



the
Golden
Candlestick

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

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Volume 27

CHAPTER ONE

PREPARATION

Reading: Joshua 1:1-2; Deut. 18:15, 18; 1 Cor. 10: 1-2

In the three days of this conference which have passed, we have been occupied mainly with the matter of spiritual position. Now today we are to be occupied with the service which issues from that position, and especially with the servant of the Lord. We shall be taking note of some simple foundational things in the matter of service as brought out in the case of Moses as a type of Christ.

The nature of service

First of all, let us repeat what we said earlier in another connection as to the nature of service. What is the service of God in this dispensation? Our answer to the question was, and again is this morning, that it is the deliverance of a people from this world for the Lord and bringing them into the fullness of Christ. Anything that is directly related to that is the service of God. But it must be recognized that all the parts of the whole should be kept in strict relationship to the whole, and no part should become something in itself as an end. The delivering of a people from this world, the bringing of them into the fullness of Christ, will require a many-sided ministry. All the aspects of ministry and service are included. I repeat, it is most important that not one of them should be isolated from the rest, but that in every one the whole purpose should be kept in view. If we make evangelism something in itself unrelated to the whole purpose of the fullness of Christ, we have very largely crippled evangelism. If we make spiritual instruction something in itself which ends with itself and as apart from the other functions of ministry, we have turned it in upon itself, it will run to seed. The purpose of God is most clearly set forth as the fullness of His Son, and, in His thought, everything is to lead on to that and to

have that in view. Everything should have that fullness as its ever present consciousness. The initial phases of the salvation of souls should have the end of their salvation in view immediately.

You will see in the case of Israel that the Lord established that as a law, for when Israel was over the Red Sea and they sang their great song of deliverance, you remember there was a distinct place in the Psalm for their being brought into His holy habitation (Exod. 15:13). It was referred to almost as though it were a realized thing there and then. They were brought out and, in their language, they were already brought in. The end was brought right to the beginning. The book of Exodus itself is a patent setting forth of that, because it begins with the house of bondage and ends with the house of God. The Lord always has His end in view from the beginning, and it is a law of effective service that we never take things, fragmentary parts, as the whole, but have the whole consciousness from the outset.

I am quite sure that many of you have enough perception to recognize that this is just where the church has come to grief. This is one of *the* explanations of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the church, which is another way of saying the unsatisfactory condition of the vast number of Christians who have been Christians for so long. Salvation in its initial sense has been practically the whole thing for them, and there they stay. Others have got into the circle of teaching, truth, and round and round they go. It is a prescribed area out of which they do not move. Greater issues, other issues, are not kept in view; it is an end in itself, they are tied up with the teaching.

Well here we begin with this, to recognize what the service of God really is in this dispensation. It is, through all the divinely appointed means and methods, to bring a people out to the Lord into the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ, being the end, must dominate every step and every phase. Having seen that, and, I trust, accepted it, we can go on.

The correspondence between Moses and Christ

It is quite clear that there is a correspondence between Moses and Christ. The passages that we read in Deut. 18 declare it: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me" (or, as He raised me up); "unto him ye shall hearken." And you will remember that Stephen quoted that very passage as referring to Christ (Acts 7:37). That prophet raised up as Moses was

raised up was the Lord Jesus. And in the passage in 1 Cor. 10, while the definite statement is not made, it is quite clear from the whole passage that that is the meaning. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all did eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. And this is set as a part of the Apostle's argument that Christians who are baptized into Christ and have found Him their life, their bread of life, their water of life, must go on and not, like the Israelites, turn back in their hearts in the wilderness and perish. The point is, that Christ and Moses are brought together.

It is said that all Israel were baptized into Moses, so that this correspondence between Moses and Christ is a very real one, and, if Moses is a great example of the servant of the Lord and is a great type of Christ as serving the Lord, he must be constituted after Christ. If it is possible to say such a thing as this — “they were all baptized *into* Moses” — in a sense Moses became the personal embodiment of the whole nation. He was the representative of the whole nation. Into Him the whole nation was gathered. If that could be said, and he was a type of Christ, he must of necessity be constituted according to Christ, and that, of course, is the great law of his service and of all service to God. It is being constituted according to Christ.

It means that there is really a background of Christ in the life, a foundation of Christ in the life, that the service is proceeding from that which is of Christ in us, from that conformity to Christ which has taken place. It is not just doing things for the Lord; it is the expression of the Lord that is the service. We can never bring people into the fullness of Christ except in the measure in which Christ is in us, and that necessitates a very deep and a very drastic work, as is made perfectly clear in the case of Moses.

Eighty years of the life of Moses were occupied with this one thing — preparing him as a servant of the Lord. If that had to be literally true of us it would be a poor lookout. But it is a fact. It took eighty years of Moses' life to fit him for service. Some people think if only they could have a couple of years in a Bible college they would be prepared servants of the Lord! There are a good many tragedies in the church because of that false idea. I was tremendously impressed when reading the report of a recent conference of the leaders of the China Inland Mission in China. The question was raised: “Had the council any suggestions of importance concerning the type of worker needed? The Chinese pastor was asked what type of

missionary recruit we should accept for China after the war. His immediate reply was: Those with some experience in church work at home. Then should they come out a little older, even at the risk of acquiring a knowledge of the language more slowly or less adequately? Yes said the pastor. Church experience is more important than fluency in the language. If our task is church building as well as evangelizing, should not all our missionaries have some training within a church...?" I think there is a lot behind that.

My point, for the moment, is not the church. It is a foundation and background of Christ in a very real way and experience through which lives have been reconstituted, mental conception has been reconstituted, the whole conception of things has been reconstituted, all the resources of life have been reconstituted; and that is the thing through which Moses went, as we shall see as we go on.

PRINCIPLES IN THE MAKING OF A SERVANT

1) Birth into conflict

Let us look at this foundation and background of his life as the Lord's servant. Go back to the first phase, the very earliest phase. See what we have there as principles in the making of a servant. First of all, he was born right into the very battle for life. He came on the scene amidst a prevailing active hostility. From his very birth he was, as it were, brought into the clash of two realms, of two kingdoms. That is a thing that has got to be wrought right into us from the very beginning of our Christian life if we are going to be of any value to the Lord as servants — that we are born into a battle, we are born into a clash, we are born into a mighty difference which is a great and active hostility. I speak to young Christians for a moment. We really must be quite clear about this, that, if we are coming into a living relationship with God's purpose concerning His Son to be of any vital account in that purpose, we are in a realm of conflict and clash. The two things are at war with each other. We are, by our very new birth, born into that conflict. It is the battle for life, this divine life, this life of God. Pharaoh had pronounced his word that all the male children should be destroyed. Death had gone forth in sentence. There was a determination to swallow up all those born in Israel, and that is a great spiritual reality in our own time.

Satan, this greater Pharaoh, the prince of this world, has determined that God's sons shall not be. If possible, they shall be quenched; this new creation people shall not come into existence, and he is out to fight that very life of the new creation, to prevent it, and, if he cannot prevent it, he neutralizes it by any means. It is a terrific battle for life that we are born into. If we think we can be Christians and just move on in such a way that we evade conflict and get through easily, we are simply setting aside the very implications of our new birth. Moses was born into this conflict, this active hostility. We had better settle that, because that is going to work it-

self out all along, as we shall see in Moses case. It is going to make itself manifest continually, there is no doubt about it. We are in a spiritual realm, and there is a set against our spiritual life, and, if we are expecting an easy time, we are going to be greatly disappointed. It is going to be conflict all the way through and intensifying as we go on. To settle that, to recognize that, is a very important factor in our effectiveness. Service is based upon that.

2) A Life of Faith

Then not only was he born into the battle, but he was cradled in faith. With Moses it was a life of faith from his birth. You remember in the letter to the Hebrews: By faith Moses ... was hid three months (Heb. 11:23). It says of his parents that by faith they hid him, not fearing the wrath of the king. There is something there of very great value. First of all, our new life is, in its very nature, from its very cradle, a life of faith. We are going to find that out more and more as we go on. All that is other than faith is going to be sifted out. Our service to the Lord rests upon this foundation, that we are clear on the matter of faith. And you will know that those who have been most powerful in the service of God, most fruitful in the service of God, have been those who have been put to it very severely on the matter of faith, who had to have faith rooted very deep in their being. Faith has been a tremendous factor always in the service of God, and when we approach the end, when the purpose is being consummated, we must expect that faith is going to be tested more than ever unto its perfection. The final triumph of the church, of the overcomers, will be the triumph of a mighty faith.

But there was that other thing said about them. Through faith they hid Moses three months, not fearing the wrath of the king. I like that, because it says this, that they did not accept as inevitable the triumph of the adversary. Many children were being slain, and they might have said, hopelessly, What can we do against Pharaoh, what can we do against this great power? It is inevitable, we must give in, we must yield, we must let go! — accepting Pharaoh's edict and Pharaoh's power and Pharaoh's triumph as inevitably successful. But faith said, No, we do not accept that as inevitable! Not fearing the wrath of the king, they set themselves through faith against the whole force of the adversary and said, in effect, Well, many are succumbing, multitudes are letting go, but we stand out; we may be thought foolish, an isolated one in the midst of the whole nation, just

one alone taking this attitude — ridiculous, absurd; nevertheless, we take it! Many of the servants of God have had to come to a position like that. They are all going that way! It is inevitable! The church has broken down, what can we hope for? We had better do the best we can, make the most of a bad job, accept the inevitable! That is how people are talking about the condition of the church today — in ruins, therefore no hope for anything like the New Testament church. Faith says: While God's Word stands, God means something by that Word. He would not have allowed His Word to continue and to be blessed and used if it did not mean that that would be the standard for His people. I think Ephesians would have been lost at some time with many other documents that have been lost, we would never have had it, if God had only meant it for the first few years of the Christian centuries. It is with us, and that letter is a tremendous help and strength. What a blessing has come and still comes, through the letter to the Ephesians.

But what is it? It is God's conception of the church. Many people today are saying that the church has broken down, there is no hope, it is mere idealism to try and get anything like that. I simply illustrate my point in that connection.

It applies in many ways, and the Lord's servants, in order to serve God's full end, have often had to come to the place — Well, the majority may be going that way, they may have let go to the prevailing state of things, just capitulating, regarding the thing as quite hopeless, anything much better as quite impossible — but, but! These parents of Moses took the position of that ridiculous but. Faith made them singular, extraordinary, unusual, unpopular in their course. It was the way of God, for faith is the link with God, and when we are linked with God, what is Pharaoh, after all, and Pharaoh's wrath? You see the point. This is the kind of faith that is necessary to serve God's purpose, God's full purpose. We shall never have a part, an effective part, in the emancipation of that people from the authority of darkness and their translation into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we shall never play a part at all in this great purpose of God, unless we have a faith that will go on with God when it means going on alone with God.

I do not know how much those parents knew, how much they understood. Sometimes you feel that these people must have had some sense that this child was a child of destiny, they had some inner consciousness that something of God was bound up with this child. I think we have a right to conclude that that was so. The little phrase, they saw that he was a

goodly child, is, I believe, in the Hebrew, a child fair unto God. How much we can read into that I do not know, but I think we are right in concluding that they had some sense that this child stood related to God's purpose in the midst of such a hopeless situation. Faith rose up to lay hold of God's purpose, and faith withstood all that which was opposed. It was a lonely way, it was a way of faith.

I would like you to take that one thing alone and think about it and see how many things are touched by such a principle of going on in faith with God when everybody else is giving up. That is a law of service. So many have come through to be of tremendous value to God, who at a certain time as individuals and companies of the Lord's people, like the Moravian brethren in their first years, and others such as they, they have stood when the tide was flowing strong against them, everything was going the other way; they stood in faith in God and then what service they rendered to God! It was the lonely way of faith.

3) A Basic Experience of Divine Deliverance

And then one other thing about this early part of Moses life was this: He had a basic experience of divine deliverance; that is, there lay right at the very foundation of his history the fact that, but for God, he would not have been alive. That is capable of a wide application. What I see in it as a principle is this, that sooner or later, every man or woman who is going truly to serve the purpose of God will be brought to this position where the situation is impossible, utterly impossible, and now it is a matter for God and if God does not do something, then that is the end. Let me say this to young Christians. Some of you may have been born and brought up in Christian homes. Your life may, in the main, have been in the midst of Christian surroundings, associations. You may not be able to point to any day when any great thing happened in your experience like Paul's conversion. If only there had been an earthquake in your experience that turned you upside down, a most revolutionary thing. How much more that would mean to you! I want to say this to you — I say it out of my own experience — you can have just as real an experience of the Lord Jesus as anyone has ever had in that matter, even after you are the Lord's. There can be brought into your Christian experience a point where everything is at an end, and now, if the Lord does not do something, something that was never done before, well, that is the end! And you can have such an experience of the Lord from that time it will be as though nothing had ever been be-

fore. I am not exaggerating. My own life stands upon experience like that. After being a minister for years and being a saved man for years, to come to a position like that; there was an end of everything. Shut up in my study, I was saying to the Lord, Unless You do something that has never been done before, I am finished. I am resigning and going out! And He did it, something far bigger than the day when I made a decision for Christ. Suffer the personal reference. You can be a Christian and get through; multitudes are the Lord's — they are spending their lives as Christians and they are going to heaven, but I am talking about the servant of the Lord who counts, the man or woman who is going to be in this great work of bringing a people out for God into the fullness of Christ, having a part in that. We will never be effective in that until there is in our own experience something which is so clearly and manifestly of God as to have our very life resting upon it. If He gets His hand upon us, He will lay that right at the foundation of our service.

Sometimes the two things go together. With Paul the two things went together. He was apprehended, he became the Lord's and the Lord's servant. It very often happens like that. Something tremendous happens in a life and that life knows quite well that if God had not come in, well, it would have been a very poor lookout indeed. That is a foundation.

But my point is this — to be a really fruitful servant of the Lord, something like that has to come about sooner or later, a crisis where we know that our life is owed to the Lord, our very life we owe to the Lord, to His coming in.

Well, Moses, the servant of the Lord, knew that. You know the meaning of the name Moses. Moses means drawn out of the waters of death. He was hidden for three months and when they drew him out of the water they called him Moses. His very name was the embodiment of his experience. I wonder what name we should have if our experience had to give it? Drawn out of the waters of death — and that being his very name for the rest of his life. Drawn out of the waters of death, the servant of the Lord. Moses, the servant of the Lord. To know deliverance from death in experience is essential.

4) In Egypt by the sovereignty of God

We pass from that earlier stage to the next phase of his life in Egypt as he is growing up. I do want that what I say shall be especially helpful to young Christians, although it will doubtless have an application to us all.

We find next Moses in Egypt being educated. Stephen tells us that Moses was learned, taught, in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), going to school in Egypt, living in Egypt, being surrounded by all that Egypt had and meant. The sovereignty of God had this man in view all the time, knew him from his birth and before his birth, knew that for which he was chosen. That sovereignty *appointed* for Moses a place *in* the world while he was not *of* it. The sovereignty of God did that. Oh, so many, especially young Christians, are wanting to get out of it. If only they could leave their business and get out they would be better servants of the Lord; and they perhaps are being destroyed in their testimony, usefulness, by that restlessness, because they have not recognized that the sovereignty of God has appointed them a place *in* the world while they are not *of* it.

And what was the Lord doing in that appointment? He was using the very thing which in its own nature was out to destroy him, He was using that very thing to lay foundations and bring about formation for service. Egypt was still Egypt, hostile Egypt, and Pharaoh was still Pharaoh, there was no change. As you see by the story, that which was against the people of God was just as active during those forty years of Moses life in Egypt as at the beginning of his life. Hostility to what was of God was there in the very nature. He was made to live in that by the sovereignty of God, and God was taking hold of the thing which in itself was intended to be destructive and making it a formative thing in his life. We owe a lot to the difficult conditions in which we are placed by the sovereignty of God as the formative things for our very usefulness to God. The hostile things are going to be used to do such a work in us as to make it possible for us to destroy them later on and deliver out of their power. That is Moses. Go back to your work until God takes you out, go back with a new idea. The sovereignty of God has you there. It is all hard, difficult, going against the grain, you are not of it, you know it; but He is using it. Do not be all the time occupied with getting out of it into an easier position. We know some people just losing all their opportunities, simply being spoiled because they are rebels against their position. The Lord does not do anything to get them out, and it is quite certain that they will not be able to be of use to the Lord until they have accepted this as God's place for them for the time being, and sought to discover what it is that the Lord is doing by their being there, how He is using the very difficult things to form them. That is how it was with Moses; foundations were laid for usefulness during those forty years.

5) A Basic Difference

But another thing was evident. The feature of this phase was the inward difference and conflict and divergence. Moses knew in himself that he was different, he knew that there was a basic difference in him from the Egyptians. He was not an Egyptian, he did not belong to that realm, and it was something that was working in him and causing a growing divergence. The sense of the difference was intensifying. Sooner or later it will have a climax, but there it is, the working of a mighty difference. It is absolutely essential to this work of delivering this people of God for God from this world that there should have been in every deliverer that experience of the tremendous conflict of difference with this world in an inward way. We are going to be useless to God if we can settle down and accommodate ourselves in this world, if we compromise with this world and cover over the difference between us as belonging to the Lord, and them. We can ignore that difference, make light of it, and go on with them as though there were no difference, but we are ruled out as the Lord's servants.

What I mean is this, that, although in the world, this fact that we are not of it has become a growing and intensified agony in our hearts. Of course, a true Christian knows all about that. What an agony it is to have to be in certain things, to have to go to certain functions, to have to live amongst certain people! But that is a splendid thing. Can you as a child of God go on in this world without any difference being registered? There is something wrong with you if you can. Can you go on without suffering inwardly because of that difference? It is not that you want to be awkward, that you want to be different in a certain sense, that you do not want to be friendly and all that, but there is a fundamental difference. You cannot by any means obliterate it; it would be dangerous to do so. This is conformity to Christ; He was here on this earth the most friendly of men, the most compassionate of men, the most generous of men, the most anxious to help all, and yet there is a divergence, He is different. He is not one of them. He knew it, it caused Him to suffer in a sense, but it was the secret of His power.

And it is true that men and women of this world, who may pretend to despise Christians, who may show very little sympathy in a practical way, would be terribly disappointed if that Christian let down his or her colors. They expect something; though they show no sympathy and give you no help, they are expecting something, and if you were to let your colors

down, they would feel disappointed. This inward divergence is the secret of power. It was the thing that was going to lead Moses out presently, it was going to be in his very constitution something which created a burning passion for deliverance of men from the world. We shall never really desire to deliver souls unless in our own soul there has come about this deep sense of something from which to be delivered, so that you are sorry for them and would that they were where you are. Even Paul, with all his afflictions and sufferings, could cry in the presence of his persecutors: I would ... that all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds (Acts 26:29). It is an inward divergence — a law of spiritual effectiveness.

6) Denial of Self

But one thing with which I close. This very conflict contains the temptation to compromise. It sets up a strain. We are tempted so often to compromise, to let down a bit, to take the easier way, to give something of our ground, and therein lies the very essence of sacrifice, of self-denial, denying self. If we would just compromise a bit, if we would give something away, if we would only let down, well, there are prizes, there are things to be had. It raises the question: Will I let go the prizes of this world to be true to the Lord, and that I might be able in the Lord to deliver others from this world? There is nothing like compromise to destroy our power of helping other people. Moses, eventually, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb.11:25) — and we will not paraphrase that, or reconstruct it — there are pleasures of sin. Compromise could have meant a high place for him, a princely place in Egypt, the treasures of Egypt, position, influence, much more. But he came to a deliberate decision.

Was it worth it? I do not know what you think or what your estimate of Moses is. It does seem to me that Moses was the greatest man of the Old Testament. I do not want to anticipate it, but you will find him on the Mount of Transfiguration appearing in glory with the Lord Jesus at last. Was it worth it?

It is a matter of saying “No” to a lot in order to be the Lord’s servants — not for our salvation; I am not talking about salvation. We do not merit our salvation by any kind of sacrifice or suffering. Our salvation is free and full, without money and without price. But vocation is another thing. To be a servant of the Lord is a costly thing. The temptation to com-

promise has within it the very essence of sacrifice, denial of self. But that is the way of value, real value to the Lord. It is that that makes it possible for the Lord to say, "Moses, my servant." I think that is a grand thing. All the time Moses is referred to as a servant of the Lord, and what service it was!

These are things which we have to take account of if we are contemplating being of use to the Lord in this great purpose of His with which we are called. Some of us know just a little of the truth of what we have been saying. The Lord give us grace to accept it and stand in relation to Him as instruments to great purpose, for His Name's sake.