

Paul's Humility



Servanthood (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

I'd like to take Paul's ministry a little further and consider another aspect of it which is brought out in Colossians 1:23–25. I'm going to start in a middle of the sentence and finish in the middle of a sentence. That's not my fault, that's because Paul wrote such long sentences. We'll begin at verse 23:

> "If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven; of which I Paul became a minister..."

Minister, Greek word deacon, a servant. So, Paul says there, "I became a servant of the gospel." We are its servants, not its correctors. God blesses an attitude of humility to his word.

(At this point, to demonstrate an attitude of humility toward God's word, Derek Prince stepped from behind the pulpit, held his Bible out in front of him and declared his submission to it. Then, to demonstrate humility toward God's people he jumped off the platform, knelt in front of a young lady in the front row and expressed his commitment to serve her as a representative of God's people. Without prior arrangement or rehearsal, the young lady then knelt in front of Brother Prince and expressed her commitment to serve him as a representative of God's ministering servants. This was a real act of faith on her part, as she had to trust the Lord to help her overcome a noticeable speech impediment. Brother Prince then returned to the platform and continued his message from behind the pulpit.)

Now, I did this in Africa but to do it here is not quite so startling. So, I've told the Bible that I'm a servant of the Bible and now I'm the servant of the church. If you could have seen the faces of those African pastors when I did this. "I'm your servant, I'm here to serve you. I have your best interests at my heart. Anything I can do that will increase your wellbeing and make you more like what God wants you to be, I will do it." See that?

"I will be your servant and servant of the whole church. First of all, a servant of God. And if there's anything that I can do that will help you to come closer to God, that would help you

fulfill his purpose in your life, I will do it for you." [this last quote was the young lady. Back to Derek:] "Bless you." You might have thought we rehearsed that but we didn't.

Let's go just one step further with Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:5.

> "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your slaves for Jesus' sake."

We have dwelt in the meetings and the worship on the importance of exalting Jesus—which is tremendously important. But, we cannot truly exalt Jesus unless we have first said, "Not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord." There's no room for a double Lordship in our lives. If Jesus is to be Lord we have to set aside self. Not me, but Jesus Christ the Lord, and myself, ourselves—your slaves for Jesus' sake.

That would be difficult for anybody to say but you consider Paul, brought up a very self righteous, pharisaical Jew, absolutely convinced that he and his brothers are the only people who've got a line to God in the whole world. That they have a unique claim on God and that they alone know God and can represent God. Then he sees Jesus on the road to Damascus and the first thing that happens, he falls off his donkey and loses his eyesight and is led by the hand into Damascus. Then Ananias comes and prays for him, he receives his sight and if filled with the Holy Spirit. Then God says, "I've made you my messenger to the Gentiles." Now you have to know, I'm sure there are Jewish people here today, but don't be offended. We live amongst the Jews both in the United States and in Israel. The word for Gentile in Hebrew is goy. How many of you non-Jews have heard the word goy? It means a non-Jew. But, I wouldn't say it's a word of abuse but it's definitely on a lower level. Here's this very proud, arrogant, self righteous Pharisee transformed by the grace of God, speaking to people from all sorts of diverse backgrounds and many of them the scum of the earth because Corinth was a great port city. And, it attracted all sorts of people as port cities do. If you look at the list of the people, Paul reminds them what they were. He said, "You prostitutes, pimps, homosexuals, drunkards, extortioners, everything that's vile." Here's this rabbi talking to them and he says, "We are your slaves for Jesus' sake." I don't think a human mind can easily comprehend the extent of what God had done in Paul to bring him to that place.

I'll give you just a personal example which is on a totally different level. Again, I hope I'll not offend anybody, but I was really confronted with this issue. From 1957 through 1961 I was principal of a college for training teachers for African schools in Kenya. All my pupils, students were black. I went there with a deep desire to share with them the knowledge of Jesus. I asked the Lord for a word when I was going to Kenya and he gave me one in Philippians 4:9. Don't ask the Lord for a word unless you really want to hear from him. This is what Paul says.

> "The things which you learned and received, and heard and seen in me, these do."

The Lord showed me very plainly it was easy to say the first two, the things which you have learned and received, do that. I remember the sergeant that first instructed us when we were called up into the army in 1940. He stood a long way away from us on the parade ground, shouted at us and said, "Don't do what I do, do what I say." I mean, he was very frank. I think some Christian ministers would have to do the same. Don't do what I do, do what I say. But Paul says that isn't good enough. The things that you've learned and received and what? Heard and seen in me, do. That was my challenge when I went to Kenya. One thing was that God gave me a supernatural love for those people. I just have to thank God for it, it was not from me.

I'd grown up, essentially, in a very white society. When I looked at Kenya I thought those white faces, what are they doing there? They're a blot on the landscape. They don't belong here. For me, black was and is beautiful. Ruth says if ever there's an African in my congregation I'll preach to him even if there are 500 other people there.

As you know, I mean, you've heard my background—it's not a matter of boasting—but I was educated at Eton and then at Cambridge and I held a fellowship at King's College, Cambridge. Academically and socially I was on the top level of British society—which is an objective fact, it's not something to boast about. When I stood in front of those black men and women I had to say to myself, "Can I really say to you, Not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your slaves for Jesus' sake." And believe me, in Africa the word slave has a lot of meaning attached to it. I thank God I could say it with my whole heart.

And there was an aftermath to that because 20 years after I left Kenya Ruth and I went back and we took our adopted African daughter with us who was born in Kenya. I told you the story last night. We didn't let anybody know we were coming. I had hardly corresponded with them at all in the meanwhile. We didn't give any advance notice. When we arrived there I was treated like royalty. They just couldn't express their appreciation enough. There's just no way to describe it. They said, "This is the man that founded our college." If you want favor with the eyes of Africans, start an educational institution, that's all you have to do! They said, "Where's the little girl that you took in?" They couldn't imagine she'd grown up. I said, "There she is outside." She was 20

years old! They were devastated that she couldn't speak her own language to them.

Anyhow, that's just by the way. I learned that if you sow, in due course you'll reap. Whatever you sow you will reap. I don't say that to exalt myself but it was such a dramatic lesson to me.

Radio Program

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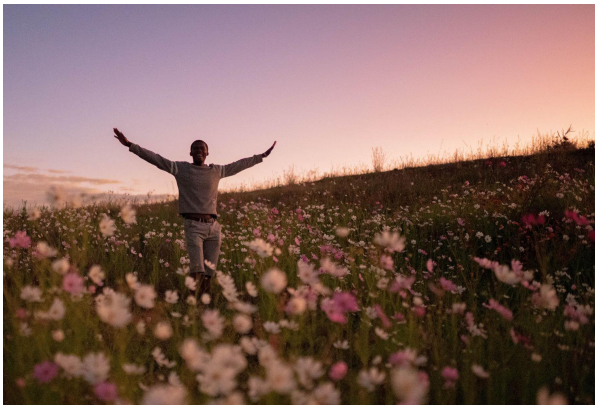


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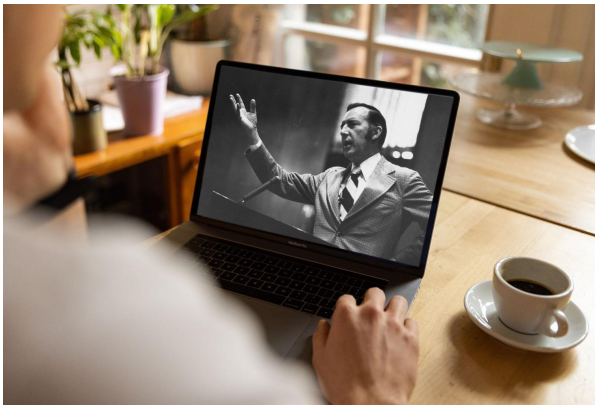
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