UHPC WORSHIP: August 11, 2019

SERMON TOPIC: “TWO TYPES OF SERVANTS AND GOD’S REWARDS”

In our time, it is difficult to find anyone who would be satisfied to be called a servant. Everyone wants to be called a “leader” of something, or an engineer of some job; a supervisor, C.E.O., C.F.O. or manager of some business. BUT FORBID IT THAT ANYONE SHOULD BE CALLED A SERVANT! Even in the church today, people are having trouble figuring out what to call themselves in terms of their position, calling, ministry, and authority. If you look at the T.V. you will find that just about everybody is a BISHOP OR AN APOSTLE. However, the Bible and Jesus Himself have a different view of servanthood. In actuality, the TRUE AND FAITHFUL SERVANT IS TO BE PROMOTED AND ELEVATED, WHILE THE ARROGANT, LAZY, AND COMPLACENT ONE IS TO BE BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES AND DEMOTED. What a stark contrast between the world’s perspective and the perspective of God!

There seems to be something imbedded in the human nature that is self-serving and haughty, so that even among the disciples of Jesus, we hear them asking among themselves: “WHO IS THE GREATEST?” (Luke 9:46…) Jesus took a little child and held him beside himself. Then He told the disciples that whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me, welcomes my Heavenly Father, for **the least among all of you is the greatest.”** We also find in the Scripture, the mother of James and John—the sons of Zebedee, asking Jesus to appoint a special place for her sons in His Kingdom. She wanted one to be at His right hand and the other at His left. This really offended the other disciples. (HOW ABOUT US…WOULD IT BOTHER US IF WE WERE THERE?) Was anybody there thinking about servanthood? Yet, Jesus exalts those who are true servants.

We have heard in the past about some **“would be” disciples** who Jesus turned down because He knew they could not and would not be able to sustain the challenges of being a disciple. Their motivation was flawed, and they had other interests that would hinder their devotion to the call. He told them that anyone who put their hand to the plow and pulled it back was not worthy of the Kingdom of God. But blessed are those who hear the Word, who receive it gladly, who get it deeply rooted internally and spiritually, and who hold fast to it. So often on our “Pilgrim Journey” we can get weary, tired, lose focus, and sometimes even fall back. I AM HERE TO ENCOURAGE US TO PRAY FOR NEW STRENGTH. PRAY FOR A REFRESHING. FIND WAYS OF ADDING TO OUR FAITH SO THAT WE ARE RE-ENERGIZED TO RUN ON AND TO FINISH THE RACE WITHOUT BEING DISQUALIFIED. If someone stumbles, get up and try again. Get help if necessary. But never, never, never give up or waste what we have already built up in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus speaks in Luke Chap. 12: 35… about two types of servants; first—the WATCHFUL SERVANT. This is the one who is dressed and ready for action. They have their lamps trimmed, filled with oil, and lit. They are as those waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast, so that they might be alert and ready to open the door for him as soon as he arrives. LET ME ASK US: “Are our lamps trimmed and lit? Are we servants who are waiting and watching for the return of the Master? Jesus went on to say: “Blessed are such servants who the Master finds alert, active, attentive, engaged, busy with their duties and service.” NOTE THIS ALSO: HE-- the Master will fasten HIS belt and have the servants sit down at HIS table to eat. HE, the Master, will serve them HIMSELF!!!” Isn’t that a switch in roles? And He will be particularly pleased if He comes at an unexpectedly, inconvenient, time e.g. early in the morning or late at night and find His servant actively engaged, diligent, committed, dedicated, faithful, and loyal… doing His will. THEN HE SAID: “BLESSED ARE SUCH SERVANTS.!!!” When our Master returns, what do we want Him to say about us? How are we keeping our lamps lit? I ENCOURAGE US TO GET READY AND TO STAY READY WITH OUT HEARTS AND MINDS FIRMLY SET ON ETERNITY. It’s no joke, He is really coming back again for His Bride which is to be without spot or wrinkle. As a servant equipped with gifts and fruits of the Spirit, how are we serving, waiting, and watching?

Luke went on to write that the true servant of God should not become complacent and faint-hearted, lax, and careless, for no one knows when the Master will come. He could come at any time. So, servants of God, GET WELL GIRDED, STAY ALERT AND READY SO AT WHATEVER TIME THE MASTER COMES, HE WILL FIND YOU DESERIVNG OF HIS BLESSINGS AND REWARDS. He will count you among the GREATEST and HE WILL FEED YOU AND SERVE YOU AT HIS TABLE AS A REWARD FOR YOUR DILIGENCE, STEADFASTNESS, ENDURANCE, FAITHFULNESS, LOYALTY, LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE. Jesus went on to explain to His disciples that there would be a promotion for the faithful and true servants of God. They will be rewarded, for the Master will give such a one authority over all his possessions.

However, for the other type of servant… the unfaithful, lazy, and complacent, servant who knew what his Master wanted, but refused to do it, he will be cut to pieces and placed with the unfaithful. He will be beaten with many stripes. However, the slave who did not know better to do better, he would be beaten with few stripes to correct his ways. THEN JESUS FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS REQUIRED.

**All believers and followers of Christ have an anointing for an assignment.** It is our duty and responsibility to carry out that ministry, however small or great. The idea is to serve to the very best of our ability until the Master comes. **Serve as unto God and not as unto man.** It is our duty to keep our lamps trimmed and lit so that we will stay alert and engaged. As Christians we are encouraged to keep our focus on the RETURN OF THE MASTER WHO WILL TAKE INVENTORY OF OUR LIVES AND SERVICE. He will decide whether we have been faithful, diligent, and alert. THERE WILL BE A REWARD HERE AND NOW AND FOR ETERNITY. In Hebrews 11, we are reminded of the classic faithful ones of the past who carried out their duties to the fullest. Despite all they endured, they completed their task and kept the faith to the very end. Among them were Abraham and Sarah, Noah, and Enoch. We might add Joseph, and Jacob, Daniel, and Esther, Mary, and Elizabeth, and so many more. GOD PROMISED THEM GREAT REWARDS, BUT IT CAME THROUGH GREAT TESTING OF THEIR FAITH. THEY HELD FAST AND RECEIVED THEIR ETERNAL REWARDS. Servants of God –HOLD FAST AND DO NOT FAINT. BUT BUILD UP AND GROW UP IN THE UNITY OF OUR FAITH. WATCH AND WAIT WITH EXPECTATION FOR THE GREAT REWARD THAT AWAITS US WHO ARE STEADFAST, TRUSTWORTHY, DILIGENT, DEPENDABLE, AND SINCERE.

How about us? Are we keeping ETERNITY IN MIND? Let us be reminded that we are in this race to win it. We are to expect an abundant reward starting in this life and lasting for eternity. What we do, is not just for now, but also for eternity. I pray that we will all keep our lamps lit and well- trimmed. We pray that we will be faithful and diligent servants serving with expectation that the Bridegroom will return from the wedding feast laden with precious gifts and eternal rewards. He will be observing those who stayed alert and watchful expecting Him to fulfill His Word. He will return to reward THE SERVANT LEADERS who followed His example when the greatest washed the feet of the lesser at the Passover Supper. HE WILL SERVE HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS AT HIS WELCOME TABLE, BUT THE UNFAITHFUL AND THE UNTRUE WILL BE CUT OFF AND CAST AWAY. Yet there is mercy, if time allows and correction is made, God is gracious and merciful to let the unfruitful tree be mulched and fertilized for another season. And if it bears good fruit, it will be spared. Let me pause to interject that servanthood does not mean one has to become a door mat. It suggests that we learn to respond to worldly attacks, with grace, in truth, with respect, and with courage, without losing or tarnishing our testimony as children of God that Jesus has demonstrated and modeled for us.

Let us give thanks for Christ and His example of servant leadership. We ask the Holy Spirit to anoint us with His strength of proven successful leadership that God elevates and promotes. Help us Abba/Father not to be like the unfaithful and lazy servant who thought the Master was delayed and so began to carouse and to beat the other servants mercilessly. Help us to be numbered among the faithful and true servants of God and not with the unfruitful, the disloyal, and the lazy servant.

HELP US ABBA/FATHER TO BE AT THE WELCOME TABLE SPREAD BY JESUS HIMSELF. MAY WE BE COUNTED AMONG THE BLESSED OF THE LORD, OUR GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

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