

QUIET TALKS ON  
SERVICE

BY

S. D. GORDON

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By S. D. Gordon

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## Personal Contact With Jesus: The Beginning of Service. (John 1:35-51.)

### **The Beginning of an Endless Friendship.**

About a quarter of four one afternoon, three young men were standing together on a road leading down to a swift-running river. It was an old road, beaten down hard by thousands of feet through hundreds of years. It led down to the river, and then along its bank through a village scatteringly nestled by the fords of the river. The young men were intently absorbed in conversation.

One of them was a man to attract attention anywhere. He was clearly the leader of the three. His clothing was very plain, even to severeness. His face was spare, suggesting a diet as severely plain as his garments. The abundance of dark hair on head and face brought out sharply the spare, thoughtful, earnest look of his face. His eyes glowed like coals of living fire beneath the thick, bushy eyebrows. He talked quietly but intensely. There was a subdued vigor and force about his very person.

One of the others was a very different type of man. He was intense too, like the leader, but there was a fineness and a far-looking depth about his eye such as suggests a gray eye rather than a black. His hair was softer and finer, and his skin too. In him intensity seemed to blend with a fine grain in his whole make-up. The third man was a quiet, matter-of-fact looking fellow. He did not talk much, except to ask an occasional question. The three men were engaged in earnest conversation, when a fourth man, a stranger, came down the road and, passing the three by, went on ahead.

The leader of the three called the attention of his companions to the stranger. At once they leave his side and go after the stranger. As they nearly catch up to him, he unexpectedly turns and in a kindly voice asks, "Whom are you looking for?" Taken aback by the unexpected question, they do not answer, but ask where he is going. Quickly noticing the point of their question, he cordially says, "Come over and take tea with me."

They gladly accepted the invitation, and spent the evening with him. And the friendship begun that day continued to the end of their lives. Both became his dear friends. And one, the fine-grained, intense man, became his closest bosom friend. He never forgot that day. When he came years after to write about his hospitable friend, found that afternoon, he could remember every particular of their first meeting. We must always be grateful to John for his simple, full account of his first meeting with Jesus.

The Triple Life:  
The Perspective of Service.  
(Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-3, 17; John 20:19-  
23; Matthew 28:18-20.)

On An Errand for Jesus.

You remember there were four times that Jesus picked out a group of men, and sent them on a special errand. About the middle of the second year of His public life, He chose out twelve men and commissioned them for a special bit of work. Six months before the tragic end, He chose seventy others and sent them out in twos into all the places He was planning to visit Himself. It was a remarkable campaign for carrying the news which He was preaching into all the villages of that whole country through which His journey south lay.

Then the evening of that never-to-be-forgotten resurrection day, under wholly changed conditions, He again commissions ten men of that first twelve. Things had radically changed with Jesus. And there had been a bad break in the loyalty of these men. Two of their number are ab-

sent. Judas has gone to his own place, and Thomas was not there that evening. His absence cost him a week of doubting and mental distress. Ten of the old inner circle are commissioned anew. And then do you remember the last time they were together? It was about six weeks later, on the rounded top of the old Olives Mount, the eleven men with the Master. Four times He commissioned a group of men for some service He wanted done.

There are two things in these four commissions that make them alike. The same two things are in each. The first thing is this: they are bidden to "go." That ringing word "go ye" is in, each time. "As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you." It is a familiar word to every follower of Jesus then, and now, and always. A true follower of His always is stirred by a spirit of "go." A going Christian is a growing Christian. A going church has always been a growing church. Those ages when the church lost the vision of her Master's face on Olives, and let other sounds crowd out of her ears the sound of His voice, were stagnant ages. They are commonly spoken of in history as the dark ages. "Go" is the ringing keynote of the Christian life, whether in a man or in the church.

The second thing found always in each of these commissions is this: they were qualified, or empowered to go. Whom God calls He always qualifies. Where His voice comes His Spirit breathes. If there has come to you some bit of a call to service, to teach a class, or write a special letter, or speak a word, or take up something needing to be done. And you hesitate. You think that you cannot. You are not fit, you think, not qualified. The thing to do is to do it.

Yokefellows:

The Rhythm of Service.

(Matthew 11. 25-30; Luke 10:1, 17, 21-24.)

**The Master's Invitation.**

It was about six months before the tragic end that Jesus sent out thirty-five deputations of two each. He was beginning that slow memorable journey south that ended finally at the cross. These men are sent ahead to prepare the way. By and by they return and make a glad exultant report of the good results attending their work. Even the demons had acknowledged the power of Jesus' name on their lips.

As He was listening Jesus looked up, and said, "Father, I thank Thee." And then, as though He could see those great crowds to whom they had been ministering in His name, He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

There are two invitations here, "come" and "take." There are two sorts of people. Those who are tugging and straining at work, and carrying heavy burdens, and then those who have received rest, and are now asked to go a step farther. There are two kinds of rest, a given rest, and a found rest. The given rest cannot be found. It comes as a sheer out gift, from Jesus' own hand. The found rest cannot be given, may I say? It comes stealing its gentle way in as one fits into Jesus' plan for his life.

Many folks have accepted the first of these invitations. They have "come" to Jesus, and received sweet rest from His hand. But they have gone no farther. At the close of that first invitation there is a punctuation period, a full stop. Some of the old schoolbooks used to say that one should stop at a period and count four. Well, a great many people have followed that old rule here, and more than followed. They have stopped at that period, and never gotten past it. I want just now to ask you to come with me as we talk together a bit about this second invitation, "Take My yoke."

Jesus used several different words in tying people up to Himself. There is a growth in them, as He draws us nearer and nearer. First always is the invitation "Come unto Me." That means salvation, life. Then He says, "Follow Me," "Come after Me." That means discipleship. "Learn of Me" means training in discipleship. "Yoke up with Me" means closest fellowship. "Abide in Me" leads one out into abundant life. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," means living Jesus' life over again. And then the last "Go ye" is the outer reach of all, service for a world.