

**A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP  
PSALMS OF ASCENT**

**FOCUSSING ON GOD - SERVICE**

**Text: Psalm 123**

**Key Word:** Service

**Key Thought:** Serving God Is a Great Privilege That God Gives to us

These Psalms are not a complete rule book on life but rather a series of snapshots of how the game is played. We clearly see what happens to a person of faith who goes about the business of believing, loving and following God. As we mature in our Christian walk we soon recognize the need to develop our service skills. The Psalms are a compilation of truth placed into song.

Psalm 23 shows us the life of the Shepherd, while Psalm 123 shows us a picture of a servant. When we accept God into our life we surrender to His leadership over our affairs. We enter into His yoke which is both easy and light. We are set free from the bondage of this world by choosing to serve a new Master.

"Life is like a game of tennis; the player who serves well seldom loses."

Anonymous

**1778 Half the World "Not Free"**

**\*\*\*** A global survey of political and civil liberty indicates that personal freedom diminished in the 1970's for 85,000,000 people in 7 countries.

The assessment was made by Freedom House, a New York based non-profit organization that rates nations as free, partly free, or not free.

Sixty-six countries with 42% of the world's population were termed "not free." The survey listed 1% fewer people in the free category than a year earlier. **\*\*\***

This Psalm helps us to understand some of the changes that take place as we surrender to Jesus as our Lord and Master. **There are at least 3 things that become apparent in our new life.**

- I. OUR POSITION (Psalm 123:1)**
- II. OUR EXPECTATION (Psalm 123:2)**
- III. OUR URGENCY (Psalm 123:3-4)**

## I. OUR POSITION (Psalm 123:1)

*"I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven."*

*Psalm 123:1*

A person of new found faith looks up to God, not down at Him. It is our new position. It is one based upon respect. It is a position which can offer us much release of heavy pressures. We do not look to the hills for our help but rather the Maker of the hills.

When Jesus came to this earth He took upon Himself the form of a man in order to serve us. We must be careful though, that we don't start ordering Him to do what we want. Instead, we should be using His example as the pattern for our lives. We must take the form of a servant in order to be conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

When the Bible speaks about God's throne in the heavens it is not so much emphasizing some geographical location. It is rather to emphasize the profound relationship between God and His people; the Creator and the created.

If we want to understand God, we must come to Him on His terms. He is the One who is enthroned. He gives us the privilege to be seated together with Him in authority (Ephesians 1:20; 2:6) but not literally. Only God sits literally on His throne. We must look up to Him to see Him. He is seated in lofty places.

*"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name  
10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father."*

*Philippians 2:9-11*

"Do not seek or ask for exaltation - that is God's work. Let us take no place before God or man but that of a servant."

[Andrew Murray](#)

*"The greatest among you will be your servant."*

*Matthew 23:11*

## II. OUR EXPECTATION (Psalm 123:2)

*"As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy."*

*Psalm 123:2*

A person in this new position is much more attentive to the responses of the Master. Slaves would constantly be looking to their master in order to fulfill their every desire. Often words were never spoken - gestures were sufficient. Simple hand movements or eye motions communicated a wealth of information.

There were at least 5 things that every slave was expecting from their master at any time.

**1. Their Direction** - A servant did not choose to do things on his own. He always took orders from the master before making a step.

*"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD;"*

*Psalm 37:23*

**2. Their Provision** - There was no doubt that in their culture a slave would perish without the master's provision. No servant was allowed to take food without permission. God still supplies our daily needs.

*"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."*

*Philippians 4:19*

**3. Their Protection** - No servant would take a matter into his own hands to correct it. Oppositions, the righting of wrongs and the elimination of injury were all a duty of the master.

*"I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"*

*Psalm 91:2*

**4. Their Correction** - Every servant was at the mercy of their master. God does not take pleasure in having to correct us in our ways and attitudes. It is His love that does so.

*"but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness."*

*Hebrews 12:10b*

## II. OUR EXPECTATION (Psalm 123:2) (Contd.)

**5. Their Compensation** - Can you picture the joy on the face of a servant who is summoned to receive a reward for faithful service? So do we look toward our Master for His approval of our ministry and compensation for a job well done.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"*

*Matthew 25:21,23*

Let us watch with great expectancy for the mercy of our God to be poured out upon us.

## III. OUR URGENCY (Psalm 123:3-4)

*"Have mercy on us. O LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt.  
4. We have endured much ridicule from the proud, and much contempt from the arrogant."*

*Psalms 123:3,4*

There are 3 times in this chapter that the Psalmist cries out for the mercy of God. This was a time in history when slavery was institutionalized. It has never worked well at any time in our history. **Power breeds oppression.**

We live in a similar slavery. Even though we have basically abolished slavery and the servant class, we still witness an oppressive slavery. We often hear the cry for freedom. People want to be set free to make their own decisions and then often enter into another form of bondage. **MANY PEOPLE TRADE MASTERS YET STAY ENSLAVED.**

People have become enslaved to leisure; addictions and compulsive habits; oppressive thoughts and actions. We do not need more freedom. **What we Do need is more responsibility for the freedoms we already enjoy.**

There is little mercy with men. There are many places in Scripture when God's people turned to the mercy of God. One such case was in the life of David. The king sent forth Joab, the commander of his army to take a census of the fighting men of the land (II Samuel 24:1,2). It took 9 months and 21 days to complete. As soon as David heard the total of 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah he was conscience-stricken (II Samuel 24:10).

### III. OUR URGENCY (Psalm 123:3-4)

The prophet Gad arrived the next morning with 3 choices.

1. 3 years of famine
2. 3 months fleeing from their enemies
3. 3 days of the Lord's plague

David chose the later. His reasoning told us why.

*"David said to Gad, 'I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, **for his mercy is great**; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.'"*

*II Samuel 24:14*

God did respond in a merciful way. David knew that men of war would not be so merciful. Every nation in the world is in constant need of the mercy of God. There is urgency in the air.

We again need to lay ourselves on the altar of God and plea for His mercy.

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."*

*Romans 12:1*

These final 4 chapters are a commentary of Psalm 123. They teach us how this Psalm can be lived out in our daily Christian walk. It offers an abundance of practical examples for life.

Have you discovered the joy of becoming a servant of God? Have you travelled far enough in your Christian journey to realize that being a servant is the key to exaltation in God's kingdom? Have you accepted the fact that the greatest must be the least in God's thinking?

If so, you've discovered the truth of Psalm 123. It places life in its proper perspective. It allows us to relax and enjoy the roses of life. It lifts the unnecessary burdens from our shoulders. It is the only place for a child of God to grow.

If you haven't allowed this truth to be demonstrated in your life, I would strongly encourage you to humble yourself before the mighty hand of God so He can lift you up. Look to Him for he will never fail you. Trust in Him because He will never leave you forsaken. **In your pilgrimage, don't forsake the step of becoming a servant.**

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Date: May 1/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Change my Heart O God - C

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*Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:20; 2:6; Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 23:11*

**II. OUR EXPECTATION (Psalm 123:2) - Psalm 123:2**

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- 2. Their Provision** - *Philippians 4:19*
- 3. Their Protection** - *Psalm 91:2*
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- 5. Their Compensation** - *Matthew 25:21,23*

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