

SERVE TO RELIEVE SUFFERING

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat;

I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;

I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in;

naked, and you did not clothe Me;

sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’

Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or as a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’

Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for Me, either.’

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Matthew 25:41-46

READ: 1 Peter Chapter 2

Coming Before Lord God Adonai

Dear Heavenly Father, I come before You today to empty of myself in order to serve You by serving others with Christ in me. Surely Jesus taught us to serve the least of His brothers, that He is to be found in them. I pray and ask You to give me the heart discernment to see You in others; to possess the compassion that Lord Jesus demonstrated; to serve to relieve the suffering of others. In this, they will know I walk in Christ Jesus and that He lives in me.

Walk as Christ

- ◆ Mark 10:45 exhorts: *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*
- ◆ Surely Lord God, Jesus did not live in and for a celebrity culture, for His own vain-glory. I repent for buying into that culture and those values, which drive so much agenda, ambition and motives even for believers. I repent for any time I have

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sought attention or credit for serving others. Jesus did not serve for His own glory, but for Yours. I commit to selfless and under-the-radar service to others.

- ◆ Just as Christ Jesus was selfless, so am I called to be; as Philippians 2:4 says, “*not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*”

I Empty Myself to Serve

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:1-3 instructs me that in order to truly serve others by relieving their suffering, I must empty myself of my flaws and my agendas: “*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, and like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*”
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I lay at the feet of Jesus Christ my bad habits and character flaws. They no longer serve me and I don’t want them anymore. I empty myself of my own set ways of going about my life, of beliefs about how I am to be supported and receive support in this world. I empty myself to You LORD God and commit to serving You fully as You need me to do so. I trust that You will provide me what I need to live, so long as I am serving You in the fullness You are calling me to.

Service Cultivates Spiritual Maturity

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:4-5 says: “*And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by people, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*”
- ◆ Father God, bring to me and my awareness spiritual sacrifices and other sacrifices that will build me up as a holy priesthood, in order to serve You and others righteously and truly.

My Identity in Christ is the Foundation for Service to Others

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:9-10 tells me who I am in You: “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His*

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marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

- ◆ Truly Lord God, knowing that I have received mercy helps me to be in humility, which is a foundation for being able to relieve the suffering of others.
- ◆ Father God, as You have poured out your mercy to me, I commit to bringing mercy and hope to others as your emissary; to relieve suffering and to minister to souls.
- ◆ Dear Father God, John 12:26 tells me that when I serve Jesus Yeshua, then will You honor me, *"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."* I commit every day to seeing and recognizing ways that I can and shall serve my Lord Jesus Christ Yeshua.

Role Model Virtues

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:11-12 teaches me how important it is to possess virtues of discipline, strong morals and purity so as to be an honorable representative of You in serving others: *"Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God on the day of visitation."*
- ◆ Galatians 5:13 instructs: *"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I commit to bodily discipline, not over-eating or drinking; keeping my mind and body clear and free of mind-altering substances. We are not in this world of manmade values and laws, but here to live by your higher laws, higher standards for living. I lean not on my own understanding but trust in your standards of virtues as the good soil for my good deeds.

Honor Authority

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:14-15 says: *"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people."*

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- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I understand that a great way to cultivate true humility is to submit to someone else. I repent for my past rebelliousness and arrogance, for pridefulness and willfulness that has kept me in ego rather than humility. Surely I can serve You better in a submitted state, in true selflessness and humility; and I now commit to doing so.

Honor All People

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:17 instructs: *“Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I understand that it is only through honoring and loving others that I may evangelize them and bring them to conversion of heart and to your loving heart. Hatred, a critical spirit, disdain and prejudice are not conducive to inviting others into Your kingdom. I repent for these traits and behaviors.
- ◆ Romans 12:10 provides the basis for serving others, by honoring others above myself: *“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”* Lord God, I commit to thinking of the needs and desires of others before my own, to honoring others above myself. In so doing, growing Christ in me.

Endure Suffering to Cultivate Noble Virtues

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:19-20 says: *“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person endures grief when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”*
- ◆ Dear Lord God, I commit to enduring patiently my trials and tribulations, rather than whining and complaining, seeing myself as a victim. I repent for this immature response to life.
- ◆ 1 Peter 5:10 comforts me: *“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”* From this Word, I understand that no suffering is a loss. You Lord God, can use all that we endure for Your purposes in us. How glorious!

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Model Christ in Suffering

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:21 says: *“For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps, He who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return; while suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself brought our sins in His body up on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by His wounds you were healed.”*
- ◆ Heavenly Father, whatever suffering I have incurred is nothing compared to what Christ Jesus went through, beaten to a pulp, nails driven through His flesh; for no wrong did He do. I commit to embracing what cup of suffering is mine, as a means of becoming more like Him, as a means to overcoming my human nature, as a means to drawing into union with You and Christ Jesus, as a foundation for compassionate service to others.

I Was a Stray Sheep

- ◆ 1 Peter 2:25 continues: *“For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, serving You selflessly is the least I can do for You rescuing my soul, for transforming my life. Use my suffering to help me relieve the suffering of others.

I Share in the Sufferings of Christ

- ◆ 1 Peter 4:12-14 exhorts: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.”*
- ◆ Dear Father God, Jesus suffered greatly and served greatly. In this way, suffering and service are symbiotic; they work together in a spiritual alchemy to bring glory to

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God and good to man. I commit to embracing sufferings as a means to sharing in the sufferings of Christ, as a way to draw closer to Jesus and to be in union with Him. In this way, I shall grow my capacity to truly serve You Lord God, in service to others.

Serving the Nobodies

- ◆ In Matthew 25:34-40 Lord Jesus teaches us that He is found in the nobodies of this world and calls us to follow Him in washing other's feet: *"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You as a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'" And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me.'"*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I commit to serving the nobodies. Give me the discernment and sensitivity and humility to recognize the spontaneous moments to serve; for we are not to schedule our service to You around what is convenient to our lives.

Relieving the Suffering of Others

- ◆ Father God, I repent for all the times and ways I could have, should have helped someone out, but did not; through selfishness or insensitivity or blindness to the situation, through callousness or stinginess. God please forgive me.
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I commit to relieving the suffering of others; which can include feeding those who are hungry, providing for the homeless and those without proper clothing. I can give through money, goods, time or serving an organization that provides these. Reveal to me Lord God, how and where I can serve to alleviate the suffering of others. In so doing, allow Christ in me to minister to others.

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I Shall Serve Through My Gifts

- ◆ 1 Peter 4:10-11 says: *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*
- ◆ Father God, I repent for all the times and ways I sat on my gifts, been stingy and selfish with my time, energy and money. I repent for choosing only as I please how, where and with whom to give of my talents; rather than asking YOU how and where You want me to apply them. I repent for believing I should or will only use them where I will receive a clear reward for them; rather than giving selflessly of them. My gifts are from You and are to be in service to You, not my own agendas and ambitions. *“Freely you received, freely give.”* (Matthew 10:8)

God Loves Those Who Serve

- ◆ I take hold of Proverbs 19:17, *“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done.”*
- ◆ I embrace Hebrews 6:10 which says: *“God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”*
- ◆ I take hold of Ephesians 6:7-8 which says: *“Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.”*

Sealing Prayer:

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to me.
Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

Matthew 25:35-40