

# The Rewards and Upside of Serving Christ

“I don’t serve anybody!” would be a common refrain of from many people who see themselves as free and in-charge of their lives. But the smallest reflection would show this as a silly thought – we all serve someone or something, multiple someones and somethings: money, time, bosses, customers, spouses, children, comfort, supposed security . . . And this seeking to serve (and be served) in multiple ways is an obvious cause of many of our neuroses.

Thus, Jesus provides another of His practical truths, telling us:

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” Mt 6:24

But this is no *New Testament* novel thought, rather it is an early-on *Old Testament* theme – we can choose our master(s), and choose we must – and our Master/master at the time of earthly death will be our Master/master in eternity. Joshua knew this and warned the Jews of this critical decision:

“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Jos 24:14-15

With another *Old Testament* theme verse outlining God’s expectations of, and gift to, His servants:

And now, O Israel [applies to Christians as well – simply with some of God’s prior commands and decrees “sunset” by the sacrifice and Grace of Christ], what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD’S commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? Dt 10:12-13

There is not a single instance, in the *Old* or *New Testament*, in which God commands anyone to give up anything where they do not receive something Better in return – much Better. Or said another way, God only requires we relinquish that which is incompatible with our greater good and happiness. For as Jesus clearly promises:

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. Mk 10:29-30

Our faith is primarily limited and measured by four related influences:

1. The extent of our belief in the sovereignty of God – what we think He can do.
2. What we expect God will do for us personally.
3. Our desire (evidenced by our actions of seeking and pursuing) to be God’s servant, knowing, as Jesus said, we cannot serve 2 masters and believing He is infinitely superior to any and all alternative masters.
4. All culminating in the practical reality of how much and how often we are seeing Grace in our lives – how much of the abundant Grace offered and surrounding us all that we are taking. For God’s Grace is His sustenance offered to us for life and for doing the goods works He planned in advance for each of us to do.

And we are going to know little of what God says, expects and promises about serving Him (versus the many false gods and masters) unless we regularly read His Word for direction, knowing what to pray for, for identifying the common false teachings/lies related to this foundational basic of the Christian life so we can reject them . . .

Many people understand a macro concept of sovereignty (God can handle big things like keeping the universe in control) without having any appreciation of sovereignty, as explained in the *Bible*, being personal to the smallest issues and concerns of the least of His servants. Faith for day-to-day living requires we accept and live God's micro-sovereignty – for we live on this end of God's sovereignty spectrum. Sadly, however, many professing Christians do not even know how and why we are saved as detailed in the key *Bible* salvation verses (*Ephesians 2:8-10*). They don't understand practical sovereignty and that God can, must and does frequently speak to those serving Him to direct them in what they are to do, how they are to do it and, as their Father, because He just likes to be with and talk to them! It is not all work and no play with God, but rest, re-creation, a good laugh now and then, comfort when needed . . .

The rewards and upsides of serving Christ? This is almost a foolish question because as we are told in the *Bible*:

Jesus did [and continues to do] many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Jn 21:25

The preacher and pastor are no more servants of God than any authentic Christian is supposed to be, only the roles are different. And the relatively short Word of God is necessary for us all to fulfill our roles and responsibilities, but we must read it (yes, it is going to take humility to admit to God we can't read His Word faithfully without His Grace – He will give this foundational Grace!) or inevitably weep when reaching the point of our personal no-return “end of the line” in the pride of thinking we could handle life without Christ in which case we will be responsible for handling our death!

If we are not among those reading God's Word on a regular basis, praying what we are reading and facing in life, we should nonetheless not fail to understand many millions of people are doing so faithfully on a daily basis and, in the process, receiving the Graces and upsides of serving Christ too innumerable to list since the rewards come so often and quickly.

The rewards and upsides of serving Christ?

This is a very great theme of the *Bible*, our faith and the Grace (our only hope) for today, tomorrow and forever.