

“My Service”
By Brother Kenneth Ray
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We are not perfect, at least, not yet. I am thankful for many things. We have had several baptisms recently, and I had nothing to do with them—I didn’t even meet those people before they got baptized. I’m thankful for that; that shows that God’s people are about God’s business.

God has a service for each of us to do. We don’t have to be afraid; God has promised to watch over us. It’s okay to be afraid; it’s not all right to let fear stop you from doing what you know you should be doing. I have a theory about the weather: Sometimes when the weather is bad, say there are ice storms, people will call and say, “I’m not coming to church,” but then, they’ll get up and go to work on Monday morning.

Today I’m going to talk about my service, meaning your service.

Colossians 3:23 ...do it heartily, as to the Lord...

You should have shown up this morning for the Lord. I will admit that you may perhaps have better quality time with the Lord in smaller numbers; sometimes it just works out that way. It’s about providing a service to God. We have a bad tendency to talk about service in terms of first we have praise and worship, and then we have the sermon, as though the sermon were not also part of worship. What we really mean is that we have singing, and then we have the sermon; it’s all worship.

Mike Alford invites a lot of people to church. I see him at Bass Pro Shop, and that brings a smile to my face, but while he’s there, he invites people out to church. I don’t give him a paycheck for that, but, by extending an opportunity for people to come to church, he gets whatever “pay” he gets from his relationship with God.

If you are unhappy today, or if you are lacking something, if you have money problems, your relationship with God can fix that. He won’t make you a millionaire, but He can give you peace in your situation. Temptations will come; there will be times when you can’t find that blue shoe, and you’ll have to wear black shoes with your blue dress, but we’ll make it.

This past Wednesday night, I was able to attend Bible Study for the first time in five months. Tom Hanson taught, and he’s an excellent teacher. Afterwards, Bill Adams said, “It’s all about the relationship with God.” I wanted to raise my arms and shout, because I was so excited to hear that somebody got it, but most people wouldn’t have understood, so I had to keep that inside.

Today I can plainly tell you that the value of the soul is overlooked. The value of your soul is overlooked by others, and yourself, as well. I recently watched “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” because I have a young daughter and she loves that movie. In that movie, the children got all excited about the Golden Ticket because, to them, that ticket had value. Money only has value because we give it value. You need to know how to place value on your relationship with God; God has placed value on your soul.

Luke 17:7-10 ...we are unprofitable servants. We have done that which was our duty...

You know, we are at that time of year when a lot of people are talking about the “B” word with their employers: Bonus. Where I work, they have a tendency to say, “Yeah, you did your job; that’s what we pay you for.” There’s kind of an attitude of, “You want a pat on the back *and* a paycheck?” You know, God is only asking for your reasonable service (Romans 12:1). If He didn’t compel them to come in, then you wouldn’t be able to, either. People just won’t listen to anything you have to say about God or about church until their hearts are ready to receive it.

Value is not in a title; value is not in tenure; value is not how many Scriptures you can memorize; value is found in your relationship with God. Sometimes we have to deal with getting our feelings hurt; when I was a kid, my mother called it “pulling my lip,” pouting. Whether I can stir you up or not does not define me; my value is found in my relationship with God. You may not think that your contribution is important, but, without it, something doesn’t work properly. Half a boat doesn’t float very well; half an effort doesn’t float very well either. You need to make a full effort with God.

My last two points: The way you see it, and the way God sees you. Those two viewpoints may not agree on something. You’ve heard people say, “Well, the way I see it...” but they may not be the way God sees it. We need to value our own being and every other being. When Christ is not present, the soul still has value, but we fail to see it, so our choices may reflect lack of value for the soul.

You may think, “Well, why do I have to do anything? God is all-powerful; He can do anything, right?” But He almost always requires some human interaction. Remember when Peter was in a trance (Acts 10:10), but then he didn’t leave until the messengers came (Acts 10:21). You still have to do your part; it’s not someone else’s job to do.

