

## Our Duty

‘The church choir director was frustrated with the sporadic attendance of all the choir members for rehearsals for the Christmas Choral Concert. At the final rehearsal he announced: “I want to personally thank the pianist for being the only person in this entire church choir to attend each and every rehearsal during the past two months”. At this, the pianist rose, bowed, and said, “It was the least I could do, considering I won’t be able to be at the Christmas Choral Concert tonight”.’

Doesn’t sound like that pianist had his or her head on straight. It’s kind of hard to do a concert if the accompanist is missing! Why play for all the rehearsals when you’re going to be absent on the big day?

In a way, though, that pianist is symbolic of many believers. They go through the motions of being a Christian, but when the big day arrives of Christ’s return, or much sooner, when their time on earth is through, will their soul be missing in action, or just missing? It seems that so much of the American church in recent decades has become filled with people who only attend for how they perceive it can benefit them. Of course there’ve always been many folks who do everything in life with a view of how it’ll promote their careers, financial position, personal prestige or status.

They're always in it only for themselves. We should all know without any question that such people are goat people, unbelievers, and not sheep, who are believers. In other words, goat people will find themselves on the outside of Christ's Kingdom when He comes and establishes it. It'll literally be to hell with them, for they never knew Him.

Then they're all these other people who occasionally do something selfless for the church and for Christ, but their hearts are not really into it. They basically do it to make themselves feel good every now and then. "Good for the soul", they think. Well, good for their souls only for a moment! Not good in the least for eternity! And not to mention all the other people who live in open rebellion against God. Such as California Governor Gavin Newsom who was sent on Thursday an open letter from 83-year-old, well-known pastor of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, John MacArthur. Newsom, using California tax monies, has bought billboards in seven pro-life states to promote abortion which quote Lord Jesus' words: "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these". In response, Pastor MacArthur wrote him, "You further compounded the wickedness of that murderous campaign with a reprehensible act of gross blasphemy. Quoting the very words of Jesus from Mark 12:31 as if you could somehow twist His meaning and arrogate His name in favor of butchering unborn infants. You used the name and the words of Christ to promote the credo

of molech (Leviticus 20:1–5). It would be hard to imagine a greater sacrilege”, MacArthur said, referring to ancient child sacrifices to the god molech.’ At that mention we should instantly recall God’s first command in the Ten Commandments. What was it? “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”. You see this abortion business violates the very first commandment of God.

If that doesn’t bother you enough, then the cold-blooded murder of a baby human should pain your heart. You should also recall that of all the creatures God made that carry His image, only humanity was given the blessing of reproduction. Only we can, by the blessing of heterosexual, monogamous marriage, create more of ourselves by bringing forth children. No other spiritual beings God made were given this ability. And yet, America and nearly all the world has gone along with the so-called birth control method of abortion. What it really is is the worship of false gods, demons who seek only our complete subjugation and control, that we may serve them. And serve them literally billions of people all over the globe are both consciously and unwittingly doing every day. Yes. Serving them. Giving money to demons!

Which should give us pause to consider our place on earth and purpose in life. What do we say at the end of our every worship service? “Go in peace. Serve the Lord”. And the congregation responds, “Thanks be to God”. But do we mean it? Hopefully, wholeheartedly yes! We exist to serve the Lord and His Kingdom. Doing so 100% brings us the ultimate fulfillment in life.

Problem is, in conjunction with our own errant and usually uncontrolled desires, the evil spirits, otherwise known in the pagan world in which we live as the “gods”, do their utmost to keep us from our destiny and fulfillment. They distract us, tempt us and afflict us at every opportunity. And so we start believing their lies that this is all there is to life. At best, we have fleeting instances of feeling the joy at doing God’s will, followed by vast stretches of boring time accomplishing nothing of eternal consequence. Or so it seems. And thus, so many people in churches all across the country fall into the trap of thinking that by just attending church they’re doing God a favor! How ridiculous, and shortsighted.

As our Lord is quoted in Luke 17:10: “when you obey Me you should say, ‘We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty’”. That’s right. Our duty. Our duty in life is to serve the Lord. This is the very point that King Solomon in all of his great wisdom, missed entirely. For him, God was in the picture, but out there, somewhere, way out there. And God is out there, somewhere, distant, because our unconscionable sins separate us from Him. Father God, Whose blessedness, goodness, love, and truth are beyond imagining, is wholly other than us, wholly holy, sacred, and beyond us. He is our Creator, but because we sinned, because we each have grossly disobeyed Him, ignored Him, gone our own way all too often, He can have nothing to do with us. If He came near, our sins would cause us to essentially be burnt to a crisp by His glorious holiness, and be vaporized into

a puff of smoke that finds its way to hell, a crisp that never ceases to flame and smoke.

But, He loves us. So much so that He sent a Substitute to be burned up in our place: Christ Jesus the Lord. Because Lord Jesus shed His blood on the cross, taking the punishment for our disobedience that we so rightly deserved, we can be saved. If we take upon ourselves His blood, as in a symbolic way we do when we receive Holy Communion every Sunday, we are once and for all, forgiven, made righteous, and adopted into God's heavenly family, becoming His sons and daughters. Forever. Even if we sin, and we inevitably will, hopefully not rebelliously, but when we confess our sins and repent, as we say the words as we begin every worship service, and as the words of absolution are declared, we are forgiven and cleansed, for *all* unrighteousness! And His acceptance of us, our position of adopted, *chosen* sons and daughters of His, brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus the Lord, is secured, forever, irrevocable, so that, as I Peter 2:9 says, "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's Own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" and II Timothy 2:12 "we will reign with Him".

Our Lord says in Luke 10:9 "does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not". But this is not the whole picture of us in our service to the Lord. Our duty to His Kingdom is no tedious, joyless affair. Quite the contrary. In-

deed, our Lord says in Matthew 11:30: “My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light”. No drudgery to serve Him. It’s easy. For He delights in accomplishing His will partnering with us. Though He’s really doing all the work, and we’re just His instruments, His hands and feet, yet, He so loves us, and loves our willingness to be used by Him, that He just delights in giving us credit for the very things He has accomplished with us. He’s literally giddy with happiness when we do anything according to His will. He chalks it up to our credit, so that He can reward us in the future judgement day when all believers receive their commendations and crowns at His throne. The crowns we receive then we’ll joyfully put down at His feet in our grateful, gladsome worship of Him, His majesty and His worthiness.

You see, at that point in time, we become an eternal part of His heavenly council. Our destinies are to be forever servants of the Most High God. But His service is unlike anything on this earth, with benefits that are so out of this world that our bliss and ecstasy in His presence is beyond our wildest imagining of Heaven. Like effortlessly swimming in an endless ocean of warm, soft honey, forever enveloped in our Creator Father’s love, so will our lives forever be. Exploring realms unknown in the continuous embrace of His love is what we look forward to. Nothing, absolutely nothing this earth subjects us to, no matter how horrible, will compare. We’ll hardly remember this life once we’re there. So, never despair. He is with us and helping us even now.

