

# **The Parable of the Unworthy Servant (Luke 17:7-10)**

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**7 “And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? 8 But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”**

# The Point of the Parables

- Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings.
  - Jesus preached in parables to separate those who earnestly desire truth from those who do not (**Matt. 13:12-15**).
- This parable pictures:
  - A servant who is required to fulfill all the work that his master requires.
- Three questions are asked in this parable:
  - **“And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat?’” (v.7).**
  - **“But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?’” (v.8).**
  - **“Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him?” (v.9).**
    - These three questions teach three lessons regarding our service to the true Master.

# Lesson #1 – A Servant's Reward is Not Immediate

- A servant's reward is not immediate (**v.7**).
  - Servants of old did not receive an immediate reward (**Heb. 11**).
  - A bondservant's reward is not immediate (**Col 3:23-24**).
  - A suffering servant's reward is not immediate (**Rom. 8:18-25, 32; 2 Cor. 4:17**).
  - A poor servant's reward is not immediate (**Luke 16:19-31**).
- A servant must patiently wait and continually endure to receive his reward (**John 16:21; Psalm 27:14; 1 Pet. 5:6; James 5:7-8; Gal. 6:9**).

# Lesson #2 – A Servant's Work Never Ends

- A servant's work never ends (**v.8**).
  - Service for the Master is full-time work (**Luke 9:23; Acts 2:46-47; Luke 4:13**).
  - By serving others, we serve the Master (**Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Cor 8:9-13; John 13:12-17; Phil. 4:10-20; Matt. 25:31-46**).
  - A servant never stops serving the Master (**Mark 9:35; Matt. 23:11-12; John 12:26; Rom. 12:11; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; Eph. 2:10**).
    - If a servant works hard for the Master, he will receive a full reward (**1 Cor. 15:58**).
    - If a servant stops working hard for the Master, he will not receive a full reward (**2 John 8**).

# Lesson #3 – A Servant's Work is Thankless

- Much of a servant's work is thankless (**v.9; 2 Cor. 11:5-15**).
  - A servant does not do his work to receive praise from men (**John 12:42-43; Matt. 6:1-8, 16-18**).
- Although much of a servant's work is thankless, the Master sees all of His servants' work (**Prov. 15:3; Job 34:21; Psalm 44:21; Jer. 17:10, 23:23-24; Eph. 6:5-8**).
  - The Master "**knows**" exactly how well His servants are doing the work ascribed to them (**Rev. 2-3**).
  - Whereas earthly masters can lose track of a servant's work, the Master of Heaven always keeps perfect track of His servant's work (**2 Tim. 1:12**).
- In due time, the servant will be honored by the Master for all his work (**Luke 12:42-44; John 14:1-4**).

# Conclusion

- A servant is willing to do all that the Master requires (**v.10; see also John 14:15, 15:10; 1 John 5:3; Ecc. 12:13; Phil. 2:5-8**).
- A servant willingly chooses to serve the Master (**Josh. 24:15; Rom. 6**).
- Even after doing all that the Master requires, a servant recognizes he is still unworthy. No servant deserves:
  - God's good favor (**Psalms 68:19; Rom. 3:23; Luke 18:9-14; Rom. 8:38-39**).
  - The gift of Jesus Christ (**Isa. 53:1-6; Rom. 5:8-11; John 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:9**).
  - Spiritual re-creation (**Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:3-5; 1 Tim. 1:12-16; 2 Cor. 5:17**).
  - The providential help offered by the Master (**Matt. 6:25-34; Phil 4:19**).
  - The spiritual help offered by the Master (**Rom. 8:26-28, 34; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 John 1:8-9**).
  - Direct access to the Master (**Eph. 2:13, 18; Heb. 4:16, 10:19-22**).
- A servant knows he is unworthy of the Master, yet tries to walk worthy of Him (**Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10, 2:6**).