

In the last session we addressed the topic of whom we will choose to serve, God or man. For those who have made the decision to serve God, we will now take a deep dive into what that means.

Mark 9:33-34

33 And they came to Capernaum. And when he (Jesus) was in the house he asked them (his disciples), "What were you arguing about on the road?"
34 But they remained silent, for on the road they had argued with one another who was the greatest.

When asked about their argument, the disciples remained silent. This was an indication that they knew they had done something wrong. Each of the disciples had been giving reasons as to why they were the greatest. They likely bragged about their skill set, intelligence, previous experience and past accomplishments. In their minds, the best leader was the one who had the biggest title, the greatest number of followers or the most natural ability to lead.

Today, many Christian leaders also attempt to impress others by exploiting their position and popularity. Christians often advertise themselves with an important title, posters and photos of them speaking to a large crowd.

Mark 9:35

And he sat down, and called the Twelve, and he said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he will be last of all, and servant of all."

If your goal is to be a great spiritual leader, Jesus said that you must stoop down to the last position and serve everyone else. This is an amazing truth that many Christian leaders miss because they think that hierarchy with God should work the same way that it does in the business world, where the one at the top gives all the orders. Instead of giving orders, Jesus Christ said the top leaders in his spiritual kingdom are those who stoop down to serve everyone else.

When I was a young, enthusiastic Christian I also thought like those disciples. I signed up for a Christian leadership training program. As part of that training, we were each given a work assignment. As I waited for my commission to be handed out, I thought of all of the important jobs I deserved based on my obvious high level of intelligence, my many natural abilities and my good looks.

As you can imagine, God needed to teach me an important lesson before I would be much use to him as a true Christian leader. When I received my assignment, I stared at it in disbelief and shock. There must have been a mistake. The note said that I was assigned to the housekeeping unit!

I envied those who had been given the good jobs. I was dusting shelves, emptying waste baskets, mopping floors, cleaning showers and scrubbing toilets. In my mind, my talents were being totally wasted by these ridiculous bathroom chores. Oh, I did the work. But I was angry and miserable. After several days of this, I became so disturbed that I began to cry. I hated this job! Why were they doing this to me?

Later that day my spiritual leader called me, and the other housekeeping staff, into her office. Her name was Dorothy. She had a very kind and compassionate heart. Although I hated my job assignment, I liked working for her. That day Dorothy taught me something that I have never forgotten. She told us how important our job is. She explained that everyone has to use the bathroom and that our goal was to clean those bathrooms with the love of God. By doing so, we were producing an environment where the people who would be using those facilities would be uplifted and blessed. In her mind, it was a great honor to have the job of cleaning the showers and toilets. It enabled us to have a positive influence on people's lives whenever they walked into the bathroom.

I didn't buy into this at first. But I spent a lot of time in prayer, pondering over what she had said and asking God to help me understand. Specifically, I asked God to help me clean those bathrooms with his love and joy, rather than with anger and grief. Over time a transformation took place in my heart. I went from despising the work, to where I enjoyed it. Before I had thought the job was unimportant. Now I was glad to have been given the opportunity to do it.

I had learned a valuable lesson. Every job is important to God. And the most important thing we have to offer God is not our talents and abilities. It's a humble heart, with a desire to do whatever is asked of us with great enthusiasm and love.

Romans 1:1

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, appointed for the good news of God,

2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a Faith that is of equal privilege with ours through the righteousness of our God, and of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul and Peter were great men of God. Do you see from these verses what God thinks is most important about them? The first thing he mentions about them is that they are a servant. After that, he mentions their responsibility as an apostle. Without the heart of service, any other title we have becomes meaningless. An attitude of service is required in order to make any job successful in God's eyes.

Many years ago, I was working for a local company as a software developer when I gave them my resignation notice. Just prior to my departure, we were in the middle of an executive staff meeting when the president and owner of the company brought in a large bucket of water and set it on the floor beside me. He then asked me to take my shoes and socks off. Reluctantly, I did as he asked. He stooped down on his knees and proceeded to wash my feet, one at a time. When He was finished, he gently dried my feet with a towel. Finally, he led everyone in a special prayer for me. This is how he chose to show his appreciation for my seven years of loyal service to his company.

This foot washing ritual was taken from Biblical culture where the servant would wash the feet of guests who came to the master's home. In John 13:4-12, Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples. Afterwards, he explained the reason for it.

John 13:13-16

13 You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you rightly say so, for I am.

14 If then I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also are obligated to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord, neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

In the world, leaders tend to sit back in their easy chair and bark orders at the peasants who work underneath them. The lesson Jesus taught his disciples by washing their feet is that being a leader requires being a servant, even to the point of doing the lowliest of tasks.

Now that we have established the humility that comes with true service to God, the next topic we will address is what is to be the focus of our service.

Matthew 9:35-38

35 And Jesus was going through all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

36 But when he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then he says to his disciples, "Truly, the harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few.

38 Therefore implore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

It's sad for me to think that "the laborers are few." So many people spend the majority of their life working for things and focused on things that are of little importance. Telling people about Jesus Christ is so important. He paid the price so that every person on this earth could have the opportunity to reap the benefit of eternal life through his saving grace. And through him we have access to our Father God so we can enjoy his fellowship here and now.

Many Christians believe their main act of service each week is to attend church on Sunday morning. True service occurs mostly away from the church building. When we choose to go into our communities, to serve the people we live and interact with each day. We are to demonstrate God's love by performing acts of kindness towards others. And to tell them about Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations in my name,

20 teaching them to obey all that I commanded you. And remember!, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age."

Jesus commanded them to “Go and make disciples of all the nations.” ‘Make disciples’ comes from the Greek word *matheteuo*. It means to teach, give instructions or to disciple. Jesus was exhorting them to go out with the goal of making and training disciples. And they were to go to all nations to do this. That’s a much larger radius than inside of a church building, isn’t it?

Acts 1:6-8

6 Now when they had come together, they asked him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 And he said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has set within His own authority.

8 But you will receive power when the holy spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.”

By way of the power of holy spirit we have been given, Jesus Christ is exhorting us to be witnesses. In our community, our county, our state, our country and around the world.

I wanted to share with you a great example of someone who fulfilled this calling in a very profound way. His name is Carlton P. Gleason, but his friends and loved ones knew him only as “Pappy.” Ordained in the Christian ministry in 1950, Carlton led four congregations through building programs that included three complete church plants. Later he moved to Lynchburg, Virginia where he worked for Dr. Jerry Falwell as a director of operations in the building of Liberty University, which is now the largest private Christian school in the United States. By 1996, Pappy was 82 years old and decided to retire. Can you blame him? But God had other plans.

At age 84, this retired minister of Nazarene and Baptist churches traveled to Kenya, Africa to visit his daughter Sarah at Segera Ranch where she had started a school for the local children. He immediately fell in love with the country and its people. He met Faith Mutungi while there and together they prayed over the next four years for God to open a door to reach the hearts of people in this remote area of Kenya.

The people from this backwoods country knew nothing about Jesus Christ. There were no churches. They had no one to tell them about the saving

grace of God. There was no one to teach them about God's unconditional love or that Jesus Christ had died for their sins. The only spiritual knowledge people were given involved a Ragio Maria cult.

Pappy donated desks for the second grade, began preaching in a cow shed, baptized people in a nearby muddy river and showed God's love in many other ways. After his wife passed away almost four years later, Pappy bought 20 acres of land and started a mission at 88 years old!

Pappy died in 2008 at the age of 94. In the six years he spent ministering to the community at Segera Mission, he single-handedly built a church, a school, a clinic and a library, using his own resources and the gifts from his children and a handful of amazing friends. Over 1,400 Kenyans attended his funeral, a testament to the impact Pappy had on this remote region of Northern Kenya.

I visited Segera Mission in April of 2019. I saw the joy of the 385 children from Kindergarten through 8th grade as they greeted me in front of their school. The love of God was very noticeably displayed by the faculty and staff. It was clear to me that the goals Pappy and Faith had prayed for more than 30 years ago are still alive today:

To give the people of North Central Kenya the message of God's love and a chance for a better life through education, medical care, and the chance for a transformed future.

To learn more about this ministry, go to www.segeramission.org.

This is Pappy's story. The legacy he left behind. What legacy do you plan to leave behind? Are you too young? Too old? Pappy was 88 years old when he took on the challenge of Segera Mission in a big way.

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill is not able to be hidden.

If you know Jesus as your Lord, then you are a light in this world. I am a light in this world. We've been given this light from God. The only question is, what are we going to do with it?

Matthew 5:15-16

15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a peck-basket, but on the stand, and it shines to all who are in the house.

16 In the same way, let your light shine before people so that they can see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Are you going to hide your light? Or let it shine? God has completely equipped you and I to serve his people. We have his power and authority behind us. Now it is up to us to walk in the light he has given us. To reach out and touch the lives of others with his unconditional love. To bring light into a world that is filled with darkness.

This past week I was talking to a spiritual friend of mine from Nepal. She had just returned home from a 2 ½ day mission trip to India. She had traveled on a bus for 18 hours to get to this rural area so she could minister to these remote people by teaching them the Word of God and providing medical support. She learned there was a tribe nearby who ate dead people. Did that stop her from serving? Absolutely not.

Isaiah 6:8

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom should I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

I was humbled when I heard the story of Pappy. And again by the recent testimony from this Nepal missionary. How committed am I to serving the gospel? God may not be asking you and I to go to the remote areas of Kenya and India to serve. But he definitely has called us to a life of service. And once we make that commitment to him, to go where he desires us to be. And to do whatever he desires us to do. He will direct our steps down the path of his choosing. We will be greatly blessed and full of joy because our God is a God of all love. And he promises to bestow great blessings upon those who humbly serve him.

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