

ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

BIBLE STUDY, 01/07/2009

STUDY 12

THE SNARE OF SERVICE

Psalm 33:1 ó 3

The main business and the principal concern of the Christian should be that of thanking, praising and adoring that blessed One who has saved him with an everlasting salvation, and who, to secure that salvation, left Heaven's glory and came down to this sin-cursed earth, here to suffer and die the awful death of the cross, that His people might be "delivered from this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4). Yet, this ought not to terminate at the lips, our very lives ought to show forth His praise (I Peter 2:9), our daily walk ought to be pleasing and honouring unto Him (I Corinthians 10:31), our every act needs to be brought into conformity to His holy will (Proverbs 3:6). It involves a life's task, which consists a constant searching of the Scriptures with a prayerful and earnest desire to find out what is pleasing to Him, a holy determination to discover the details of His revealed mind.

"Praise is comely for the upright" (Psalm 33:1). But to see the upright praising God is something which Satan cannot endure, and he will employ every art and device to turn aside the happy Christian from such blissful occupation. He cares not what the object may be as long as it serves to engross the believer and hinder his giving to Christ that consideration (Hebrews 3:1) and adoration (Revelation 5:12) which are His due. Satan's aim is gained if he can occupy the believer with perishing sinners rather than the Lord of glory. Satan seeks to get Christians engaged in "service" as a substitute for communing with Christ. It is the dragon posing as an angel of light, stirring up the feverish nature and restless energy of the flesh, to find some outlet that appears to be pleasing to God.

Questions for discussion

1. What is the great aim and chief exercise of the Christian to his blessed and wondrous Saviour? Psalm 33:1; Revelation 4:11; 5:12ó14
2. What are necessarily involved in worshipping and adorning Christ? I Timothy 4:7, 16; 5:22; II Timothy 2:15; I Corinthians 10:31; Proverbs 3:6
3. What is it that in these times so often prevents the child of God from "taking heed" unto himself? I Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 12:1
4. What does this phrase mean "*they made me keeper of the vineyards; mine own vineyard have I not kept*"? Song of Solomon 1:6; Luke 10:40
5. What does it involve in substituting service toward others for personal dealing with God for ourselves and its danger?
6. Discuss the danger in any attempt to worship with those who are not walking with God, or engaging in works which are not really glorifying to Him. Matthew 7:6; I Peter 3:15; Acts 4:13

Conclusion

Our first great need is not seeking to minister to others, but ourselves being ministered unto by the Lord. Our highest privilege is not that of being engaged in service for Christ, but of enjoying daily communion with Him. Our first obligation is not that of being concerned over the welfare of our neighbours, but making our own calling and election sure. Our first great task is not to serve our fellowmen, but to serve our God by studying His Word, learning His will, and then doing it. Our first circle of responsibility is not towards strangers and distant acquaintances, but our own home. Our chief ambition should not be the proclamation of Christ with our lips, but the preaching of Him by our lives.

If we have not learned to worship God in the secret place, we cannot do so in public assembly. If we are not ourselves really following Christ, walking and communing with Him, it is but mockery to speak of Him to others. If we preach Him in words but deny Him in our works, then we are only a stumblingblock to those who hear us. If our "service" for Christ is robbing us of the time so urgently needed for the cultivation of our personal "vineyard," then it is a snare and a curse to us. Then "*take heed unto thyself*", "*lay aside*" every weight (Hebrews 12:1) which hinders you from running the race which God "has set before" us. "*The kingdom of God is... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men*" (Romans 14:17ó18).