

I'm Yours (The Lord's Servant)

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[0 : 00] Ladies, there are two words I think that people want to avoid.

! Yet in the Bible, that is one of the great honors to be bestowed upon a human being, to be called a servant.

And surrender implies loss. Yet again, that is the quest of the true disciple of Jesus, or should be. It's an old gospel song we haven't heard in a long time, but it came to mind as I was reflecting on this passage.

It says, I'm yours, Lord. Everything I am, everything I'm not. I'm yours, Lord. See if I can be completely yours. Is this your earnest prayer?

To be a servant who will surrender to her Lord. Now let me read the passage. Luke chapter 1. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

[1 : 30] To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He came to her and said, greetings, oh favorite one.

The Lord is with you. But she was greatly troubled at that saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, how will this be, since I'm a virgin?

And the angel answered her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God.

[2 : 39] And behold, your relative Elizabeth, in her old age, has also conceived the Son. And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her. Is this your earnest prayer, ladies, to be a servant who is surrendered to her Lord?

We're all familiar with this passage. It's, if you've been around the church or just watched TV at Christmas time, you know about this passage. The time has come for God the Father to send God the Son, the Savior of humanity, into the world.

And he could have chosen to send his Son as a full-grown adult. Full-grown adult male coming out of the desert in mystery with divine light all around him.

[3 : 52] But he didn't. In order for the Son of God to be our Savior, he had to have our nature. How to do this then? Well, he had to be born like everyone else, yet unlike everyone else.

And the angel Gabriel, he who stands in the presence of the Lord, has already been sent to tell another aged couple that they will have a miraculous conception.

And have a birth in their old age. And their son would be John the Baptist, the cousin of the Lord Jesus, actually, we believe. He would be the herald of the Son of God.

So then a few months later, this is where our scene comes in. Gabriel is dispatched to prepare a young woman for her role as the servant of the Lord. So I got three or so points, ladies.

Eh, three and a little one at the end. First of all, the Lord's servant is one who has found favor with the Lord. Taking that right out of the text, the same language.

[4 : 59] Verse 30. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Now listen, Gabriel is not sent to a princess, but to a peasant girl.

An ordinary girl. She's a teen. We know this is true. She's a teen, likely not more than 14 years old, somewhere around there. Because girls in that time and place were given in marriage by their parents at their age.

That was their culture. What I want you to know is how this angel sent from God greets her in verse 28.

Greetings, oh favorite one. The Lord is with you. Then in verse 30, she is said to have found favor with the Lord.

You see, Mary, ladies, joins the awesome list of those in the Bible who it is stated that they found favor with God. I'll just give you the list of names.

[6 : 01] Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, David. All of them were said to have found favor with the Lord. Each one of them went on to be used by God, in their case, in very profound ways.

At crucial moments in history. What does it mean to find favor with God? Well, another way of translating that is she had found grace from the Lord.

That's the same word. Grace is God's unearned, undeserved favor given to those who deserve the opposite, which is his justice. To find grace in God's sight is to experience his sovereign kindness and blessing upon you.

You see, Mary was a sinner. Though it seems she was a devout follower of God, she still needed grace in his sight. Because her works could not save her or earn her God's favor.

As one commentator said, Mary is not the mother of grace, but the daughter of grace. And this is true of her and all of the others I mentioned from the Old Testament.

[7 : 20] And though Mary is probably the greatest woman who's ever lived, yet her greatness, her greatest service to God's kingdom, took place as a teenager who was purely by God's choosing given this privilege.

But lady, this is your stories too. Not Mary's story. You're not called to her particular vocation or calling. But each one of you who has faith in the Lord Jesus has found favor, has found grace in the Lord's sight.

Grace is how Paul begins his letters to churches. Grace is how you are saved. Remember Ephesians 2, 8, 9, and 10. Oh, that wonderful passage that we all memorize.

But do we understand it? Faith is how you are saved. For by grace you have been saved. Through faith. Faith is not the reason, it's just the conduit. And this, not on your own doing.

It is the gift of God. What's not of your own doing? What's the gift of God? The grace and the faith. Not of works.

[8 : 32] So that no one can boast. You can't pat yourself on the back. For anything that you've done in the name of God, ladies, you can't pat yourself on the back. Why?

He goes on. For we are his workmanship. Oh, I love that word, workmanship. In the original language, it could be translated poem or work of art.

Someone said masterpiece. And I'm going to use that one because I think you are. For you, for we are his, for ladies, you are his masterpiece.

Created in Christ Jesus. That's why you're a masterpiece. Because you've been recreated in Christ Jesus. Created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Which God prepared beforehand that you should walk in them. You see, you're not saved by good works. But you're saved to good works.

[9 : 30] To do good works. To live your life. Because of the grace of God doing good. You were graced by God.

For his love. By his love. And for his service. 1 Corinthians 15.10 is another beautiful passage. Paul is talking his own personal testimony.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am. His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary. I worked harder than any of them. The them of the other apostles, by the way.

Though it was not I. It's not me. Ladies, it's not you. But the grace of God. That is with me.

Grace produces works. Sometimes he produces hard works. Tiring works. Dangerous works.

[10 : 33] Self-sacrificial works. But it's grace. Grace. At work in you, ladies. So many Christians are seeking to do less for the Lord.

To protect and pamper themselves. But grace may call you. The grace of God may call you to step out. In ways that you have never seen before.

Not to earn your salvation. But in great gratitude for him who is your salvation. Jesus. The son of God. So ladies, I got to ask you a question.

Mothers and daughters. And sisters and daughters. Got to ask you this question. Do you know this grace? Is this grace real to you? Is this grace at work?

In your heart. And in your life. If so, are you involved in service for his king and kingdom? Are you the Lord's servant wherever you are?

[11 : 31] Because God has a work for you to do. And he's equipped you to do it. Just as he called Mary and equipped her to do it. Her story in that regard is no less true for you.

Secondly, the Lord's servant is one who believes in the power and promises of the Lord. Lord. Mary is told she would bear a son. And that she's to call him Jesus.

And Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua. It means the Lord is salvation or the Lord saves. This son will be great.

I love saying that, by the way. I always get tear up when I say this. Because Jesus is the greatest of the great. He will be great.

And will be the son of the most high. He will be the long awaited Messiah of Israel. The one they've been waiting for. He will be that son of David.

[12 : 31] Who has been given an eternal kingdom. But there's just one problem. Huge. And it's a big problem. Mary says it. Gabriel. I'm a virgin.

I'm a good girl now. Hey. Don't be trying to put. No, I hold it. So how am I going to have a son? Now here's the thing. Here's the thing that hit me as I was studying this.

She didn't seem to think Gabriel meant. After she got married to Joseph. I would have thought that she would have understood that way. You're going to have a son?

Oh, sure. When Joseph and I get married, I'm going to have a bunch of kids. Thank you, Lord. You know. She didn't take it that way. I don't know why. But she just. She seemed to have sensed some immediacy about the angel's words.

So Gabriel explains how this will go. No man or husband will be involved at all. He promised her that the Holy Spirit would do the creating power in her womb.

[13 : 38] Now, Mary didn't seem to have a problem with that. Because she knew God. You see, Mary understood sometimes that what we forget.

That if God created the heavens and the earth and everything that exists, it's no problem for you to do what he wants to do. In your life or in mine, it's no problem. If he wants to create life in a womb without a human involvement, that's no problem.

That is not a big deal for him. But so she must have believed in the promise and power of God.

She knew that God had the power to keep his promises, ladies. And God has made statements about you and promises to you as his daughters, which you will find in his word.

There are a whole lot of them. First of all, let's start with Genesis 127. It's not on the screen. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him.

[14 : 44] Male and female, he created them. Do you understand, ladies? You have worth and dignity, not because of what you do, not because of how you look, but because you bear the image of God.

You have to understand that. If you don't understand that, your identity will get twisted and you'll be bounced around by this crazy culture. You've got to go here, ladies.

Children, little girls, teenagers, oh, teenagers, please. Young adults, listen, you are created in the image of God and worth and dignity belong to you because of him.

I don't care how you look. I don't care what people say about you. Worth and dignity belong to you because you're not junk. You were created by God. Genesis 3.28 says this.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. Understand the passage.

[15 : 55] Paul is not saying there are no distinctions in people. That's not what the conscience is not about that. What he's saying that in Christ, we're all equal.

In Christ, ladies, you are equal partners, united with men. Whether you are married or unmarried, you are equal partners in the eternal kingdom of God.

And I don't care where you come from. Whether you are African American or African. Whether you're Asian and all the different varieties of being Asian. Japanese, Chinese.

I don't care where you come from. Whether you're white and you come from Scotland or Finland or England. I don't care. If you are in Christ, we are family. We are all one.

And ladies, that means you. You are not inferior in any way. One more. Well, maybe.

[16:52] Proverbs 3.5 and 8. This is my favorite. It's not addressed to women per se. It's addressed to disciples of Jesus. But this is for you, ladies. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding.

Because you might not understand. In all your ways, acknowledge him. And he will make straight your paths. Listen, listen. You might not understand the path you're going on.

You've got questions. And God isn't going to tell you everything you want to know. The secret things belong to him. He's going to tell you what's in his word, though.

So in all your ways, you don't understand. But acknowledge him. Turn to him. Lord, I don't know what's happening. I don't know what you're doing. But I'm trusting you. In all your ways, acknowledge him.

I want your way, not my way. I want your way. Acknowledge him and he. Listen. The idea of the Hebrew of making straight paths for your feet.

[17:50] One commentator said like this years ago. I read this. He said he means he will make the path line up under your feet. Not you got. You don't have to find the path.

But as you're walking, he'll make the path go where you're going. And lead you where he wants you to be. Hmm. In all your ways, acknowledge him.

And now watch this next one. Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord. Reverence and stand in awe of him. Turn away from evil.

That's sin. It will be healing to your flesh. And refreshment to your bones. Sometimes, ladies, you're so worn out because you've been wise in your own eyes.

You think you got it all figured out. And if God don't do it your way, well. And then you'll find that things aren't working right.

[18:51] Maybe even your own body. But obedience to the Lord and repentance and following him will be refreshment to your bones. You can trust the Lord to guide your steps in life as you call upon him, turning from sin and not trusting your own wisdom or the wisdom of the world.

Proverbs 11, 16. That's a promise. Now watch this. A gracious woman gets honor and violent men get riches. Fascinating.

Which one do you want to be? The word gets here can mean take hold of or seize. A gracious or graceful woman acts for the benefit of others, not seeking anything in return.

She therefore takes hold of honor. How many times is it? I know it's hard. We do things.

We serve others. But we really expect something back. You never say it. But in your heart, you do.

[20:06] How do you know? If they don't appreciate it, if they don't give you what you want, you're angry and destroyed. That's how you know.

If you're really expecting something back. But that's not what a gracious, that's not what grace produces. It produces in us a desire. Ladies and gentlemen, for you to act for the benefits of others, not seeking anything in return.

You dare you take hold of honor. How is this possible? Because you know God will repay. You know God sees.

He will bless you and does bless you. Contrast that with the violent man who only seizes riches but will never satisfy the hunger of his soul.

Oh, we could go on. Read Proverbs 31 when you get a chance. What a beautiful woman there. But there are so many promises, ladies. And I'm going to just mention one more because it's important here.

[21:06] Hebrews 11, 6. I want you to hear this. Without faith, it is impossible to please him. That's God. Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists.

He's real. He's there. He is not silent. He's your God. And that he rewards those who seek him.

Ladies, God rewards the faith he gave you.

Ain't that a trip? The faith that is the gift of God, God rewards that faith as you express that faith by trusting in him, believing that he will bless you in his own time, in his own way.

Listen, are there any promises you are clinging to right now? Promises rightly understood from scripture because you can claim things that are not promised.

And that's dangerous. That hurts. But the clear promises, there's so many. Ladies, in your devotions, as you go before God, do you ever claim any promises and trust in him?
[22 : 12] Do you cry out to him, Lord, you said? Have you ever gone to God? Have you ever got on your face and said to God, you said? You said it, Lord.

I believe it. And I'm going to stand on it. You said. Have you ever asked him? Have you ever, in a small c, challenged God to keep his word? I hope some of you will start doing that. Our Lord Jesus was the ultimate one who trusted his father with raising from the dead. So he went to the cross for your sins in confidence. So that in him you could know God will keep his promises to you.

Second Corinthians 1. For all the promise of God find their yes in him. To him is Jesus. That is why it is through him, that Jesus, that we utter our amen to God for his glory.

Every promise that God has made to his people, find their yes in Jesus. If you go to God in Jesus, through faith in Jesus, hope in Jesus, life in Jesus, you can know that God's word to you is yes.

[23 : 26] And his timing though. God did something gracious here in this passage.

Again, he gave Mary a sign that she didn't even ask for. The sign was her cousin Elizabeth. She was pregnant.

It was a miracle of God's power once again. Then, so when Mary went to Elizabeth, so Mary, she was six months pregnant by the time Gabriel came to Mary.

Later in the passage, Mary will go to Elizabeth. She goes for her baby shower, I'm saying. Elizabeth meets her and declares to her in verse 45.

She says, blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was promised to her from the Lord. Blessed is she who believed, who had faith, who trusted.

[24 : 32] Oh, what a blessing it is to trust the Lord. Faith in God is a hallmark of a servant of God. Thirdly, the servant of the Lord is one who accepts the Lord's will and surrenders to it.

I didn't put this on the screen, but I added without grumbling or complaint. Nancy Lee DeMoss, walk them off. In her book, Lies Women Believe and the Truth That Sets Them Free, she says, surrender is defined by Webster's as to give oneself up into the power of another.

The fact is, the only one qualified to fill that position is God. First, why? Because all power belongs to him. Second, because he won't abuse that power.

Did you hear that? God won't abuse his power in your life. He won't abuse you. The word surrender, she said, is a military term. It means a war is taking place and someone wins and someone loses.

Ladies, the war, if you are in Christ, if you're not, this is not true. But if you have surrendered to Jesus, the war between your kingdom and the Lord's kingdom is over.

[25 : 45] Your will be done or his will be done is over. You've made a choice by his choice. You see, you're all self-sovereign queens in your own kingdoms.

Queens. That's who you are. That's how we act. Queens. We even call you sometimes queens. Don't let that go to your head, but anyway.

We're trying to be respectful. We're trying to love you. But don't get crazy with it. Your self-sovereignty is over. Because God in grace and love has called you into a better kingdom. He's deposed you. You were queen. He said, not anymore. Now you're in my kingdom and I'm king. And I don't have a queen. And Jesus' only queen is his church, his bride, the whole body of Christ. Jesus' kingdom is an upside down kingdom that you've been called into, ladies. Because in this kingdom, the king comes to die for you that you might live. He doesn't insist that you die for him to earn or prove your loyalty.

[26 : 54] He dies for you that you might see his loyalty. So Mary utters those beautiful words. Behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to what you said. According to your word. According to the word of God. Let it be to me. That's why I love this passage.

Because I love Mary. Those beautiful words from a teenage girl. I want you to get this. From a teenage girl. They humble me. She doesn't complain.

Do you know what this will mean for me? My family will not believe me. No one will believe me. Virgins don't get pregnant, Gabriel.

My family will be disgraced. Joseph will divorce me. Don't you know the people of Nazareth could stone me as an adulteress? You do know one of the myths that surrounds this story is that Mary

was impregnated by a Roman soldier.

[27 : 56] That's one of the myths. Can you see her? Come on, Gabriel. You can't be asking this of me. I thought you said I was favored of the Lord.

Because this don't sound like favor. You're asking me to take my life in my hands. Can we rethink this?

Is there another plan? Plan B, ladies. Is there a plan B? Now listen. If she had said that, she would have been in good company. Yeah.

Moses. Moses said the same thing. Exodus chapter 3. God said to Moses, Tell him who I am that I should... Moses says, Who am I that should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Who am I? I'm just a chump. I'm just Moses. I ain't nobody. Why? Exodus 4.1. Then Moses answered, But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, The Lord did not appear to you.

[29 : 04] No one will believe me, God. Chapter 4, verse 10. Moses said, Oh my Lord, I'm not eloquent. Listen to him. I'm not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant.

I am slow of speech and of tongue. And then my favorite, verse 13. Oh Lord, please send someone else. Have you ever read that?

Moses is talking to a burning bush. And he tells the God of the bush to send somebody else. Woo! I'm serious. A miracle don't do a whole lot sometimes. Don't get caught up on miracles. The text says, Then the anger of the Lord burned, kindled against Moses.

God was like, I'm doing, Bro, you ain't listening. What was Moses' problem? Ladies, come on, help me out. Moses' problem. He constantly focused on his ability and not on the Lord's ability.

[30 : 14] Ladies, if you focus on what you think you can do or not do, then you will tend to choose not to serve, not to follow, and not to surrender to the Lord.

Listen, unless it looks easy. When you say, I can do that, sure, I have time for that. Yeah, you're all right now.

But maybe God might be asking you to do something that you don't think you can do or you don't think you have time for. So if he's calling, you're going to have to do something.

Trust him. You're going to have to trust that he will supply the time and the ability and the energy to do what he's called you to do.

Send someone else is not an option. He's sending you. Mary knew the road would be hard and it was, but it was harder than she thought, I think.

[31 : 24] At his birth, they ran for their lives because her son was, a contract was put out on her son's life to kill him. A sword, as prophesied, did pierce her heart.

She did grieve as her son, when he grew up, was haunted and hunted and disrespected. He was likely seen as born out of wedlock, which means she was viewed as a loose woman in whispers, of course, because you know how people are.

And then the horror of horrors happened at the cross where she saw her baby, her boy, her son, the leader of their home because Joseph is perceivably dead.

She saw him die. But to whom much was given, of her much will be required. And from whom, and from her to whom they entrusted much, they will demand more.

Luke 12, 48. She had been given much. Ladies, you've been given much. Grace, love, acceptance, resurrection, life in you.

[32 : 39] You're not the same. He's done something. The price for your birth, rebirth, the price for your salvation was none other than the sacrifice of the eternal son of God taking up our humanity and dying for you.

The price was high. To serve him who served you so well is an honor. To give the gifts he has granted you back to him in worship and for his use is an honor.

Phil Reichen in his commentary says, the more you have been given, the greater your responsibility to use it for the glory of God. Listen, ladies, Mary lived what Paul said in Romans 12 to present her body a living sacrifice to the Lord.

Why did she do it? Because of God's mercy to her. Because of God's kindness to her. She gives herself to him. And he called her to serve.

She was overwhelmed by grace in awe of the God of heaven in awe of who she would bear in her womb. Listen, you're on the other side of this. You see him. That Jesus whom she would bear, you see him clearly even more than she did at that time.

[33 : 57] It would have been worldly for her and the world would have told her to say no. You're asking too much, God. How do I know you're going to come through? But she renewed her mind by remembering his promises and faithfulness.

She gave her immediate and distant future into the Lord's hands and followed him. Carolyn Custis James puts it this way. She writes, looking at Mary later in life as she stands at the cross, who is this broken woman she asked?

She was Jesus' first disciple. She was a hearer and doer of God's word. Faced with her hard and costly choice, she blazed a path of faith and courage for all women, old and young, and demonstrated, now I made some changes here, and demonstrated the power of God and a woman moved by the grace of God to risk everything to advance God's cause.

Mary was the first to believe and laid down her life for the gospel. She was first to leave all to follow Jesus. Is God calling? You know he's calling, ladies, because it's in his word.

Applying his word, you know, his word don't return, his word is true. Is he calling? Is the opportunity there? It may be used, it may be a big choice, a big decision.

[35 : 23] Have you sought wise biblical counsel? Not your girlfriends who disagree with everything you say, but wise biblical counsel. Here's the last thing, you can't shake it.

God won't let you shake what he's calling you to do. He keeps reminding you. Somebody will say something, and you go, you have dreams, you'll have all kinds. He'll remind you, because he's told you in his word. He said, I want you to do this.

I want you to be this. I want you to go this way, and you're resisting. I understand that, because I do too, but listen, you're a servant of the Lord. Surrender. Well, I'm going to cut this short.

I got 20 more minutes. No. So, who's servant are you? It's somebody's servant, ladies.

It's somebody's servant. You know, our culture's obsession with women looking a certain way at all times. Are you more concerned with your physical appearance? That means you're serving your body.

[36 : 22] Are you serving the corporate ladder? You're just trying to, you just got to move up. Some women have made some interesting choices to move up the ladder. Don't, no, don't you, not you.

Nuh-uh. But are you serving the corporate ladder? Are you, are you serving? Is it all about the country? I mean, are you a Christian nationalist and it's about, you're trying to serve the, you want Jesus, take America back for Jesus. I don't mean this, I don't mean this totally, but good luck with that.

That don't be even luck. Are you serving a relationship that you will, that you've compromised in some things?

Are you serving your family in an unhealthy way? Making your children be perfect? Making your children, you, you rise and fall with your children's success. You rise and fall with your children's choices.

That's unhealthy. Something's wrong. You got to back up. You can't serve your children that way.

Are you serving the fact that you don't have a child and you think somehow you're less than a woman?

[37 : 28] Well, you're not married. You think you're less than a woman. No, you're not. You are the servant of the Lord. You have everything you need right now to be God's woman. Everything you need right now to follow him.

You got it. You are equipped. You are complete in Christ. Nothing is lacking. Stop telling yourself that something is lacking. It's not if you are in Christ.

And you're beautiful because God beautifies the meek with salvation. You're beautiful in Jesus.

Carolyn Custis James, my last quote, says this.

She's talking about what Jesus said in another passage. She says, when some woman said, blessed are the wound that bore you and the breast that gave you nourishment.

And Jesus said to her, no, blessed are those who do the word of God and obey him. That's what she's commenting on. He said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice, blessed is the wound that bore you, blessed.

[38 : 34] Jesus zeroed in on two institutions for women, motherhood and family, and redefined them both. According to Jesus, a woman's life is truly blessed, not when she becomes a mother, but when she hears and obeys his word.

The crown glory for a woman as for a man is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is a woman's true identity and the only path to blessedness. To base our identity, she's a woman, she's a base identity or anything else is to stand on shaky ground.

Instead, these treasured roles of wife and mother have become the heart and soul of our lives as women. We are at a loss and we lose ourselves when we don't marry or we can't have children or when our families are less than perfect.

Wow. Wow. That's your sister talking to you. Will you surrender everything? Everything.

It's not a one-time thing, by the way. It's a daily thing. Will you surrender your present, your immediate future, and your destiny to him who holds you in his hands and loves you?

[39 : 56] Will you surrender to him who has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you? Will you surrender to him who died that you might live and rose again that you may have eternal life forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever?

Will you surrender your rights, maybe? rights to explanation sometimes. Rights to your will be done. Rights to your rights.

Sometimes you have to surrender those too. Sometimes. I don't know all the time, but sometimes you do. Because God is calling you to something. He's calling you to be a servant.

A surrendered servant of the Lord to his will. His will be done, not yours. And in that surrendered state, brothers and sisters, and especially sisters, listen, in that surrendered state, we are safe.

Safe and surrendered to him and to his service. And serve and it's beautiful. It's beautiful. Your service is beautiful.

[41 : 08] And if you're trusting in him, your service will be kind. Not, I'm serving. But you will serve in kindness and in grace and in tenderness,!

And in tenderness,! Not in reluctance, as if you are less than, because you're not. You're not less than ever.

Your service is beautiful. It's a service to Christ and his kingdom. Father, will you help us? My sisters, Lord, they're not always treated with the respect they deserve in this culture.

It's not right. I pray you protect them from such things. My mothers and sisters, protect them, surround them with your grace.

But Father, if they must walk through those paths, may they do so, surrender to you, trusting in you alone for their future and their destiny. Men do not hold their destiny, neither do other women.

[42 : 13] Your destiny, their destiny, is in you, in Christ your Son. Help them to believe it. Help them to believe it. And may Jesus give great glory to each one.

in his name, amen.