

The Owner of the House

... say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher says, 'Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?' And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; and prepare for us there" (Mark 14:14-15 NASB).

Recently I met a man whose servant spirit truly impressed me. A layman, he resides in a country where practically every church is a house church. He and his family had previously lived in a small apartment but looking around, he observed there was not a church available for those in his area. As he began praying for another place to live where there would also be space for a church, God led him to the ideal property. After clearing trash from the lot, he set about building onto his home. Being a steel worker, he constructed both the roof covering and the benches. He is continually making improvements to this "church" attached to his residence.



When we visited his home, he proudly introduced my husband and me to his young pastor and wife and some other members of the congregation. He and his wife provided a virtual banquet for a large group of people that evening. Where he lives, that was not an easy thing to do. His obvious joy in the Lord is cemented in my memory. Honestly, I don't remember his name, but it really doesn't matter because God knows it. I believe

God will richly reward him for unselfish service for His kingdom's sake. I often think of this gracious man as "the owner of the house."

Jesus, knowing that His time had come and that His crucifixion was close at hand, needed a private place to celebrate the Passover with His disciples. Sermons have been delivered and pictures have been painted about the events in "the upper room." Mark tells us that place had already been made ready by the owner of the house. Only two verses tell us anything about the man who owned this house. Mark 14:14-15 tells us that he was expecting Jesus and His disciples. Questions about the relationship between Jesus and this man go unanswered. How did he meet Jesus? Had he been His follower for a long time? When did Jesus tell him He would need this room for the Passover?

It was in this house where Jesus washed the feet of all twelve of the disciples (even Judas). It was in this house where Judas left the group to betray Jesus into the hands of the chief priests, officers and the elders (Luke 22:52). It was in this house where Jesus made astonishing statements to the remaining eleven disciples. It was in this house He said He was going to His Father's house to prepare a place for them. It was in this house He revealed Himself as *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6) and *the true vine* (John 15:1). It was in this house He promised to send the Holy Spirit to them. It was in this house where He prayed for those who believed in Him (John 17). The words that Jesus spoke in this house have been instruction, comfort and encouragement to believers throughout the ages.

The owner of the house goes unnamed. He is not mentioned again. However, the value of his ministry is enormous. Certainly, without his obedience and generosity, this privilege would have gone to someone else. But he is the one who opened his home to the Lord and His disciples and provided the privacy, protection and atmosphere that Jesus needed at this crucial time in His ministry.

After reflecting on the owner of the house, I became aware of other important people in scripture whose names were not given to us. Many who served God were mentioned, not by name, but by their obedience and contribution to His purposes.

In the Old Testament, when Israel asked Samuel for a king to reign over them, God told Samuel that He would grant this request. His choice was a tall, handsome Benjamite named Saul. 1 Samuel 9 tells of the first meeting of Samuel and Saul. That meeting actually came about because of Saul's servant. When Kish, Saul's father, lost his donkeys, Saul was sent to search for them. After a time, unsuccessful in his mission, Saul determined to go home. It was his servant who convinced Saul to seek out the prophet Samuel first (1 Samuel 9:5-10). God revealed Saul's coming to Samuel (1 Samuel 9:15-17) and subsequently Saul was crowned king of Israel. The unnamed servant was a spiritual man led and used by God.

Another unnamed man in the New Testament provided something that the Lord needed. On what we call Palm Sunday, the disciples were sent to bring a donkey and a colt to

Jesus. The Lord told His disciples, *"If anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them"* (Matthew 21:3 NASB). Although the scripture does not say that the disciples were questioned when they obtained the donkey and the colt (Matthew 21:6-7), it seems clear that the owner of the animals willingly provided them for the Lord's use.

Just as the man I described at the beginning of this devotional, I have known many Christians whose service goes unnoticed by all but God. Some of those are prayer warriors. Some have the spiritual gift of service or mercy. When Paul described the parts of the body of Christ, he recognized the possibility that the "feet" and "ears" might rather be "hands" and "eyes" (1 Corinthians 12:15-16). Paul made the point, however, that fulfilling your individual calling as part of the body is what is important to the Lord.

How often have you thought what you do for the Lord is of little consequence? Do you doubt your service really has any meaning? Service in obscurity sometimes seems like service without merit. And yet, we can learn something from these unnamed men of God's word. Leave the results of your obedience to Him. As Jesus' mother told the servants at the wedding in Cana, *"Whatever He says to you, do it"* (John 2:5).

Jesus deserves to be the focus of your life. Focus on Him, His love and His unique calling for your life. Your responsibility is to trust and obey Him giving Him glory. You will never know what He will do with your smallest act of obedience.

© Stephanie B. Blake