



The Obligations of a Dutiful Servant

Considering a Message from Luke 17:1-10
For the Week of August 5th, 2018

This Sunday of the Church Year focuses on "Renewed Obedience." It is a time of introspection for us to consider what God wants of us and how we might be dedicated in our service to Him and to His purposes.

As Christians, God has given us duties and obligations to follow. These can be very challenging for us—especially the task of repentance. As God's people we value daily renewal as we admit our wrongs, and lovingly encourage those around us to do likewise. "Repent!" has been God's repeated message to His people—as we hear through His prophets: "Amend your ways and your doings." (Jer. 7:1-7). Those who are not repentant—who are not fulfilling these duties and obligations—are failing because they lack true faith in God. Through faith we leave behind our own unrighteousness and failures, and receive Christ's righteousness and success. Not only does faith in Christ impart His righteousness to us, it causes love to flow out of our hearts. It inspires us to cheerfully and happily carry out our duty and obligations as God's servants. We then work together as dutiful servants of God, making use of the different gifts that we each have, showing love to each other and to God, glorifying Him as we serve Him and for the good of His kingdom (1 Cor. 12:1-11).

Opening Prayer: We thank You Heavenly Father for bringing us together. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and love, especially as we gather together with our fellow Christians. Help us as we now consider how we might be dutiful servants. Inspire and motivate us to carry out our obligations happily as we consider the great love that you have shown to us through our Savior, Your Son, Jesus. We pray this in His name. Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

Take a few moments to greet each other—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. Introduce yourselves again if anyone is unfamiliar with anyone else, give an interesting factoid about yourself that not many people know...

1. Have you ever had a job where you felt overwhelmed? Were there obligations or duties that you weren't prepared for or that frightened you? Please share... **ANSWERS WILL VARY/ SUBJECTIVE—THIS APPLIES TO OUR TEXT BECAUSE WHAT JESUS IS ASKING OF HIS DISCIPLES—OF ALL OF US—MAY AT FACE VALUE APPEAR TO BE OVERWHELMING!**
2. What is it about the words 'duty' or 'dutiful' that we don't find appealing? Similarly, why don't we like the idea of being a "servant" to anyone else? **ANSWERS WILL VARY/ SUBJECTIVE—IN GENERAL WE DON'T LIKE TO BE COERCED OR FORCED INTO THINGS—THIS KIND OF THING IS IMPLIED WITH "DUTY." ALSO: OUR SINFUL PRIDE ABHORS SUCH THINGS—SUBMITTING OURSELVES AND OUR WANTS TO OTHERS AND WHAT THEY EXPECT OF US?! WHO WANTS THAT? BUT ULTIMATELY THIS IS WHAT LOVE IS—SUBMITTING OURSELVES AND OUR WANTS AND NEEDS FOR SOMEONE ELSE! TO SERVE ANOTHER PERSON REQUIRES SELFLESSNESS AND SELF-SACRIFICE—DIFFICULT THINGS FOR US!**

CONNECT to the Word—Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): **Luke 17:1-10**

3. Jesus issues a serious warning against anyone who would harm the faith of a young Christian. Why might His stern words be startling to many people? **ALL PEOPLE ARE EASILY TEMPTED AND CAPABLE OF FALLING INTO THIS SIN. WHO HASN'T SPOKEN CARELESSLY BEFORE OR BEEN A BAD EXAMPLE?! THESE ARE SERIOUS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS! WE HAVEN'T LIVED UP TO THIS!**
4. Why is it often difficult for people to confront another person about their sins? **FROM SERMON: "WE FEAR THEIR RESPONSE. THEY MAY TELL US IN SO MANY WORDS TO MIND OUR OWN BUSINESS, OR THEY MAY RECALL SOME SIMILAR SIN WE HAVE OURSELVES COMMITTED" LOOK UP AND READ MATTHEW 7:1-5—SOMETIMES WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT SPEAKING OUT BECAUSE WE MIGHT BE ACCUSED OF HYPOCRISY... THIS IS WHY WE BEGIN WITH OUR OWN DAILY RENEWAL AND**

REPENTANCE—WE UNDERSTAND AND VALUE GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND UNDERSTAND THAT A CALL TO REPENTANCE IS FROM A POSITION OF LOVE...LIKEWISE WE CALL OTHERS TO REPENTANCE BECAUSE WE ARE MOVED BY LOVE...



5. What moves us to be radical in our forgiveness?—even forgiving someone “seven times in a single day”? **FROM THE SERMON: “GOD HAS FORGIVEN US EVERY SIN FOR JESUS’ SAKE, AND HE MADE THAT BLESSED TRUTH KNOWN TO THE WORLD FROM RAISING JESUS FROM THE DEAD.” IT’S “A DIFFICULT DUTY, SINCE OUR OLD SINFUL NATURE IS MORE INTERESTED IN VENGEANCE THAN FORGIVENESS.” “GOD FORGIVES US AGAIN AND AGAIN EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES.” GOD’S “UNMERITED LOVE FOR US IN JESUS COMPELS US TO FORGIVE OTHERS.” ALSO SEE MATTHEW 18:21-35...**

CONNECT to Life

6. Why should we see ourselves as those who have merely “done our duty” when we live out our lives as Christians? **WE AREN’T HEROES... OUR FAITH IS WHAT MOTIVATES US TO “DO OUR DUTY”—AND OUR FAITH IS SOMETHING THAT GOD WORKS IN US! IT’S NOT ABOUT WHAT WE DO, IT’S ABOUT WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH US! WE SHOULD PRAY WITH THE DISCIPLES: “LORD INCREASE OUR FAITH!”**
7. Why is it comforting to know that our relationship with God doesn’t hinge on our performance of the law? **IF IT WERE UP TO OUR DUTY WE WOULD BE IN TROUBLE! THANKFULLY IT’S ABOUT GOD’S GRACE! EPHESIANS 2:8-9 IT ALSO GIVES US CERTAINTY! SALVATION IS GOD’S WORK NOT OUR OWN! THIS PUTS “DUTY” IS THE PROPER LIGHT FOR US...**
8. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day? **VARIOUS ANSWERS—OBVIOUSLY THE WHOLE SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO BE A COHESIVE UNIT/SINGLE THEME.**

CONNECT in Prayer—*In closing & throughout the week!*

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS for “renewed obedience”—that God might strengthen us as His people in faith—that He might help us be dutiful servants!
- Pray for the continued success of our outreach efforts—especially to bless the Gospel Seeds planted at our Women’s Brunch this past Saturday.
- Prayers for God’s guidance and blessings on our upcoming building project that is moving ahead.
- Prayers for Sig Lee and Steve Reagles—thanking God for preserving them and helping them to recover from their recent hospital stays—but also for continued healing and recovery!
- Prayers for our member Joan Navia who has been hospitalized this week with an infection.
- Prayers for our Synod’s Home Missions and our Missionaries (and families)—especially our Cross-Cultural Mission, Cristo Rey Lutheran Church in Bell Gardens, California as they dedicated their newly remodeled Sanctuary—and carry out a variety of outreach programs!
- Prayers for our Synod’s World Missions, especially a new group of pastors in Kenya that are receiving continued theological training via video-conferencing from several of our ELS pastors.
- Prayers for our fellow Christians throughout the world who face hardship and persecution because of their faith—that God might preserve them and keep them strong in the face of persecutions.
- Offer any other prayers for those in your group who have any requests.

