

* The long-term recession of the US economy affects the 14 million American workers who can't find a job. The worse scenario is that when people were being unemployed for one year the specialists lose their labor skills, their connections, their attachment to the labor force and etc. "The unemployment situation we have, the job situation, is really a national crisis," said Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke four days ago. It is obvious that unemployment is a harmful thing, especially for families where both parents were dismissed from their job. Also, there is no need to mention the following pain and shortages which children and fools don't understand.

* At the same time among the unemployed laborers there are some worthless people who were disqualified because they didn't pass requirements while they were working for a company, as for example, some former employees who worked with EDS. According to the book "*Execution ...*" by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, (p.47-54), it says that during two years of radical renovations the formerly troubled company had reached the record revenues and solid market share gains. The success was a result of the supervision of the new chief executive officer, Dick Brown. Besides the reorganizations made at all levels, Brown also made a reorganization among the laborers. Thus, people who couldn't handle the requirements, either got coaching or were removed. "Brown himself ordered an analysis of the sales staff's performance and found, among other things, that 20% of the salespeople had sold nothing at all for the previous six months. He said to his sales executives, *What are you going to do about these people – and about their supervisors?*"

* As we specified the two circumstances of unemployment, they came into view as uncontrolled and controlled circumstances. First, it is out of man's hand to be protected from unemployment as a result of the economic recession. And second, the unemployment that happened due to a personal idleness might have been prevented by the physical and intellectual strength of the employee. Now we are ready to make the next step toward the question of the day since the secondary ideas have been set up.

* No matter who we are, clergy or laypersons, we are all the servants of the Lord's house, (Mar 13:34). And so far, apart of the temporary interest of a hired person – "one silver coin" (Mat 20:1-7), we work with the purpose to receive an eternal crown, (2Ti 4:8). On the basis of these remarks we ask you, *Dear Christians, Could we be sure that we are secured from being fired from our positions as the servants?* In fact, we must not expect a recession in God's kingdom, therefore not to be fired or discharged. But in the case of an idle employee, does the answer remain the same? *It depends*, replied the wise listeners. It is true, but the question could not be exposed by two or all the more a single word until we'll face the facts.

* Now we are going to make a schematic for the future discussion. First, we'll try to define the individuals with antithetical characteristics on the subject of faithful and unfaithful servants. Second, we will reflect on our Lord's character as a householder. Finally, we'll summarize all facts turning them to good account by a single word. A single word? It is impossible! Well, but isn't it true that with God's help everything possible?

* Therefore, we start with hunting for the characters. Ah, here is a good one, the apostle Paul, the author of our Sunday reading from Philippians, (3:4b-14). As you can see, Paul's portfolio is clean from records of personal selfishness, greed, or idleness. On the contrary, it says that he sacrificed all of what he had, time, physical energy, money, even he counted for nothing what he had in the past when he was a Pharisee, (v. 8). We may wonder about Paul's reliability and faithfulness as a steward of the Lord's house when recalling his ministry from the very beginning up to the end. Paul's life is a key component of how Christians should please his Master in order to attain the eternal reward, (v.11). But despite his achievements, Paul acknowledges himself as an unworthy servant due to the fact that his righteousness exclusively belongs to Christ, a Master of our salvation,(v.9). Making Paul as an example (v.17), we may wonder about his zealously to please the Lord in order to receive a title of *The Most Faithful Servant*; and in this instance, pondering what Paul says about his second reward. *Brothers, I don't regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do. Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,* (v.v.13,14). Of course our crowns demand less works than the apostles' but by no means do we wish to appear as the unfaithful servants in the Lord's house.

* As soon as we mentioned the unfaithful servants in the Lord's house, we recalled the gospel reading for this day, (Mat 21:33-46). It brings to light the character of the unfaithful servants under invented images of the field-workers in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. As usual, landlords rented their vineyards to the local residents, farmers and their families. The farmers give a pledge to return half or more of the products of the grapes to the builder of the vineyard. When harvest comes to the end, the owner will send his representatives to secure his share of the grapes, raisins and so forth. The peculiarity of the event in the parable reflects on a fact that the tenants acted unfaithfully regarding their pledges. But the worse thing is that the unfaithful forcefully gained the owner's property for themselves! It says that they acted violently - beating, killing, and stoning the master's deputy. The escalation of violence reached its apex with the killing of the owner's heir, (v. 39). As we know, in literal life it happened when the Jews crucified the only Son of the Heavenly Father by hands of Romans. After that violation they became not only the unfaithful but the wicked servants as well. Their terrible fate came upon them with overthrowing Judea by Rome in the 1st century. The countless number of Jews were killed on the battlefield, others were executed through crucifixions. In such a way God paid back to the unfaithful servants of the house of Israel because they voluntarily spurned their Redeemer Jesus Christ.

* Now we have the two real characters, Paul - who stands for the faithful Christians; and on the other side, the wicked husbandmen - who portray the unfaithful servants of the Church of Christ. Even though Paul suffered death as well as some of his supporters, it doesn't mean that they lost their jobs in the house of the Lord, says Scripture, (Heb 12:22,23), potentially they gain their double rewards. Next to them, but in the opposite direction, there are people who are disqualified from their positions by the Chief Executive even

at the present age. First, it happened because they grab power over God's property as though it would belong to them. Second, they show their unfaithfulness by giving up their duties. Third, they blame Jesus' ambassadors without proof and without witnesses. Finally, they plot to discharge the heirs in order to make God's house a place for their pleasures. Alas! It's hard to believe that those people have never learned the truth that the unrighteous will not be rewarded with the eternal crown. Hadn't they known *that the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ... nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor the verbally abusive, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God?* (1Co 6:9,10). We can assume that those people forget the teaching of righteousness, but now there is no excuse for the unfaithful servants if they will persist in their wickedness.

* Once a Gardener whispered a message that she would gladly pass it on: My dear child, are you wondering at the sequence of trials in your life? Come and look at the work of my hands in the vineyard and learn about it. I don't prune, trim, and harrow a vine if I expect nothing more from it during that season. See, it is left to itself, because the season of fruit is past and further effort for the present would yield no profit. Be sure that comparative uselessness is the condition of freedom from suffering. Do you then wish me to cease pruning your life? Shall I leave you alone forever?" And the comforted heart cried, "No!"

* Going back to the question of the day, this single-word answer should be ours as well. Friends, say another **"No!"** to the sinful flesh and the devil; and let us be useful servants where it depends on us; meanwhile the Heavenly homeowner is the kind and merciful One. At this point, the global unemployment will not harm us, and in the end there is a double reward waiting for us.

Amen