



QUARTERLY | 1:22

SERVICE

Length of
Service –
David Park



The Call to
Full Time
Service –
Thomas
Martin

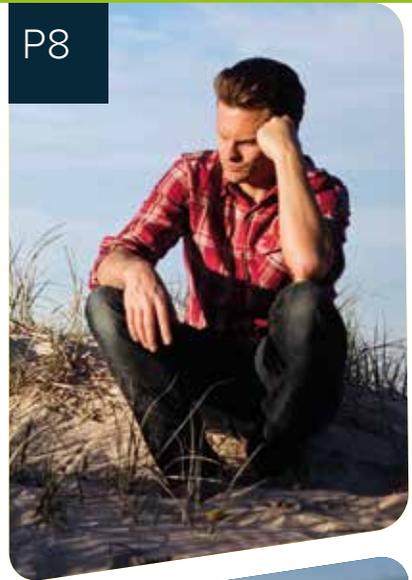


Engagement
in Service –
Ian
Goligher



And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13



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P22

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 Email : editor@ltbs.tv
 Editorial Assistant : Leslie Curran
 Treasurer : Rev Andrew Patterson
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Service

CONTENTS

- 02 **Scripture Text**
- 03 **Contents Page**
- 04 **Editorial**
Ryan McKee
- 05 **LTBS News Page**
Leslie Curran
- 06 **Requirements for Service**
Stephen Miller
- 08 **How Can I Serve the Lord?**
David Smith
- 10 **Length of Service**
David Park
- 12 **The Call to Full Time Service**
Thomas Martin
- 14 **Engagement in Service**
Ian Goligher
- 16 **The Sword of the Spirit**
C. H. Spurgeon
- 18 **Bible Words – Mercy**
Stephen Nelson
- 20 **Bible Book Overview – 1 Chronicles**
Simon Anderson
- 22 **Ladies’ Devotional – Against All Odds**
Jill Saunders

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Editorial

Psalm 107:20 - He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

Psalm 107 is a record of the mercy of God in His dealings towards His people. The opening verse instructs mankind to give thanks to God. So often we are found lacking in this area. Answered prayers can be quickly forgot and daily needs met can be taken for granted. How often we need to be reminded of the command and the reason for the command: 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.'

It is the 'redeemed of the Lord' who are to be found praising their God.

This Psalm recounts some of the great workings of God among Israel in the period following their exodus from Egypt. Over and over again He responded to their cry and met them at the point of their need. In verses 17-20 we read of the Lord healing those who had been afflicted in their body because of their wicked behaviour. As they suffered and grew weak in body, they cried out onto the Lord again and He answered in a miraculous way. Verse 20 details how the Lord helped the people in need at that moment. Consider the first clause in that verse: He sent His word. The Lord always has a word for the need of the individual. That word has come on occasions via the audible voice of God. Many times in the wilderness God spoke. Words of encouragement, promise, revelation, rebuke and direction are recorded in these wilderness years in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. God has also sent His Word in Holy Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:21 - 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' We have the complete canon of Scripture today that contains warnings against those who would seek to add to it or take from it. It is an

eternal, forever settled Word.

Furthermore, John 1:14 reminds us that God has sent His Son, called the Word in this chapter. 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.'

Surely our hearts should be lifted up in great thanksgiving. God has not left us in our lost estate without hope or salvation. He has sent His Word. Our ministry at LTBS is taking that Word and sending it across the world through radio, television and printed page. We do so with confidence in the wonderful promise of Isaiah 55:11, 'So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'

What the Lord accomplished through His Word in that period, we know He will accomplish in the hearts of sinners in our day. As the Spirit effectually applies the truth of God's Word, and sinners respond in faith and repentance they will be able to say that the Lord has 'healed them and delivered them from their destructions.' (Psalm 107:20)

Pray that much would be done for the Lord through this ministry.



Ryan McKee
is minister in Magherafelt Free Presbyterian Church and editor of LTBS.

LTBS News

We thank the Lord that during the COVID-19 pandemic recordings have continued with some improvisation which enabled us to maintain our broadcast schedule. However, it had not been possible to have congregations present for many months, and their presence has been greatly missed.

We are delighted to announce that we are once again able to have congregations in the studio for our recordings. It is a most welcome change to have a 'live' audience present in the recording sessions once more and empty pews filling up. If you would like to be a part of the congregation for future recordings, we invite you to submit your name and details via our website.

Simply go to ltbs.tv and click the 'GET CONNECTED' button on the bottom right of the page. This will allow you to request



updates on LTBS news, LTBS daily devotional and receive information about upcoming LTBS recordings.

Report from Rev. Leslie Curran

Programme director of LTBS in Northern Ireland and Convener of the LTBS Committee

The Requirements for Service



Romans chapter 12 verse 1 speaks of the 'reasonable service' that we should render to God. The requirements for service set out in the first two verses of that chapter follow the wonder expressed concerning God's wise and sovereign plan of salvation at the end of chapter 11.

Romans 11 verse 33 declares, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' Verse 35 asks what we can offer to God, 'Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?' Verse 36 states that all things belong to God, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'

When we think of who God is; the infinite, eternal and holy God, the One who possesses and controls all things and the One who has planned our salvation, how can we do anything other than serve Him?

We can only serve the Lord when we have received, through faith and repentance, His cleansing from our sins.

Thus we are exhorted in Romans 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.' The Lord has shown mercy to us, who are not worthy of the least of His mercies. As the recipients of His mercy, we should be His willing servants. Those who have not experienced God's mercy cannot be His servants.

Salvation is essential for service. God has provided salvation through the life and blood shed of His dear Son who is the greatest Servant. We can only serve the Lord when we have received, through faith and repentance,

His cleansing from our sins. The true servant is always conscious that, but for the grace of God, he would be the slave of sin.

The gift of God's salvation includes our deliverance from hell as well as our privilege of service. 'For by grace are ye saved,' (Ephesians 2:8) cannot be detached from, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,' (Ephesians 2:10). Service does not originate within us but in the mind of God. God has purposed that service will flow from hearts willing to obey Him because they are thankful for His mercy.

In service we present our 'bodies a living sacrifice.' To give ourselves entirely away to God's will requires a child-like trust. When presenting ourselves to the Lord, we do not know the service He will ask of us. Faith believes that whatever hardships service will require, the Lord will give

grace to endure them. Faith also judges that whatever suffering service brings, the Lord Jesus is worthy of it all. Faith is confident that God will enable us to do what He asks.

Our presentation of ourselves for service is to be 'holy.' We must be holy to serve the Lord. The servant is always striving for greater likeness to His Master in purity and obedience to the will of God. Robert Murray M'Cheyne's words regarding the Christian ministry can be applied to all forms of Christian service, 'It is not great talents that God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.' A heart surrendered and a holy life are, 'acceptable unto God.'

The servant who reaches this point recognises that this is his 'reasonable service.'

The servant is always striving for greater likeness to His Master in purity and obedience to the will of God.

He is not conscious of his work being exceptional or praiseworthy. The Lord's servant realises that at best his service is reasonable, considering all that he has received from the Lord.

Romans 12:2 indicates that separation from the sins of this present evil world is necessary in order to serve the Lord, 'And be not conformed to this world.' We should not conform to the moral standards of the world in serving the Lord. The way we live and the way we serve should be conformed to the Word of God. This requires a regular examination of our hearts and conduct to guard against conformity to the world's standards.

In addition, the mind of the servant must be renewed, 'but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' The Lord's service cannot be sincerely performed with the mindset of this world. The ungodly world speaks of service but thinks of opportunities for personal advancement, popular acclaim and a place in history. It is possible to be separated from the world's outward sins but have the world's spirit inwardly, promoting ourselves under the guise of serving the

Saviour. The Lord's servant must have a transformed mind; a mind renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit; a mind whose objective is doing the Lord's will for the Lord's glory regardless of recognition, cost or apparent success.

When we are being transformed day by day into the likeness of our Saviour we, 'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.' Service requires a heart that earnestly desires to please the Lord by knowing and doing His will. When we are determined to know God's will, our service will be revealed to us.



Stephen Miller
is licentiate minister in
Tavistock Free Presbyterian
Church, England.



How Can I Serve the Lord?

As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

To many, this expression means becoming a minister, a missionary or, indeed, any occupation associated with Christianity that takes up most or all the working week. Undoubtedly, a believer who hears the call of God to such a field of labour is indeed serving the Lord. However to use the term 'serving the Lord' only in this narrow sense robs believers of an appreciation that we are all, in Christ, servants.

The statement of Joshua in Joshua 24:15 gives a fuller picture of how service to the Lord is to be viewed.

It is a personal obligation.

Although Joshua called upon the people of his day to make up their minds on the issue of whom they would worship and serve, he and his household had no question over the matter. 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.' He did not shirk this duty or

believe it was just a duty for someone else. Joshua would personally serve the Lord.

When the boy Samuel heard the voice of God, Eli instructed him wisely as he informed him what he ought to say when God spoke again, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' The words of David in Psalm 116:16 are also applicable: 'O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.' This is something you and I must do.

What must compel us, however, is the love of Christ toward us in rescuing us from Hell and bringing us to God through the gospel.

We are compelled to serve. The words of Joshua at the

beginning of this chapter record the great things the Lord has done for his people, that is, in bringing them out of Egypt, providing for them in the wilderness and going before them in battle, particularly in Caanan. What must compel us, however, is the love of Christ toward us in rescuing us from Hell and bringing us to God through the gospel. Paul often speaks of service for God done in this light. When speaking of the gifts to be collected for the wants of God's people he encourages the Corinthians to abound in their giving, and reasons with them in 2 Corinthians 8:9, 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.' Service to God is compelling because we are the objects of the love and compassion of God in salvation.

It must be decisive. Joshua is encouraging the need for decisiveness. He is saying, don't waver over this matter. Don't be indecisive on the

issue of whom you will follow as your guide. The proper response is the decisive, 'I am going to serve the Lord. No one and nothing is going to take His place.'

The Lord Jesus emphasised this in Matthew 6:24: 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Love for the ungodly worldly practices and serving the Lord cannot stand co-exist. Let us then devote ourselves decisively to the Lord's service.

All that we do is done with an eye toward the Lord.

Surely these words remind us that service is to be comprehensive. By that I mean it must encompass our whole life. All that we do is done with an eye toward the Lord. Joshua is really saying I will give myself to serving the Lord, every part of me.

Serving the Lord is not like an act of charity, which is completed and then ordinary life moves on. Service toward God encompasses all. 'Whatsoever we do we do it unto the Lord,' 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Taking these words, let us consider some applications.

Our times of worship are part of our service to God. When we come to God's house to praise and meditate upon God's truth, this is service. Our time at the house of God should not be merely a meeting place with other believers but a meeting with God. Our praying, singing and thoughts would then all become focused and concentrated upon the Lord. We should not partake in a dry, dead practice with no concentration.

It will include the work that goes on in the local body of believers. The opportunities to take part in Sunday School work and various other youth works are in view here. What about the practical duties which are part of maintaining a witness for Christ? The efforts to evangelise in our local area and elsewhere, when opportunity arises, are surely part of this service to the Lord.

It will include our family life. Indeed 1 Corinthians 10:31 clearly shows that eating and drinking is to be done to the glory of God. That being the case everything in the home is included. Husbands are required to love their wives and wives to submit to their husbands. Parents duty to their children is be under the Lord's instructions. Mention in the scripture is made of fathers not provoking their

children to wrath as well as being responsible for the instruction and nurturing of their children in the things of God. Ephesians 6:4. Mothers are told to 'love their children.' Titus 2:4.

Our workplace is one of service to the Lord. In Ephesians 6:5 Paul reminds us that even slaves in his day were to be mindful that in such a position they were to give their masters service by doing their duty unto the Lord. This would not preclude them from desiring their freedom, as scripture is not teaching that slavery was right. Simply, Paul is showing that whatever the status in life, secular work was to be done in light of the fact that we are servants of Jesus Christ and so our work is to be firstly, toward Him.

Believer, let us dedicate ourselves to serving the Lord, as Joshua did.



David Smith
is minister in Banbridge Free Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland.



Length of Service

We are never too young to begin our service for Christ, in that a child can serve the Lord in his own simple way. Nor are we ever too young in the faith to commence labouring for our Saviour; often we see those just converted engaging in Christian work. Likewise, we are never too old to bring honour and glory to the God we love by doing what we can, especially in the ministry of prayer, one of the greatest tasks in which to involve ourselves.

Likewise, we are never too old to bring honour and glory to the God we love by doing what we can, especially in the ministry of prayer, one of the greatest tasks in which to involve ourselves.

As a young boy of ten, just converted to Christ, having had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, I began to develop a desire to do something for the Lord in those tender years of childhood. As time rolled on into my adolescent and teenage years that desire grew and intensified.

I had the joy and privilege of growing up under the ministry of 'Mr. Evangelist' in the Free Presbyterian Church, Rev. Kenneth Elliott, who constantly encouraged young people to engage in the Lord's work where possible. Consequently, as young men and women, we were swept, I believe by the Lord Himself, into various aspects of ministry, including door-to-door outreach, children's work, and the Sunday School ministry.

I entered Bible College at the age of nineteen to train for the Christian ministry and I have been serving the Lord ever since, for the past 40 years. I know not what the future has in store, but in the mercy of God, as health and

strength permit, there will always be a work to do for Christ until that day God calls me home to Glory.

The Scriptures highlight the fact that young people were actively involved in serving God. Samuel was just a small boy when he was presented by his parents for service in the tabernacle. As a child, we are told, he 'grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.'

David, it seems, was a teenager when he stepped forward and slew the giant Goliath. Joash was only seven when he came to the throne and 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.' Later, in Israel's history, Josiah, another boy of great piety, ascended the throne at eight years of age. What about the little maid in the story of Naaman, or the young lad in New Testament times who stepped up to the mark with his five barley loaves and two small fishes?

If these examples are not convincing enough, I take you to the greatest example of all, the child Jesus, just

a boy of twelve, sitting in the temple amidst the doctors of divinity, astonishing all who heard Him.

Do you remember what Jesus said on that occasion? – 'I must be about My Father's business.' Isn't it the prayer of every godly parent and earnest pastor that our children would feel this way, and walk in the steps of Christ, and be about our Heavenly Father's business while they are young?

Then, of course, you are never too old to serve the Lord. The words of the Psalmist are an amazing encouragement to those who are most senior among us (Psalm 92:12–16). He reminds us that the righteous 'shall still bring forth fruit in old age.' Abraham was seventy-five when he departed from Haran to go into the land of Canaan where he became great in the sight of the Lord. Moses was eighty when he entered upon the great calling of God in his life, to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land and it took him forty years.

In the New Testament we have the outstanding examples of Simeon and Anna. Their stories are a remarkable testimony of serving God faithfully in old age (Luke 2:25–38). The beloved John, the youngest of the twelve apostles, outlived all the others. His

lifespan probably covered most of the first century. He was used mightily of God in many ways, not least in penning John's Gospel, three epistles and the book of Revelation.

It blesses my heart as a pastor to watch children and young people getting involved in Christian work ...

It blesses my heart as a pastor to watch children and young people getting involved in Christian work: a little boy, just recently converted, going into school to tell his friends what Christ had done in his life, a young teenage woman standing up to give a testimony, another young man helping on an outreach programme. Over the years I have brought dozens of young people to serve the Lord short-term on the mission field – we are never too young to engage in the Lord's work.

How my heart leaps for joy when I hear the 'mothers in Israel' pray, or watch the old saint in his eighties distribute gospel literature, or the pensioner with her substance honouring the Lord. We soon discover that it is often the senior saints who form the backbone of our various congregations, who continue

to be faithful, diligent and a tower of strength to others around them. We are never too old to serve the living Christ.

George Muller served the Lord until God called him home, aged 92. He did follow-up work for D.L. Moody, preached for Charles Spurgeon, and inspired the missionary faith of Hudson Taylor. He spent most of his life in Bristol, England and pastored the same church for sixty-six years. He is known around the world for his orphan ministry. He built five large orphanages and cared for over 10,000 orphans in his life. When he turned 70, he fulfilled a life-long desire for missionary work, and for the following 17 years, until he was 87, he travelled to 42 countries, preaching on average once a day, and addressing some three million people. Truly 'the righteous...shall still bring forth fruit in old age.'



David Park
is minister of Hebron
Free Presbyterian Church,
Ballymoney
Northern Ireland.

The Call to Full Time Service



When we first meet Barnabas in Holy Scripture (Acts 4:36-37) he is doing something for Christ; and when we last meet him (Acts 15:35-41) he is still serving Christ. Like many of God's faithful servants he realised he was saved to serve. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Scripture is very careful to show us the sphere of Barnabas's service for the Lord. There are Biblical principles being taught when we study and consider the area of Barnabas's service for Christ.

(1) His Service is connected with the local church

Barnabas sold land and brought the money to his local church in Jerusalem. (Acts 4:36-37)

He introduced Saul of Tarsus to the local church and got him involved in the work there. (Acts 9:26-28)

When Barnabas came to Antioch he encouraged believers in that place to get

involved in the work of the local church. Then he went to Tarsus and found Saul and brought him to Antioch and for a whole year both men served faithfully in the local church in Antioch. (Acts 11:23-26)

Barnabas was serving under the authority of the elders of the local church at Antioch and the Spirit of God called him to full time service. It was the local church that sent both Barnabas and Saul into the mission field. (Acts 13:1-2)

Scripture points this out for good reason. Christ, the Head of the Church, has placed His authority for the governance of His church under the local assembly. It is here we are called to serve and submit to the doctrine and discipline of the Word.

Sadly today we have many who break away from the authority of the local church and they begin their own works; they plant a new church, they start a new ministry or they commence a para church organization. But Christ would have

His people under the authority of the local church. Membership of a local church is the Scriptural way to acknowledge and submit to that authority. Christ would have us work with accountability under the discipline of the local church.

Scripture points this out for good reason. Christ, the Head of the Church, has placed His authority for the governance of His church under the local assembly.

It is Christ's will for all believers to attend faithfully, support regularly and get involved individually in the work of Christ in the church where He has placed us. It is here Christ wants us to serve and it is here that He will use and bless our service for Him. When possible be in

your place at both Services on the Lord's Day. Come to the times of prayer and if you cannot make the midweek service at least get to a prayer meeting on the Lord's Day. Seek to bring others to the services especially the gospel meeting. Seek out children and young people and invite them to the Sunday School, children's and youth meetings. Pray for the work and get involved in the life and service of the local church. This is the will of God for you.

(2) His Service is considered for the LARGER CHURCH

As Barnabas was busy in the local assembly the Spirit of God singled him out and called him to work for the good of the larger Church. Can you imagine someone not involved in the local church coming to the oversight and saying the Lord has called me to serve on the mission field?

Surely, if we have no interest in souls and service in the local and surrounding area then how could we be burdened for a foreign field? The local church is our training ground; it is here God proves us and from here He calls His labourers to the work of the larger church.

It is interesting to notice how Barnabas discovered the will of God for full time service. He was living in

Surely, if we have no interest in souls and service in the local and surrounding area then how could we be burdened for a foreign field?

obedience to the revealed will of God. In Acts 13:2 we are told he 'ministered to the Lord.' The word 'ministered' can be rendered, 'to serve obediently.'

Therefore, it was while he was already obeying God's will for his life that the Holy Ghost called him to full time service. Furthermore, he was clearly burdened about full time service as Acts 13:2 suggests with the words 'and fasted.' Barnabas was seeking the Lord in earnest, concentrated prayer to know the mind of God for future service. He is determined to seek the Lord and makes it a matter of priority to know the will of Christ for his life. The answer he desperately needed came when the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate Me Barnabas...for the work whereunto I have called (him).' The concealed will of God was sought and found in earnest prayer and through the Word of God by one who was already walking in obedience to the revealed will of God.

Perhaps there is someone reading this and you are burdened about full time service and long to know the will of God for your life? What you need to do is to keep serving the Lord where you are, and give yourself to earnest and concentrated prayer about the matter, waiting for the Lord to speak to you through His Word. Once you know the will of God then follow through and the Lord will be with you and will bless you.

The concealed will of God was sought and found in earnest prayer and through the Word of God by one who was already walking in obedience to the revealed will of God.



Thomas Martin
is minister of Comber Free Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland.

Engagement in Service



As we enter year three of this global pandemic, every Christian worker needs fresh encouragement. To some it may appear that ground that was hard won over past years of ministry has been lost. Gospel ministries and missions have been frustrated, and some plans to extend God's kingdom have fallen flat. Still, because we serve the Lord God of creation who also actively controls all things by His works of providence there is encouragement for us all.

We should, therefore, be encouraged that God is at work in this world by His almighty providence.

Notwithstanding the stresses caused by the horrors of this pandemic, we know that God has not changed, nor

has one promise of His word failed. We should, therefore, be encouraged that God is at work in this world by His almighty providence. The Heidelberg catechism defines God's providence as:

The Almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea all things come not by chance, but by his fatherly hand. [Q. & A. 27]

It is unthinkable that the Creator of all things for His own purpose and glory should for one moment hand the world over to the powers of chance, without His government and preservation. We should remember, therefore, that gospel work is totally dependent on God's controlling hand.

To stay encouraged in our service for the Lord it is

also necessary to realise that God's will commanding differs from God's will intending. God has clearly revealed His commands to go into all the world to preach the gospel. Without doubt God wants every soul in this world to hear the gospel of His Son. This applies to our neighbour as well as to the foreigner. We do not know however, when, where nor in whom He will work to save souls as the Lord builds His church. But we know that His will shall be done and that His elect people shall be safely brought home to glory.

To overcome the ongoing challenges in God's service, we must always remember that God ordains the means as well as the outcome of gospel work. God is pleased to use us as His chosen vessels, even earthen vessels, to fulfil His purpose in the salvation of souls. Just as we must plough the fields and sow the seed, year by year, expecting the sun to shine and the rain to fall to give a harvest, so we must sow the gospel-seed and

wait for God to give His Spirit to bring forth a spiritual harvest in His church.

When God purposes to build His church, He will send an evangelist or a Bible preaching pastor so that the work of witnessing and pastoral ministry are provided. We go, therefore, not at our own charges, nor do we wait aimlessly for the blessing of God; rather, we are called to use the means of grace that God has ordained, that the local church might be a light to souls in this darkened world. Zacharias Ursinus, who wrote the Heidelberg Catechism, commenting on the providence of God, gave three clear reasons why means are to be employed:

- 1. That we may render obedience to God, who has ordained both the ends and the means for the attainment of these ends, and has prescribed them unto us, otherwise we tempt God at our peril.**
- 2. That we may obtain the good things promised to us.**
- 3. That we may retain a good conscience, even though we do not always obtain the things desired and expected in the use of these means."**

The preacher in the Old

To overcome the ongoing challenges in God's service, we must always remember that God ordains the means as well as the outcome of gospel work.

Testament book of Ecclesiastes stated:

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. (Ecclesiastes 11:4-6)

These words of divine wisdom exhort us to serve God faithfully and wholeheartedly in the face of adversity, and to do so with full expectation that 'the Almighty and everywhere present power of God' will bless our every effort to

extend His kingdom. As long as we use the means God's has ordained, we may labour in full hope of God's blessing. We can then stay encouraged by leaving the outcome to the wisdom and power of God, who is always there controlling.

We search the starlit Milky Way

A million worlds in rhythmic sway

Yet in our blindness some will say

There is no God controlling!

But as I gaze from sphere to sphere

New wonders crowd the eye, the ear

And faith grows firmer every year

My God is there, controlling!

[Attributed to William Watkins Reid, 1890-1983]



Ian Goligher has retired from the pastorate having served in Colverdale, British Columbia, Canada. He currently works in radio ministry with LTBS in Canada.

The Sword of the Spirit – C. H. Spurgeon



Extract from a Sermon entitled *The Sword of the Spirit Delivered on Lord's-Day Morning, April 19th, 1891*, by C. H. Spurgeon. Based on Ephesians 6:17.

We are not to bury the Word under other matters; but we are to take it as a sword: which means, as I understand it, first, believe it. Believe every portion of it; believe it with a true and real faith, not with a mere credal faith, which says, "This is the orthodox thing." Believe it as a matter of fact for every day, affecting your life. Believe it. And when you have believed it, then study it. Oh, for a closer study of the Word of God! Are there not some of you who have never even heard or read all that the Lord has said? Are there not passages of the Bible which have never been read by you? It is a melancholy fact that there should be even a line of the sacred Scriptures which has never once come under your eye. Do read

the Bible right through, from beginning to end. Begin tomorrow: nay, begin to-day, and go steadily through the whole of the sacred books, with prayer and meditation. Never let it be suspected by you that God has recorded truths in his Word which you have never even once read. Study the Word, and work out its meaning. Go deep into the spirit of inspiration. He gets most gold who digs the deepest in this mine. They used to say of certain mines in Cornwall that the deeper you went the richer was the ore; assuredly is it so with the mines of inspired Scripture. The deeper you go under the Spirit's guidance the larger is the reward for your toil. Take the sword with

The deeper you go under the Spirit's guidance the larger is the reward for your toil.

the grip of sincere faith; hold it fast by a fuller knowledge, and then exercise yourself daily in its use. The sword is to be taken for earnest fight. You will not be long before occasion arises in such a world as this. You will have to parry with it, to pierce with it, to cut with it, and to kill with it. "Where shall I begin?" says one. Begin at home, and, for many a day, you will have your hands full. When you have slain all the rebels at home, and long before that, you may take a turn at those around you in the world, and in the professing church. Inside your own heart you will find a band of bandits which should be exterminated. There will always be need to keep the sword going within your own territory. End this civil war before you go into foreign parts.

We are to take this sword with a purpose. We are to use it that we may be able to stand and to withstand. If you want to stand, draw the sword, and smite your doubts. How fiercely unbelief

assails! Here comes a doubt as to your election. Pierce it through with the Word. Anon comes a doubt as to the precious blood. Cleave it from head to foot with the assurance of the Word that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin. Here comes another doubt, and yet another. As quick as arm can move, drive texts of Scripture through every new fallacy, every new denial of truth, and spit the whole of them upon the rapier of the Word. It will be for your good to kill these doubts outright. Do not play with them, but fight them in real earnest. You will find that temptations also will come in hordes. Meet them

If you want to stand, draw the sword, and smite your doubts.

with the precepts of sacred Writ, and slay even the desire of evil by the Spirit's application of the Holy Word. The washing of water by the Word is a glorious cleanser. Discouragements will arise like mists of the morning. Oh, that God's Word may shine them away with the beams of the promises! Your afflictions multiply, and you will never be able to overcome impatience and distrust except by the infallible Word of God. You can bear trial, and bear it patiently, if you use this weapon to kill

How the devil laughs when we try to make converts apart from Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit!

anxiety. You will "stand fast in the evil day", and having done all, you will still stand, if this sword be in your hand.

You have not only to stand fast yourselves, but you have to win souls for Christ. Do not try to conquer sin in others, or capture a heart for Jesus, except with the sword of the Spirit. How the devil laughs when we try to make converts apart from Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit! He laughs, I say; for he derides our folly. What can you do, you children, playing with your little wooden swords—what can you do against men covered from head to foot with the steel mail of the habit of sin? Sunday-school teachers, teach your children more and more the pure Word of God; and preachers, do not try to be original, but be content to take of the things of Christ, and show them to the people; for that is what the Holy Ghost himself does; and you will be wise to use his method and his sword. No sinner around you will be saved except by the knowledge of the great truths contained

in the Word of God. No man will ever be brought to repentance, to faith, and to life in Christ, apart from the constant application of the truth through the Spirit. I hear great shouting, great noises everywhere, about great things that are going to be done: let us see them. The whole world is going to be embraced within the church; so they say. I fear the world will not be much the better for inclusion in such a church. Big boasters should heed the word of the wise man, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." If the champion goeth forth with any other sword than the Word of God, he had better not boast at all; for he will come back with his sword broken, his shield cast away, and himself grimy with dishonour. Defeat awaits that man who forsakes the Word of the Lord.





Bible Words - Mercy

There are several words in both Testaments translated 'mercy' in our English Bibles. The most common in the original Hebrew is 'chêsêd.' One Bible commentator notes that this Hebrew word has no equivalent in other languages. It speaks of an abounding kindness and favour. It first appears in Genesis 19 when Lot recognises the mercy of God in sparing him from the destruction of Sodom.

In the Greek New Testament, the root word most often translated 'mercy' is 'eleos'. It appears first in Matthew 5 as Christ presents the beatitudes at the Sermon on the Mount.

When we consider the use of the word 'mercy' in the Scripture our hearts naturally consider the mercies of God.

When we consider the use of the word 'mercy' in the Scripture our hearts naturally consider the mercies of God. In Psalm 136 we are reminded some 26 times that 'his mercy endureth for ever.' One Bible Dictionary defines mercy as 'a form of love, especially directed toward the needy or unworthy.' Surely that defines our relationship with God? We are so needy and unworthy, yet the LORD extends His love towards us. Let us meditate on the mercy of God together.

The Mercy of God Stated in Scripture

Many Bible texts point us to the mercy of God, but consider 2 Corinthians 1:3, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.' Interestingly, the Father is described as the 'Father of mercies.' By ascribing this title to Him, Paul is seeking to show that the Lord is the author and the source of mercy. Mercy proceeds from

God. He is the fountain from which mercy springs forth.

The mercy of God is evident in our everyday lives. We have comfortable homes, we are gifted health and strength; provision is made for our needs even though we don't deserve any of these good things. In truth, all mankind deserves is eternal judgement and condemnation, but God is merciful.

Of course, we must meditate upon our Saviour. In Jude 1:21 we are instructed, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." We are reminded that there is coming a day when Christ will judge the unsaved and they will receive justice, suffering eternal death. But for those who belong to the Saviour, they will receive mercy, enjoying eternal life.

The Mercy of God Seen in Salvation

Titus 3:5 states, 'Not by works of righteousness which

we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Immediately fallen man is humbled. There is nothing in us that can earn or merit our salvation. Indeed, there is nothing in fallen man that can even contribute to our salvation. Salvation is according to the mercy of God.

Perhaps one unsaved is reading this article? How many times have you heard the Gospel preached? Hundreds? Thousands? The Lord has been so merciful to you but still you haven't come to Christ. The Psalmist reminds us that the Lord is 'good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee' (Psalm 86:5). The Lord promises mercy to those who seek Him. Will you come to Him today?

The Mercy of God Necessary for the Nation

In Jeremiah 3, backsliding and idolatrous Israel is depicted as a harlot. The Lord commissions Jeremiah to call Israel to repentance. 'Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever' (Jeremiah 3:12). The Lord

promises that if Israel returns to Him, His anger against her will cease. Why? Because God is merciful.

Doesn't our own nation need to seek the mercy of God and turn from her sin? When we look around, we realise that the UK is an idolatrous nation just as Israel was. We see the idolatry of false religion, the idolatry of materialism, and the idolatry of 'self.' Our nation needs to remember that the Lord is merciful and return to Him once again.

The Mercy of God Reflected in our Relationships

The Lord Jesus instructs His people in Luke 6:36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.' As Christians, we are to reflect the Saviour, we are to be Christ-like, living godly lives. Christ commands us to display mercy. We must be tender-hearted and compassionate. Christians have experienced more of the mercy of God than they can articulate. We are so underserving of God's grace, yet He has saved us. Just as the Lord is merciful, so we must seek to be merciful. All too often we exhibit little mercy, compassion, or kindness in our everyday lives. Let us remember Christ's command, let us act in obedience, and seek to have that good testimony before men.

Charles Wesley's hymn pictures the sinner asking the question, 'Depth of mercy! Can there be mercy still reserved for me?' The answer is 'yes.' To the sinner who comes to Christ in faith and repentance, and cries out for forgiveness, God's mercy is promised. Have you experienced this mercy?

Indeed, there is nothing in fallen man that can even contribute to our salvation. Salvation is according to the mercy of God.



Stephen Nelson
is minister in Rasharkin
Free Presbyterian Church,
Northern Ireland.

Overview of the Book of 1 Chronicles

The Particulars of the book

A chronicle is a factual written account of important or historical events in the order of their occurrence. The story begins in Chronicles and is continued in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. They form a unit and tell one story. In the original Hebrew scrolls, first and second Chronicles were one book. However, between 300 and 250 BC the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek. It was then that the book was divided into two. This was partly because the Greek language required more space than the Hebrew, and the two smaller scrolls were more convenient to handle than a large one. It is uncertain who wrote the book of Chronicles but Jewish tradition points to Ezra, who was both a priest and a scribe, as the author of the book. Nonetheless, the reality is, the importance of these works does not depend on identifying the human author but what they contain and communicate about God, His redemptive plan and purpose. In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the final book thus reflecting the fact that it was probably

the last Old Testament book to be written.

The Parentage in the book

Beginning with Adam, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles chapters 1-9 trace the development of God's

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purpose for mankind to the tribe of David. They testify to God's faithfulness in preserving the line of the promised Seed through whom God would restore His blessing to fallen man (Genesis 3:15). The exile of Israel could not overthrow God's purpose of salvation any more than previous

judgments such as the flood in the days of Noah. Genealogies were essential to the Jews as they were required to keep accurate records of their family ties for various reasons. One had to know their tribe, clan, and family relationships because property ownership was supposed to stay within the tribe. Genealogies were also needed to prove that priests and Levites had come from the tribe of Levi. Although these genealogies can seem wearisome, they remind us that God knows each of His children personally, so much so that He knows the very number of hairs on their heads (Matthew 10:30).

The People in the book

The main character in Chronicles is David

(1 Chronicles 11:1-29:30). The book of second Samuel and the book of first Chronicles, except the genealogies, are both entirely devoted to the reign of David. In 2 Samuel 2-4, it is recorded how David was made king over Judah after the death of Saul (1 Chronicles 10:1-14). Saul had been living for many years in open defiance of God, constantly stumbling from one disaster to another. He learnt that God was no longer helping him due to his sin and that inevitable disaster would be the only result. His lowest point came when he knew that military defeat was looming and he asked for a medium to summon up the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel, to seek advice instead of calling upon the Lord (1 Chronicles 10:13). Saul's military acumen deserted him and in panic he engaged the Philistines on the flat plain at the top of Mount Gilboa. He saw his armies fail and sadly, he took his own life. Saul had foolishly sought escape from a disaster by fleeing into the righteous judgement of the God he had

rejected. Nonetheless, Saul's disastrous end was just the start of David's mighty beginning. David went on to become King of all Israel and laid the plans for the building of the temple, devoting much of his reign to collecting vast stores of gold, silver, and other building materials for it. David was forbidden by God to build the actual temple as he had been a "man of war" and had "shed much blood" (1 Chronicles 22:8 / 1 Chronicles 28:3). Hence, God assigned the task of building the temple to Solomon, David's son, who was later made king in 1 Chronicles 23:1-32.

The Purpose of the book

The purpose of Chronicles is to call people to turn from their idols and seek the Lord in holy worship, motivated by confidence in God's covenant faithfulness to the Son of God. Chronicles clearly shows us the repeated failure of man to achieve salvation and the urgent need of sinners to look to the coming Messiah, whose line of descent is traced in Chronicles. In the book of first Chronicles, we learn that God is faithful to His people and keeps His promises. We can clearly see the fulfilment of God's promise to David when he is made king over all Israel. Chronicles teaches us that obedience brings blessing while disobedience brings judgment. This is obviously demonstrated through the

story of Saul (1 Chronicles 10:1-14). The book of first Chronicles is a chronicle of the sin, repentance, forgiveness, and restoration of the nation of Israel. In the same way, God is patient with us and forgives our sin when we come to Him in true repentance (1 John 1:9). We can take comfort in the fact that He hears our prayer of sorrow, forgives our sin, restores us to fellowship with Him, and sets us on the path of peace and contentment.

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Simon Anderson
is minister in Aghnacloy
Free Presbyterian Church,
Northern Ireland.

Against All Odds



When Zachariah came to the throne of Israel, there began a succession of events that demonstrates God's amazing power in the lives of people in otherwise impossible circumstances. Zachariah, like his father before him, did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord and he reigned only six months before he was brutally assassinated in the sight of his own people. His daughter, Abijah, was married off to Judah's King Ahaz, perhaps in a treaty between the two kingdoms. Ahaz was one of the most wicked kings Judah ever crowned. With a depravity beyond definition, he made at least one of his infant sons "pass through the fire" as a human sacrifice to the heathen god Molech (2 Kings 16:3). We aren't told if this son was Abijah's, but for her to witness the burning of her husband's child would have exposed her to a level of horror she could not soon forget.

In her marriage to Ahaz, Abi (as she was also called) was surrounded by the worst kinds of evil. Ahaz tried to destroy every vestige of allegiance to God in the

kingdom, and I wonder if Abi, like Hagar, cried unto the Lord, "Thou, God seest me"? We aren't told her spiritual condition, but we do know that into this unfortunate alliance, in the providence of God, came a son—a testimony to the grace of God that when life and circumstances are contrary, God CAN do impossible things. Hezekiah was born. His name means "God gives strength" and against all odds, that little lad was raised to honour the living God.

How was this possible? With rampant idolatry in the kingdom, who influenced Hezekiah to love the one true God with such conviction? And knowing the capability of Ahaz to destroy his own children, did Hezekiah's caregivers need to use Jochebed-like protection to keep him alive? Who taught him to serve God with such steadfastness? For when Hezekiah took the throne in his mid-twenties, it is recorded that he "clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him." I want to believe it was his mother or his grandmother, but maybe it was a God-fearing royal nurse or maybe it was none

of the above.

Hezekiah's determination to honour God is seen from the very first month of his reign when he set about "breaking in pieces" his father's idols, repairing the broken-down house of the Lord, and gathering the priests to be sanctified and reinstated. He even had Moses' bronze serpent demolished because the people had been worshipping it. So Hezekiah restored true worship of the Lord God in Judah. Humanly speaking, Hezekiah could not have become so wise beyond his years and so God-fearing overnight. There is every indication that he was the living testimony of years of godly investment from his earliest childhood like Daniel, Moses, Samuel, and David. We will never know until eternity who raised Hezekiah, but we do know that he had this testimony: "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah" (2 Kings 18:5).

The answer to Hezekiah's love for the Lord is not

necessarily because of human oversight but because of the Lord Himself. God had a plan for Hezekiah and no human odds would be able to hinder that plan. His story is so encouraging because it gives us hope to see beyond the evil influences and impossible situations surrounding our own loved ones who may be far from the Lord right now. It helps us to trust that God can work in their hearts even when no one is there to influence them for good. Sometimes it is difficult for us to walk by faith when sight is so easily influenced by what it sees. Faith needs power. Power comes from God.

Sometimes it is difficult for us to walk by faith when sight is so easily influenced by what it sees. Faith needs power. Power comes from God.

I've shared with you before that when I am writing an article, I usually meet someone or something that illustrates my topic and helps me understand it better. A few nights ago I had the privilege of being at the

baptism of two people in their early 30s. One of them had no godly upbringing or influence in her life. She got into the worst sin as a young child, which included over fifteen years of occult involvement. The level of involvement in her teenage years is difficult to fathom. How could someone like this turn to Christ and be saved? But Diana testified with tears of joy that the Lord made Himself known to her and broke the demonic chains that bound her. To an onlooker, Diana's case seemed hopeless, but God can do what man cannot do. How amazing to hear her clear testimony of deliverance through the power of Christ alone.

The apostle John said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" and there is no greater sorrow when they do not. Sometimes children raised in the most God-fearing homes with the best training go astray. Maybe that describes your child and your heart breaks for him. Or maybe your husband is unsaved and you fear the negative influence on your children. Pray on, dear friend, pray on. Hezekiah's salvation is an example of what God CAN do!

The Bible has many examples of God's power in the lives of men, women, and children who came to Christ, when their upbringing, peer group, sinful lifestyle, and their own hard hearts militated against it. God is

able to make the best out of the worst. *"Man's extremity is God's opportunity"* (John Flavel).

Human odds were stacked against young Hezekiah. What hope did he have surrounded by evil from his birth? But God set His love on that young lad and made him into the man that he was. Does that not give us hope for our loved ones? There is no sinner too great for God to rescue. When Hezekiah took the throne of Judah he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done" (2 Chronicles 29:2)? I wonder did Abijah live to see it? I wonder did she care? We may not see our prayers answered in our lifetime, but God will do what He intends to do whether we live to see it or not. So let us rest our heavy hearts on Him, let us dry our tears, and let us not be anxious. We cannot change the present, but God can—even against all odds—for His great Name's sake.



Jill Saunders
is the wife of Dr Larry Saunders, minister of Toronto Free Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Canada, and the Principal of Whitefield Christian Academy.

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