

Luke 17:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Analysis

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Jesus continues the parable with the expected master's response. The Greek construction **will not rather say** (οὐχὶ ἐρεῖ αὐτῷ, ouchi erei autō) expects the affirmative answer: "Of course he will say..." The command sequence is specific: **Make ready wherewith I may sup** (ἐτοίμασον τί δειπνήσω, hetoimason ti deipnēsō—"prepare something for my supper").

Then **gird thyself** (περιζωσάμενος, perizōsamenos)—tucking one's robe into the belt to work unencumbered, the posture of active service. The servant must **serve me, till I have eaten and drunken** (διακόνει μοι ἕως φάγω καὶ πίνω, diakonei moi heōs phagō kai piō)—complete the master's meal before attending to personal needs. Only **afterward** (μετὰ ταῦτα, meta tauta) does the servant eat and drink.

This isn't cruelty but cultural expectation—servants fulfill duties before claiming privileges. Applied spiritually: believers serve God's purposes before pursuing personal comfort. We don't negotiate terms with the Almighty or demand compensation. Our obedience is owed, not optional, and completing assigned tasks doesn't create indebtedness in God. This radically opposes prosperity gospel notions that obedience guarantees material blessing.

Historical Context

Ancient near-eastern household dynamics placed servants entirely at masters' disposal. The verb diakonei (διακόνει, serve) is the root of "deacon" and describes menial table service. The sequence (field work, then domestic service, then personal eating) was standard. Servants had no right to rest until the master's needs were met. While modern sensibilities may find this harsh, Jesus doesn't endorse slavery's ethics but uses familiar social structures to illustrate theological truth. God's people exist to glorify Him and accomplish His purposes—our comfort and recognition are secondary. The Incarnation inverts this pattern (Luke 22:27, John 13:1-17)—Jesus, the Master, serves His servants—demonstrating grace beyond justice. But the parable's point stands: we cannot claim merit before God based on obedience to His commands.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the servant's posture of completing the master's agenda before his own challenge contemporary Christianity's focus on personal fulfillment?
2. What would change in your spiritual life if you truly internalized that serving God is duty owed, not favor granted?
3. How does Jesus' own servant-hearted ministry (John 13, Philippians 2:5-8) transform the master-servant dynamic established in this parable?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ'	οὐχὶ	ἐρεῖ	αὐτῷ	Ἐτοίμασον	τί	δειπνήσω	
And	will not	rather say	unto him	Make ready	wherewith	I may sup	
G235	G3780	G2046	G846	G2090	G5101	G1172	
καὶ	περιζωσάμενος	διακόνει	μοι	ἕως	φάγεσαι	καὶ	
and	gird thyself	and serve	me	till	I have eaten	and	
G2532	G4024	G1247	G3427	G2193	G5315	G2532	
πίεσαι	καὶ	μετὰ	ταῦτα	φάγεσαι	καὶ	πίεσαι	σύ
drink	and	afterward	G5023	I have eaten	and	drink	thou
G4095	G2532	G3326		G5315	G2532	G4095	G4771

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:37 (Parallel theme): Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Genesis 43:16 (Parallel theme): And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.