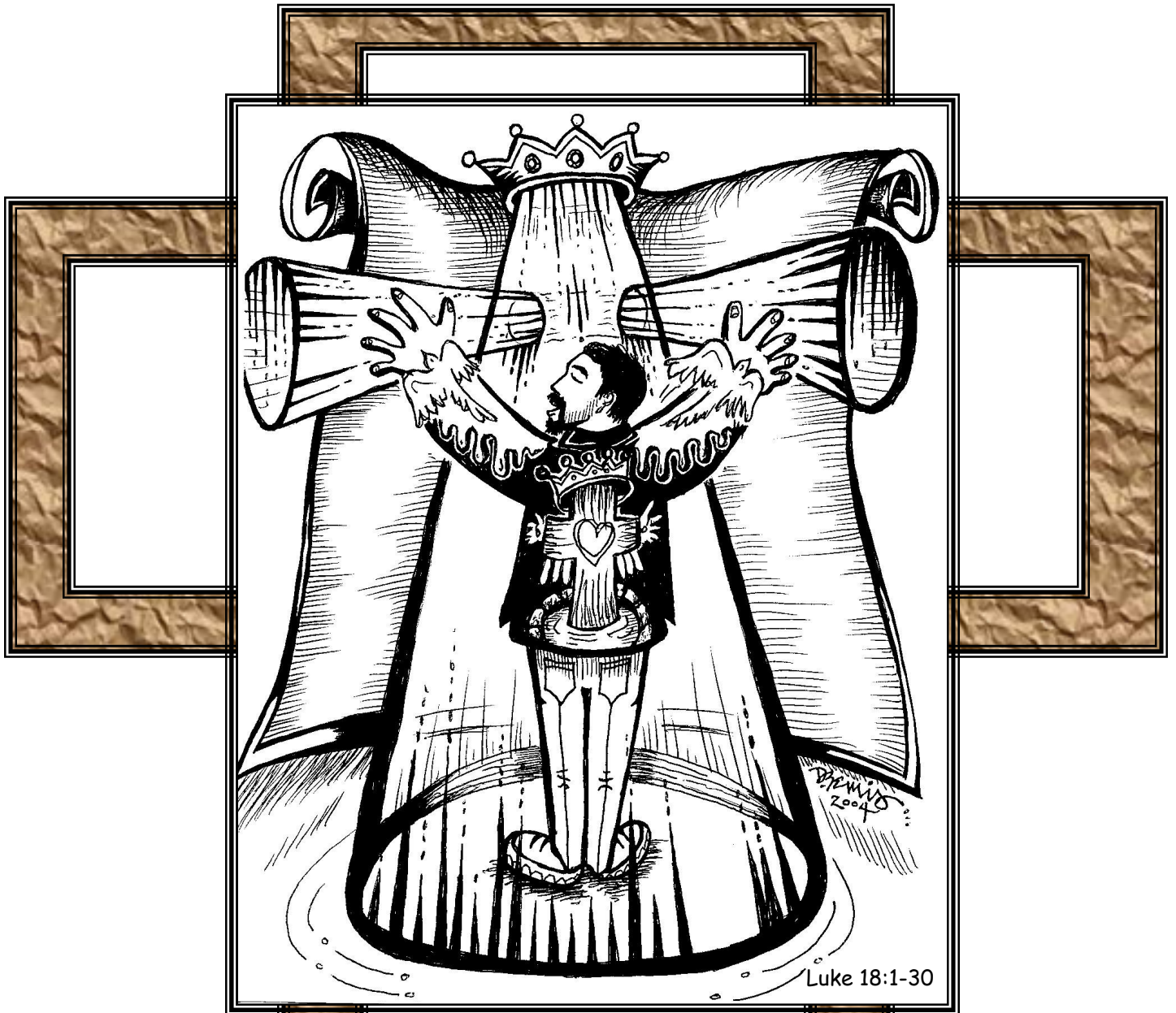


The Cost of...



Article & Artwork by Chaplain D. L. Bemis M.Ed.
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Ministry

THE COST OF MINISTRY

Cost of Ministry

I find many want to be in ministry. Many want to be on the platform preaching or sharing their personal testimony. Many want the spotlight but most do not want to pay the price for an anointed ministry. Any ministry that cost you nothing probably has nothing. Many want to sing for the Lord but many do not want to pay the price. The price might be diligently practicing as you develop God's gift.

Many want to perform before people and many want to hear their voices on the microphone but most will not pay the price of **preparation** to have an anointed ministry.

- What is the price to enter into a ministry for the Lord?
- What is the price to serve in God's Kingdom business?
- Why does the enemy work so diligently to keep us from paying that price?

Let us look deeper into what Jesus says about the cost of ministry. Let us join our hearts together in prayer to seek His wisdom and understanding about the cost of having an anointed, God-given ministry. When you have an anointed ministry, God has stamped you and your ministry with His approval by lacing it with a demonstration of His miracles, His power, and His provision.

Just imagine a time when all in attendance feel God's Holy presence through you because you have paid God's required price to be a carrier of His Glory. Before we go into our scriptures let us pray:

"Father, we seek Your wisdom, understanding and Your knowledge. We seek Your word because it carries a promise from You that it will not return void. Your word will accomplish all that You want. So, Jesus, shed Your Light upon our selected topic and let us learn directly from You. You alone are worthy and You alone were slain. Let Your Light shine upon our hearts, bodies, and souls as we soak in Your presence. You paid the greatest price for ministry through the shedding of Your perfect blood. I desire to learn as I sit at Your nail-scarred feet. You are worthy to be praised and You are worthy of me to listen to Your words of truth. Come, Lord Jesus, come, and be my Teacher. Amen and amen."

The cover design was inspired as I watched a man lead worship; I asked the Lord what the difference was in the ministry that he gave this common man of dust. The Lord said to me, *"He has paid a great price for the anointing that I have given him. That price is absolute obedience to My voice."* The man in the drawing is in the center of God's highest calling on his life. The man is clothed in humbleness before his God. The man is clothed in God's riches found in Christ Jesus. The man in the drawing knows nothing but Christ crucified, and on the third day risen from the dead. The man of dust knows his true place in God's Kingdom business. The man knows that he leads others into God's presence by being the first to enter into God's glory cloud. He knows that he should not play with God's presence because he knows God's word. He knows that to

minister to the King he has to be subject to the King of Kings first. The man of common dirt knows that he is nothing and God is everything. This man knows that he is subject to the King's authority. The man has paid a great price and has God's stamp of approval resting upon his one time broken-heart. The man knows that he is the Lord's and the Lord is his. Did you know that this man, at the time of this drawing, was in prison? He was a convict, prisoner, and a felon. All of this the Lord seems to overlook. Let me put it this way: the Lord passes over him because He sees the blood of the Lamb on the door of his heart, because the man has repented and has been tested. God Himself has proved him.

To understand the price of ministry let us search God's holy word. Let us begin our adventure in the Gospel of Luke, listening to Jesus. Use your holy imagination and be one of His disciples listening to Jesus give instructions.

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge

them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

The Lord Jesus is telling us that we must be persistent and we must persevere. There is no quitting in ministry. If we want the anointing we must be persistent and we must hang on until the very end. Many Christians give up at about the time their blessings are ready to show. Think for a moment about Joshua, who was Moses' assistant for 40 years. He did not quit nor did he give up. He stayed the course and continued to go forward. Joshua was obedient, submitted, and patient for 40 years as he waited for God's perfect timing (Joshua 1). We must pay the price for ministry by never stopping. We must win by going forward day in and day out. We need to be ready in season and out of season. We must be persistent in everything involving the God-given ministry that He has placed into your hands.

In the Old Testament, Joseph had a dream. His dream did not come true until more than twenty years had passed (Genesis chapters 37 through 46). In everything he would not give up. He continued to do everything right in God's sight. He continued to stand with God and God alone, even when people falsely accused him of rape. His persistence brought about his fame and fortune. His determination brought him into his highest anointed calling.

King David was the same (1st Samuel 16). He was anointed king, yet it would be years before he actually became the king. So it will be for us. We must stay in the battle even when we feel like giving up. We

must stay focused even when we want to quit.

Next in our text, Jesus is still teaching His disciples. Let Him teach you right now.

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

In this portion of scripture Jesus is telling us what is important to God: a humble hear. Remember what God said about Moses when his own brother and sister turned against him in Numbers 12. He said Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth.

Oh, dear reader, do you hear what the Spirit is saying to the church? Do you hear what the Spirit is saying to your heart?

To be in fulltime ministry or service to God, one has to have an unassuming heart. One must start thinking like God. One must start acting like God. Even our words and our actions must mimic the Lord. The price of having a real anointed ministry lies in our acceptance of our

lowly position. In all of this we must pay the price of preparation through the daily reading of God's Holy and proven word of truth.

I was going to a bilingual church and I delivered a message to one of the members of the congregation. As soon as I entered the church, people would flock to me and want me to give them a prophetic word. I liked the attention. But God stepped in and said that I needed to quit going to that church, for the people were looking at me and not God. I repented for my pride, and out of obedience I never went back to that little church.

Little David was anointed to be the next king after Saul, but many years would pass before he saw his anointing come true. In the midst of it all, David was a humble man after God's own heart. David would not touch Saul, even when Saul tried to kill him. David knew Saul was God's anointed and he waited on God. Our position is subservient, to help the Lord build His kingdom. His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matthew 6:10). We must ask God to destroy our pride so that humbleness could grow and bring forth life.

Many, and I mean many, ministers fail because of this one issue, the condition of their heart. Men and women think they can go and build their buildings and construct their own private kingdom. Many television ministers have lost their kingdom because they allowed their hearts to become prideful and full of themselves.

Dear reader, humble yourself before God, for He knows all motives of the heart. Jesus says you will be blessed when we have a meek heart (Matthew 5:5). You might fool

people, but you will never fool God. God will expose you and your wrong motives for the whole world to see. It is God who humbles a heart and it is God that will lift the humble-hearted to exaltation.

For me, this means that I consider myself nothing more than God's obedient donkey. I just deliver the messages that God gives me, just as in the story of Balaam and his talking donkey (Numbers 22). I am nothing; it is Jesus in me that gives this donkey the anointing which moves in people's hearts. I am nothing more than the obedient donkey that brought Jesus into Jerusalem. I bring Jesus into every situation. He holds the miracles, blessings, and the favor of God.

I started to draw one Sunday morning and as the worship was led by my wife people began to weep. They were touched first and foremost by God's holy presence. This is what our one-flesh ministry is all about. It is about bringing people into His glorious presence. When they are there, He touches the very core of their being. There in His presence is healing and wholeness.

Let us watch what Jesus does in this next section of Scripture as another example of acting in meek ways.

Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Luke 18:15-17)

We must start acting like Jesus. These people wanted nothing to do with children, and Jesus corrected their thinking and their behavior. In today's churches, many think the same way. They place children's ministry far down on their priority list. If you want a ministry that carries with it God's stamp of approval, then you will embrace His children. We must receive His children because Jesus tells us to do so. Many people do not consider the children because they do not pay tithes or offerings. Their heart is not moved to help those who cannot help the church to grow. We must partner with God to receive everyone, especially the least in God's kingdom.

We find, once again, Jesus on the streets of life and someone asking Him questions. Let us listen in and receive from Jesus His words of absolute truth. Are you ready?

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. (Luke 18:18-23)

- First, Jesus very quietly proclaims that He is God because He is good. He also tells us that no one is good but God Himself.
- We get to the question that the rich young man asks. The question is good, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
- Jesus then asks the young heart another question, “Do you know the commandments?”
- The rich man obviously knew what God’s word said. Did you notice that the rich man only kept those commandments that he liked? He did not want to pay the price Jesus was asking him to pay.
- He went away sad because he would not give up his earthly riches.
- The rich man would not give up his pride, but in doing so he gave up his joy.
- He would not let go of his money, but by doing so he gave up his peace.
- He would not give up his furniture or his house, but in doing so he gave up his mansion in Heaven.
- He would not let go, so instead of receiving a blessing, he received unto himself a curse.
- He would not pay the price for an anointed ministry and he walked away in sadness of heart because he will never reach his destiny in God.
- He will continue having his stuff, but he let go of his dynamic future in God.

My friends, this is not good. But this is where many Christians fail. They hang on to the wrong things and let go of the right things. If you will not pay the ultimate cost for ministry, then who is to blame? I ask you: why, then, do people blame God?

- GOD IS NEVER THE PROBLEM.
- GOD HAS NEVER BEEN THE PROBLEM.
- GOD WILL NEVER BE THE PROBLEM.

Many people will not pay the price by preparing for their God-given ministry to humanity. Others will not let go of their ten dollar-an-hour employment to grab hold of their destiny, which God will anoint with power, love, and even the King’s riches.

We have to let go of those things that keep us from reading God’s word. We must give up all excuses to follow God’s voice. I have diligently studied His word for more than two decades. After many trips through the Bible from cover to cover, my heart is full of His promises. My lips know nothing but the words of Jesus. His words breathe life into all.

One man would not give up his stolen items as God had directed him. He got caught and they forcibly took his treasured items of sin from him. He did repent while in jail, but he still had to do the time in captivity.

Another young lady would not let go of her destructive husband. She has been years struggling to walk in her destiny. She did not want to pay the price then, but ten years later she is still paying a greater price than

what God had originally asked of her. She and her husband were separated, and she took him back even though God had told her to let him go.

So, what are you hanging on to that will cost you more than you are willing to pay?

➤ **With God All Things Are Possible!**

Let us turn back to our selected text and continue our reading, and seek God's wisdom.

And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 18:24-27

With God all things are truly possible. If the Lord has asked you to do something that is beyond your understanding, remember that with God all things are possible.

I call this the "Nothing Anointing." God is more than enough. What He has called you to accomplish, for His glory, He can do. If the Lord asked you to do it, then He is able to complete it.

If it is the Lord's will, then it is the Lord's bill. I am always going to God with nothing in my hands, and He fills my hands so I can do His greatest will.

Peter told a begging man, "Silver and gold I have not but in the

name of Jesus walk." Peter had the "Nothing Anointing." With nothing he did everything, including miracles.

Pastor Gary in Lucerne Valley, California, also carries the "Nothing Anointing." A church came to him and said, "We have the biggest church in town but the fewest people. You have the smallest church in town but with the most people. So, we want to sell you our church."

Pastor Gary said, "I do not have the money to buy your church. We have poured our money into remodeling our little church."

The other church leadership said, "But you do not know what our asking price for our church is." With that, they told Pastor Gary they would sell him their 9,000 square feet church and the 2 acres of land that it is on for ONE DOLLAR.

The rest is history. You know what Pastor Gary said, "Silver and Gold I do not have but a dollar I can do, give all praise to God."

The cost of true ministry is in



