**Serving God from Where I Am**

**Introduction**

1. We are to be faithful in service to God through all time and circumstances. Some are more challenging than others.
2. Satan is good at altering our perspective through the existence of the world, and our lives, in flux. He would have us to believe that we should not or cannot serve God in a particular season or experience of life, or that we cannot serve God as effectively.
3. We all have our struggles, trials, heartaches, challenges in life as we journey by faith. Regardless of the nuances of your circumstances, you must be able to serve God from where you are.
4. Where Am I?
5. Have an Unfulfilled Longing?
   1. Is there a blessing of life you’ve looked forward to that just hasn’t come yet?
   2. Zacharias (priest) and Elizabeth (his wife) (Parents of John the baptizer) – **Luke 1:5-7** – had no child but were still righteous/faithful.
   3. Difficulty:
      1. **(vv. 7, 13)** – years of prayer without desired results – Personal longing unfulfilled – children a natural desire, and blessing.
      2. **(v. 25)** – reproach from people – barrenness thought to be a curse (based on own fault), or disgrace (not able to fulfil role as wife/homemaker in childbearing)
   4. **Unfulfilled longing** – childless, single, jobless (fresh out of school), etc.
6. Let Down by Your Vision of Life?
   1. Is the way you envisioned your life not panning out?
   2. David – **1 Samuel 13:14; 16:13** – after God’s own heart (**Acts 13:22**), anointed to be king.
      1. Brought to cheer Saul with harp, made his armorbearer – **1 Samuel 16:21-22** – David found favor in Saul’s sight.
      2. Victory over Goliath the Philistine champion – **1 Samuel 17**
      3. Continued prospering – ***“So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants.” (1 Samuel 18:5***, NASB)
      4. Saul resented David because of his success, and the favor of the people – **1 Samuel 18:7-9** – David pursued and persecuted by Saul from that time forward.
      5. In the cave of Adullam, fleeing from Saul – **Psalm 142** – great trouble.
   3. **Let down by your vision of life** – not where you thought you’d be by this time, experienced unforeseen difficulty/obstacles, reality of life brought you down to earth (i.e. see that life is not all easy and positive), etc.
7. Weighed Down with Sorrow?
   1. Have you experienced great loss or disappointment resulting in tremendous sorrow?
   2. Hannah kept from having children – **1 Samuel 1:5-7, 15** – barren, provoked, woman of sorrow.
   3. David mourning for his son Absalom – **2 Samuel 18:33** – committed treason and drove David out (in sin), died.
   4. **Weighed down with sorrow** – lost loved one, life altering news, lost relationship, loved one apostatized, etc.
8. Facing Lasting Consequences of Sin?
   1. Have you repented of your sin, but it left lasting consequences?
   2. David’s sin with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah was forgiven – **2 Samuel 12:13**
   3. However, his sin brought on lasting consequences – **2 Samuel 12:10-15**
      1. **(v. 10)** – sword not to depart from his house.
         1. Amnon murdered by Absalom – **2 Samuel 13:28-29**
         2. Absalom died in his rebellion – **2 Samuel 18:14**
         3. Adonijah executed – **1 Kings 2:24-25**
      2. **(v. 11a)** – adversity against him from his own house.
      3. **(v. 11b)** – wives taken from him and given to others.
      4. **(vv. 14-15)** – child from sin with Bathsheba would die.
   4. God forgives sin, but the scripture is clear about the consequences that may last – physical, mental and emotional.
   5. **Facing lasting consequences of sin** – regret, damaged reputation, damaged/lost relationships, lost trust, remain unmarried, prison, financial burden, etc.
9. Feeling Inadequate?
   1. When you consider what God requires of you, do you feel inadequate to perform God’s expectations?
   2. Moses felt inadequate – **Exodus 3:10-11; 4:1, 10, 13** – making excuses and showing a lacking faith, however, coming from feelings of inadequacy.
      1. NOTE: It did not matter what Moses’ abilities were. God can use anyone for His purposes.
   3. **Feeling inadequate** – lacking knowledge (intimidated by evangelism), past guilt (though repented, feeling unable to restore others), lacking talent others have, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the responsibility, etc.
10. Feeling Misjudged?
    1. Are you in a circumstance or time of life where others misevaluate your abilities and usefulness in the kingdom?
    2. Timothy – **1 Timothy 4:12** – Paul told him to let no one despise his youth.
       1. **1 Corinthians 16:10-11** – let no one despise him.
       2. This does not mean that Timothy could control other people’s thoughts, but only his actions.
       3. However, even if he gave no reason for others to despise him it does not mean he did not deal with such.
    3. David – **1 Samuel 16:7** – Samuel told not to look at his (Eliab, or any of David’s brothers) appearance (if he did he would have misjudged him); **1 Samuel 17:33** – Saul’s initial estimation of David when in battle with the Philistines.
    4. **Feeling misjudged** – youth, elderly, injured or ill, background, past, talents, etc.
11. What I Must Not Do
12. Allow My Circumstances to Shake My Faith
    1. Stop believing in God at all.
    2. Fail in my faithful walk – **Hebrews 12:11-15** – not to let negative circumstances control you, embitter you, and affect others.
    3. God is not subject to change – **James 1:17; Psalm 46:1**
    4. The worst thing we could do is allow our circumstances to distance us from God. He is faithful – **Lamentations 3:21-24**
13. Allow My Circumstances to Limit God’s Use of Me
    1. Elijah – **1 Kings 19:4, 9-10** – victory over prophets of Baal, Jezebel seeks his life, Elijah sits under a tree in defeat, hides in cave, “what are you doing?”
       1. NOTE: We don’t always see the full picture, and must not make assumptions (especially that affect our faith/actions) – **1 Kings 19:18**
    2. Our confidence is not in self, but in God to use us – **Isaiah 10:15** (speaking of Assyria who thought their accomplishments were their own; arrogant) – we are merely a tool wielded by the Almighty – He can use anyone under any circumstance He chooses for His glory – we must not get in the way (where false-humility is exposed as faithlessness).
14. Serving God from Where I Am
15. Prioritize
    1. Without prioritizing – **Matthew 13:22** – word choked out.
       1. If these circumstances aren’t put in their proper place, it will affect our service to God.
       2. The devil uses these circumstances to blind us to what is most important.
    2. When your life is rife with ingredients for anxiety/worry – **Matthew 6:31-34**
       1. **Seek first** – priority above all else – any negative/unfortunate circumstances fade into the background because the spiritual eclipses it.
       2. **Kingdom** – entrance, citizenship, contribution, care for its purposes, etc.
       3. **His righteousness** – His standard, value truth, live truth, perform/obey His word, etc.
    3. When a priority is always available/accessible it leads to joy – **Philippians 1:12-18** – imprisonment furthered gospel, though some preach with wrong motives the gospel is still preached.
       1. Joy in the things of the Lord – **Philippians 4:4**
       2. **You’re always able to act on your main priority when the Father’s will is your priority.**
       3. You may think your circumstances put you at a disadvantage, but if your priority is the Lord’s will you are never at a disadvantage (**Philippians 4:13**).
    4. Such prioritization produces contentment – **Philippians 4:11-13** – learned through the joys of discipleship.
       1. This great gain – **1 Timothy 6:6**
       2. We must always be content with God – **Psalm 73:25-26**
16. Use Your Circumstance
    1. If we’ve prioritized God and His will, we’re going to realize that opportunity can be found in any circumstance.
       1. We will only be able to see what is negative through a fleshly lens.
       2. But we walk by faith – **2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:7**
    2. If we give careful thought to our situation, we will be able to see ways we can take advantage of such in service to God – **1 Corinthians 7:32-35**
       1. Context – **(vv. 25-31)** – judgment concerning wise actions to take under the present distress (persecution).
          1. Remain as you are **(vv. 25-28)** – avoid trouble.
          2. Do not be attached to the world **(vv. 29-31)** – it is passing away – i.e. prioritize the eternal, especially in time of distress.
       2. Concerning virgins, and whether to give them in marriage during the present distress – **(vv. 32-35)** – while single they can focus fully on the Lord and will not be tempted in persecution to forsake the Lord for the sake of their spouse.
       3. **(v. 35)** – serve the Lord without distraction – general principle even applicable now.
    3. Redeem the time you have now in your circumstances – **Ephesians 5:15-16** – when things change you will lose opportunities unique to your prior circumstances.
       1. **More time** (single, no children, demanding job).
       2. **Humility/sobriety** (things not happening as fast as you thought, realize there’s something better to pursue than what the world offers).
       3. **Empathy/aid/comfort of others** (trial/tribulation/loss/sorrow gives experience that can help others going through similarities – physical, emotional, spiritual, consequences of sin – moving forward).
       4. **Greater reliance on God** (feeling inadequate? Use that feeling to motivate diligent study, etc.)
       5. **Impactful influence** (youth shows spiritual maturity, aged show spiritual excitement rather than burnout, redeemed/restored show transformation – change is possible, etc.)
17. Wait on the Lord
    1. Written concerning the future judgment of captivity in Babylon, and how the Israelites needed to handle it – **Isaiah 40:27-31**
       1. **(v. 27)** – don’t doubt His knowledge or care about your situation – He is not ignorant, nor indifferent.
          1. **“God is not too great to care; he is too great to fail!” (Humphries, 412)**
          2. With His help, you can serve God effectively in the circumstance you are currently in.
       2. **(vv. 26, 28-29)** – look up and acknowledge who God is. (Demonstrated in history of nation.)
          1. **Everlasting** – always been there for help, always will be.
          2. **Creator** – unlimited power.
          3. **Not faint or weary** – no weakness, not man or idol.
          4. **Understanding unsearchable** – infinite wisdom, never misunderstands, always knows what is best, etc.
          5. **Empowering** – above not empty facts, but practical to those of faith – He acts for our well-being.
       3. **(v. 30)** – Understand the disadvantage without God regardless of your own perceived strength.
       4. **(v. 31)** – wait on the Lord and receive strength, ease of progress, endurance.
          1. **Wait on the Lord** = walk by faith (**cf. Habakkuk 2:4**).
          2. **Not run ahead** – **Isaiah 30:15-17** (concerning alliance w/ Egypt upon threat of Assyria) – taking matters into our own hands
             1. Acting on own wisdom, without God’s authority.
             2. Acting to pursue own interests instead of God’s.
             3. **Don’t rush into something and make an unwise, or unlawful decision.**
          3. **Not lag behind** – **Isaiah 42:24** – not obedient.
             1. Don’t become bitter and turn from the Lord to the world.
    2. **Proverbs 3:1-12** – we must put our trust in God.
       1. **(vv. 1-4)** – remember God’s word, keep it close, stay faithful to Him.
       2. **(vv. 5-8)** – trust in God by leaning on His wisdom/guidance/will in all actions of life – there will be benefit – He will make your way prosper because you have made His way your way.
       3. **(vv. 9-10)** – use what you have to God’s glory, and He will bless you. (Note: no distinction of abundance or want)
       4. **(vv. 11-12)** – embrace what God has allowed you to go through, knowing He loves you and will use it for your good.
          1. This describes a time when we may be tempted to doubt and question.
          2. Instead, we are to continue to trust.
    3. God will provide whatever He knows we need (physical or spiritual), and we must continue to trust and wait on Him regardless of where we are.

**Conclusion**

1. Where you are in life now is the exact right time to excel in faithfulness to God.
2. God’s help is abundant, and the opportunities to glorify Him are myriad.