

Called to be a Servant

Mark 10:42–45

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Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

I see the world differently today than I did just ten years ago. Many things have changed in our world and so it looks different. But in reality there is nothing new under sun. It's my perspective that has changed. God has changed how I view the world, our culture, and especially people.

That brings me to how you and I as disciple makers can view world. More than every I see an attitude of entitlement, people expecting something for nothing. I see more than ever people living for themselves. I see more people living for pleasure. What I don't see is an attitude of helping. I don't see people willing to put aside their wants and desires. I don't see people who are ready to serve those around them.

As disciples who make disciples of Jesus, we need to teach people how to serve the Lord by serving others.

Mark 10:42–45 (NIV) Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

It's clear that the calling of Jesus was to be a servant. Jesus is the Lord of life, the Savior of the world. Let's make a list of the titles of Jesus. He is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life. He was with God when all things were created. He was with God when the first man Adam was formed from the ground and the first woman Eve was formed from Adam's rib.

He has all power and authority. In His name the Father in heaven gives good and perfect gifts. He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One of God. He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Lamb of God. He is the atonement for sin. Through Him alone are sins forgiven. He is the Word of God. He is the Son of Man. He is the Son of God.

Jesus came from heaven in all of it's glory and majesty, all of it's splendor and wonder, all of it's perfection and holiness to this earth. He was born as everyone of us is born. His birth was in a stable where animals are kept. His bed was the feeding trough for those animals. He entered the world in a manner and in a place that was decisively unworthy of His stature and authority.

As Jesus lived His life people were astonished by the miracles and the teaching, He was serving every person. With every limb healed, eye made to see, leprosy removed, demon cast out Jesus was serving that person and those who were witnesses. Each time Jesus spoke to the crowds or to an individual He was serving them by proclaiming the truth. They wanted to lift Him up as king and crown Him. But He served them with food. He washed their feet. He opened their eyes to see Him as the Lord and Savior.

Jesus was tempted to be their great miracle worker and not follow His calling. He was tempted to use His power and authority for His own purposes and not follow His calling. He was tempted to be their teacher and prophet but then He would not have followed His calling.

He was born to serve the needs of this world. He came into our world to serve as our sacrifice for sin. He lived each day serving people by forgiving their sins.

Mark 10:42 (NIV) Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

Don't think of yourself as anything more than a disciple of Jesus. James and John had asked to be placed in positions of great honor. They were two of the three closest disciples to Jesus. They saw things and heard things that the other disciples hadn't seen or heard. They may have felt that they were in a position to be honored above the rest. They may have even felt they were better than the others. So they wanted to be seated beside Jesus when He came into His kingdom. This caused the other disciples to become upset. Everyone thought they deserved to be in the seat of honor.

This is human nature and not spiritual nature. We want to be on top, to be honored, to feel special. We don't like being made to feel like we're unimportant. We don't like others assuming we don't belong. We don't like the feeling of being unimportant.

In our world we've tried to make people feel better by giving them titles and trophies. Our culture still has a hierarchy. The CEO is viewed as more important than the workers. The guy who cuts your grass is less than the person who designs cars. Wealth is prestigious. Poverty is shameful. A title is to be honored. Hard work is overlooked.

This is the way of the world. It has been since Cain killed his brother Abel. He felt as though his brother was better than him. Jealousy turned to anger, and anger turned to violence. Jesus said in His kingdom it's the other way around. It's counter-cultural. It's greatness for the servant and the slave.

Everyone of His disciple was a person who needed to learn to live the Jesus way. Jesus was not making a political statement or proposing an economic way of life. He was proclaiming the way of the Kingdom of God. The calling of God for kingdom people is being a slave and serving others.

There can only be God on His throne and Jesus at His righthand. When we choose Jesus as our Savior and Lord we are choosing to be a servant. We aren't offended to serve in the name of Jesus. We don't take it as a put down to be a slave in the house of the Lord.

Or do we? We can let that title servant or slave get in our heads. We begin to think that we aren't important. We may dislike doing servant work. We let that attitude steal away our peace and our joy. That is the peace of God and the joy of Jesus. To be a slave, servant, in the Kingdom of God we need to be as humble as Jesus. We need to see our position and our ministry in God's Kingdom as God's calling on our lives.

When we think that serving in God's Kingdom is work, a duty, an obligation then our peace slides away, our joy falls away and we become filled with pride. We're no longer humble like Jesus. This is the way our world operates, this is how sin infiltrates our lives.

Mark 10:43–44 (NIV) *Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.*

The great irony of being Jesus' disciple is to make yourself a slave. A slave of Jesus Christ is not owned by another person. As a slave of Jesus you are not a slave to the whims and personal demands of any individual. You are not a possession of anyone on this earth.

A slave of Jesus is a slave to being like Jesus. A slave to His teachings, a slave to His words, a slave to His actions. You are a slave on a journey of becoming more and more like Jesus. You are a slave to Jesus, He is Lord of your life. Those who are slaves of Jesus are not bound by the pleasures of another person.

The slaves of Jesus are bound only to Jesus. You are bound by the working power of His Holy Spirit. A slave of Jesus does what is good. Not how anyone on earth defines good, but what Jesus says is good. Jesus defines God according to the standards of heaven. Everything in heaven is good. All the saints in heaven do what is good.

Jesus' slaves are gentle, kind, and patient. Their actions are clearly seen by others, those being served as tender, caring, and enduring. Those being served speak about the gentleness, the kindness, and patience of Jesus' slaves.

Slaves are under the control of Jesus. That is Jesus is controlling what they think, what they say, and what they do. They surrender themselves to His authority and His authority alone. They are empowered to be His slave, to be like Him.

A slave of Jesus does all this because they are loved by Jesus and they love Jesus. They have experienced His love first through the forgiveness of their sins. They live each day with the joy of knowing that they are loved in every situation. They have peace that is actively working in every circumstance.

The first disciples of Jesus' learned to be humble and empowered. Humble and humility are not bad, they are not negative. These words today are used with connotations of being beat down, defeated, and giving up. Humble in God's sight, and the humility of Jesus is the willingness to submit to Jesus all the time. It is the prayer in the midst of good times that God's will be done. It is the prayer in the midst of the worst of times that God's will be done.

This is not my human nature. This is not how we naturally respond when we are on the mountain top and all is well. When one crisis after another happens we aren't very likely to pray for God's will to be done. Being humble and having humility in the sight of God is trusting God to be good and do what is good.

Often times we don't learn to be humble or have humility until we are faced with a choice. The choice is to trust Jesus or to go our own way. When we do whatever we want God will use that situation until God's will be done. As we humble ourselves before God we find that we can serve the people around us who are in need.

Humility drives us to wash one another's feet. Being humble empowers us to minister to the least of the people in our world. As slaves of Jesus we are free of the burdens of caring for another person. We are at peace with giving ourselves to the needs of the broken, the hurt, the innocent, the hungry, the sick, the sinners all around us.

Mark 10: 45 (NIV) *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

To follow your calling is to be like Jesus, so choose to serve others. Jesus came to serve people by healing them of diseases and casting out demons. When He did they wanted to follow Him. They were grateful that they were no longer slaves to a disease, an affliction, a demon. But they may not have been ready to be a slave of Jesus. They could speak about the power of Jesus. Their testimony was powerful. People were amazed at what they saw and what they heard.

Many people followed Jesus. Not everyone was ready to serve, to be a slave in the Kingdom of God. They weren't ready to submit to the control of Jesus over their lives. They weren't humble enough to allow themselves to serve others in Jesus' name.

It is no small thing to submit to the control of Jesus in your life. It is no small thing to be a slave of Jesus. As disciples of Jesus, He is calling us to be humble, to allow God's will to be done through us. All those who have been forgiven are also called to become a slave of Jesus. He has given you everything you need through the work of His Holy Spirit.

But you need to choose humility. You need to allow Him to bear the fruit of His Spirit in your life. Make that commitment today to be a slave to Jesus. The next time He gives you the opportunity to serve another submit to His control and through your love for Jesus minister to the people in front of you.

Jesus came to serve people by taking away their sins. The ransom Jesus paid was on the cross when He became your sin. His death paid the penalty for your sins. Through His resurrection from the dead Jesus defeated the power of death.

Choose Jesus and experience His love and joy and peace in your own life. His love is unlike any human love on this earth. His joy is greater than any moment of happiness or pleasure on the earth. His peace cannot be explained with words. His peace can only be experienced by faith in Jesus.

You cannot earn God's grace and be forgiven by serving others. You cannot earn God's forgiveness and new life by trying to help others. You cannot earn God's salvation by thinking you're better than another person.

Grace, forgiveness, salvation and the power of God to be like Jesus only happens when you turn to Jesus seeking to be forgiven. Make the choice by telling Jesus you have sinned and then turn to Him, trusting Him with all of your life. Tell Jesus you are ready to follow Him anywhere. Tell Jesus you are willing to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.