

The Major *Ministry*



Yunus Ciptawilangga, M.B.A.

THE MAJOR MINISTRY

Ro 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

Serving or ministering is not an unfamiliar word for God's children, since according to the above verse, we are commanded to serve the Lord.

If we intend to discuss matters related to service or ministry, certainly there are many related aspects we can dig into. Therefore in this article we will discuss only two of them. Those are:

- The concept or perception of ministry.
- The major ministry.

The concept or perception of ministry

The concept or perception of ministry is among others described in :

*1Pe4:10 As every man hath received **the gift**, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

*11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God **giveth**: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

From these above verses, we read that ministry is in fact a "gift" from God. This is also mentioned in:

1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ;9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

What is the meaning of a gift ?

A gift is "God's grace" or "God's generosity".

Why is it so ?

At least there two reasons :

First :

God does not need our ministry or service.

Why doesn't God need our ministry or service ?

For the Bible clearly states that God created the heavens and the earth and all the host of them so perfectly, God never needs anyone to help Him.(Ge.1-2)

God also doesn't need counsel from anyone to carry out His authority and judgment.

Isa40:14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

God poured the waters upon the earth without help from any man :

Ge7:10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

God divided the Red Sea without help from any man :

Ex 14:21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Moses indeed stretched out his hand over the sea, yet the sea was divided not because of his outstretched hand rather because of God's power and authority by a strong east wind.

God provided for the Israelites during the forty years dwelling in the wilderness without the help from any man :

Ex 16:35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

Dtl 8:4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

Nu 11:31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.

Ex 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.

God took care of Elijah without help from any man :

1Ki17:4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

There are many more examples in the Old Testament, and also in the New Testament are recorded how God did everything without help from any man.

Ac8:39 And when they were come up out of water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Ac12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

In this life we often hear how God did miraculous things without help from any man. Years ago there were many of God's children who yearned to evangelize one area in Indonesia which was closed off for the Gospel. That's why many servants of God tried to enter the area to share the Gospel there. And we heard that many of them failed and were persecuted, tortured, even put to death in their mission. Today the area is quite open for the Gospel. Who succeeded in opening it? Was it evangelist A? Or evangelist B? No. We know that it happened because God Himself opened the door by the tsunami.

Second :

Our abilities are inadequate to meet the qualifications God wants.

Let me give you an example. Suppose there is a special celebration in the President's Mansion. What do you think, my dear readers, would we be allowed to serve there? Whether as speakers, as members of the choir, as song leaders, as protocols, or any other position of service?

I am almost sure that we would not be permitted.

Why ?

Because our qualifications do not meet the requirements for the service in the President's Mansion.

While our inadequate qualifications fail for some service in the president's mansion, probably also in the governours' or mayors' office even in less official services, why then would we be granted to serve in God's House, the House of the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth, King of kings?

Isn't it due to God's grace and mercy only?

I once watched a movie about a family where the daughter-in-law lived with the family. When the honeymoon was over, the mother taught her daughter-in-law how to cook. And before long the daughter-in-law was given the task to cook for the family. Many times when the daughter-in-law was busy cooking or after finishing her task, the mother gave comments on her cookings and the way she cooked.

One day the daughter-in-law complained to her husband that she felt his mother has treated her unfairly, because his mother who used to cook for the family before their marriage now after their marriage she just be there to give comments on her that this or that is lacking and many more. At the very moment when the daughter-in-law was complaining to her husband, the mother happened to pass by their room. The next morning at breakfast time, the mother said that in the afternoon she would cook again. Hearing it the daughter-in-law was naturally very glad, but she wondered since her father-in-law also seemed to be happy, and even her husband was very glad.

In the afternoon, they enjoyed the food cooked by the mother. Then she realized why the whole family were glad hearing that they were to eat the mother's cooking again. It seemed that the delicacy and quality of the mother's cooking was far beyond hers. Up till that moment not only the daughter-in-law suffered because she had to cook for her new family, yet the other members of the family also suffered due to the food of poor taste and poor quality they had to consume.

Likewise is our ministry in God's eyes. The quality of our ministry is way below the standard it should be.

If the quality of our ministry is so low, why does God allow us to serve Him? God allows us to serve Him only as a grace, a gift of God's compassion to us human beings who are but dust.

Some of us may think that they have exceptional talents, for example, a golden voice to sing beautifully. He or she may have won some prizes, awards or trophies, since a golden voice belongs to the rare, and certainly different from that of the congregation in the church, or from my own awkward voice.

In fact, even though our voice is so beautiful, maybe the most wonderful voice a man could ever have in this world, could it be more wonderful and amazing than the voice of the angels praising God the LORD in the highest?

Rev 7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, "Amen. Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

Actually not only our ministry is God's gift to us, entering God's House and praising God too is a gift. Today if we want to enter the President's Mansion, most likely we would be denied the feasibility by the guards. Suppose today is our President's birthday, and we long to sing a special song in front of him, then similarly we would likely be denied the opportunity to do so.

Who are we that the Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth , the King of kings allows us to enter His House ? Allows us to sing praises before Him ? Indeed these all can happen due to His grace and His Compassion only. Therefore we should be aware of our position and behave accordingly.

Heb12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Furthermore, Peter's letter also clearly explains that we have to perform our services with the strength God provides for us.

*1 Pet4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God **giveth**: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.*

What is man ? What power and abilities does he have ?

*Ps103:14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.
15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

Mt 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Jas 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Technology makes a lot of people so self-confident, as if they can do anything. Yet the truth is that we, as human beings, are not able even to create the grass we tread upon. We can only plant the grass we already have. We are not given any ability to create from nothing or from scratch, because we can not give life to anything to make it alive, such as giving life to the grass. We can only create artificial grass that does not have life in it to grow.

Therefore, every time we get a gift to serve God , we must do it with the strength God provides for us, since our abilities are so limited or inadequate, moreover if compared to God's exceeding abilities.

Isa55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

That is why while we have to accomplish every service earnestly, we also have to continue to pray to God to be given the strength and wisdom as to be able to

perform our ministry according to what God wants, not according to what we want nor to our knowledge, simply because our knowledge and abilities are but so trivial.

As we carry out our ministry with the power bestowed by God, through that ministry God's name will be glorified not only by those whom we serve, but particularly by ourselves who serve. Why ?

For when we do not use our own strength and wisdom in our ministry, but yield our ministry completely under God's power, then we will be amazed at His revelation to shows us the results and to make us understand. When we experience how God gives us the insight and see how He opened the ways for our ministries miraculously, that's when our hearts will be overflowed with praise to God, acknowledging Him as our true and marvelous God. We can sense the truth of the lyric in the song How Great Thou Art, "Then sings my soul ... how great Thou art" because we have experienced how obviously true the manifestation of God's power is in our lives. Besides, our ministry will become a blessing to others, since what we say or do is in accordance with God's Word and God's plan.

Why do we often hear that many pastors and Christian activists are fatigue, drained up and feel empty inside in the middle of their industrious life serving the Lord ? Because they serve with their own strength, not realizing that we human are but dust. Their lives seem empty, because they have never felt God's power manifested in their ministries nor in their own lives. Neither have they experienced how God gives some wonderful insight about His Word and His ways. This happened because up till now they have relied more upon their own wisdom and strength in their ministries.

The congregation or those whom they served also went home with empty hearts, because the ministries they received are merely a performance or a lecture. Today there are some ministers who even never pray for help from God before they preach. Some pastors are so self-confident concerning their abilities, yet if we observe closely what has been delivered, it was no more than scientific knowledge, mere human opinion and intelligence. So the sermon delivered was actually only a lecture about some knowledge, not about God's Word !

2 Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The major ministry .

The major ministry or service the Lord has assigned to us is mentioned in Deuteronomy 6 :

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart,

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto my children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes,

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

The above verses clearly state that we must teach the Word of God over and over again to our children, to talk about the Word of God at all times and at every occasion, even write the Word of God at the best or most prominent places in our homes.

What is God's purpose by that ?

Malachi 2:15 explains that God's requirement is a family with godly offsprings, children of God.

*And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek **a godly seed**. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

Also in Malachi 2 : 10-16, God emphasizes that besides godly descendants the Lord wants loyalty in couples, between husband and wife.

God very seriously desires that every descendant of God's child become a godly generation, even God once planned to kill Moses because Moses neglected to carry this out.

Ex 4 : 24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.

25 Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.

It was a blessing for Moses to have a wife who was wise and remembered the covenant between God and Abraham so that he circumcised his son.

Ge17:9 And God said unto Abraham , Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

Zipporah called "a bloody husband" because in the Old Testament God often revealed the relationship between God and His chosen people as a husband and wife relationship, and this relationship is characterized with rites of blood by way of circumcision.

Hos 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

From the above verses where God sought to kill Moses, we realize that the task to make each child of us become a godly child or God's child is a serious thing demanded by God.

We can not make any excuses that we are so busy that we may neglect this major ministry even if we are very busy in God's service, because if we examine closely when God sought to kill Moses it was not before Moses received God's command to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, but thereafter (Gen. 3).

This means that how important or heavy any ministry could be, it would never become an excuse for us to neglect raising and educating our children that they may grow and become God's children.

In the year 2005 when I understood this, I began to prepare a special time to talk with my three children about salvation in Jesus Christ, even though they had been attending Sunday School since they were very young and had also served in the church. I wanted them to really understand why salvation is only found in Jesus Christ and through Him alone.

Ac4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jn14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And after that I also needed to make sure that they all have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

Let us read the Lord Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28 :

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

And Acts 1 : 8 says:

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both **in Jerusalem**, and **in all Judea**, and **in Samaria**, and **unto the uttermost part of the earth**."*

So the gospel was spread from Jerusalem to all Judea, to Samaria, then to the ends of the earth.

We know that Jerusalem is a city, while Judea is the province where Jerusalem is located, and Samaria is a neighbouring province next to Judea.

This verse can be interpreted that evangelism starts from the smallest group of our families, which consists of a husband and wife with their children. If all in the family have received the gospel and become children of God, then we begin to enter Judea which is our extended families, meaning our siblings, our grandparents, our in-laws, our cousins, uncles and aunts, and other relatives. After that we should evangelize our neighbors, our business partners, our friends, and if it is completed, then we can evangelize the ends of the earth.

Since my background is as an entrepreneur, I don't know many pastors nor Christian activists.

But of the few of them whom I know, I found out that in at least four families they have lost a son or daughter who turned to other religions.

We certainly did not expect anything like this to happen in our lives. Therefore give more time to bring up and educate our children to love and fear the Lord Jesus Christ. Be sure that all of our children become God's children.