

Serve Others: Be Christ's Disciple (4)

Mark 10:45 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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.

2 Corinthians 4:5 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants on account of Jesus.

Introduction

Recap: In the past month, we have been talking about marks of Christ's disciples. What are the marks that distinguish us as followers of Christ from mere church-goers? They are: *putting Christ first, separated from the world, and being steadfast*. Today, we'll delve into another essential mark: *serving others*.

When Christ calls us to follow Him, it's a call to **lifelong servanthood**, not just for a day or two. He Himself set the ultimate example, coming to Earth "*not to be served but to serve*" (Mark 10:45). This morning, the same Lord beckons us to follow in His footsteps by serving others in His name.

Don't mistake God's service as something reserved only for the clergy; it's a calling for **all of us**. You are called to serve God and the people in your lives. Indeed, you are a **servant of God**.

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Understanding "Servant of God" in Today's World

The idea of being a "servant of God" can feel a little alien to us these days. We live in a democratic society that champions equality, where we're used to terms like "employee" and "employer" rather than "servant" or "master." While you might occasionally hear "servant of God" in church, many of us don't fully grasp its meaning.

The Privilege of Being a "Servant of God"

The title “**servant of God**” holds profound significance, and it's not a label for just anyone. This esteemed designation is reserved exclusively for those **called in Christ and appointed by God**. It's a privilege to join this distinguished lineage of individuals throughout history who served God. To truly grasp this privilege, let's look at some notable figures in the Bible who bore this title: *Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, all the prophets, Mary the mother of Jesus, Jesus Himself (Luke 22:27), Peter, Paul, and all the apostles of Christ*. These were all servants of God.

The Honor of Serving God

Being God's servant is far more than a burden or a mere duty; it's a **privilege and a profound honor**. Why? Because it's God Himself who has appointed us Christ's disciples to serve Him and others in the name of Jesus our Lord. We should take immense pride in this capacity.

Imagine a butler, meticulously preparing a state dinner in the British Kingdom, carefully polishing each glass. You can see the quiet pride on his face as he serves the Queen. How much more, then, should we feel proud to serve God, who deemed us worthy to be in His service! We are God's servants, His **bond-servants**.

Understanding “Bond-Servant”

The Scriptures describe us as **bond-servants** (the original Greek term being ‘*doulos*,’ meaning “slave”). These bond-servants are those bound by a **contract**, which the Bible refers to as a **Covenant**.

When we were baptized, our sins washed away, and we publicly declared our commitment to follow Christ, we entered this covenantal relationship with God. In this covenant, God proclaims, “*I am your God, and you are My people.*” He promises to be with us, provide for our needs, and protect us from the Evil One. In return, we pledge our allegiance and loyalty to Him in worship and service.

It's crucial to understand that **no covenant with God has ever been made without a sacrifice**. This is where Christ enters the picture. God established a new covenant with us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As the New Testament states, “*we are bought with a price.*” That price was Christ, the Passover Lamb, whose death on the cross paid the wages of our sins.

Accountability: Serving Our Master's Will

Where there's a servant, there's a master. Servants work for their masters, existing to fulfill their master's wishes and needs. They obey commands, and they don't serve themselves; if they do, they're no longer servants.

Our Master, Jesus our Lord, also has certain expectations of us. What are they?

Understanding the Master's Will

First and foremost, a servant must **understand what the master wants**. A servant ignorant of their master's will is a useless one. If we claim to be God's servants, we must make every effort to clearly understand what God wants us to do in and with our lives.

Here's what God wants from us:

He wants us to **serve others**, using the talents and resources He's given us. He wants us to **never** serve our own selfish desires at the expense of others' needs. God's blessings on us are always meant to be shared with the less fortunate.

Consider the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). The rich man feasted sumptuously every day while a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, lay at his gate, longing for scraps. The rich man's failure was his neglect of his neighbor.

Serving with the Right Attitude

Beyond simply understanding our Master's will, every servant is expected to serve with **good attitudes**. Let's explore what that looks like:

A. Serve with a Purpose

Understand how your service to others connects to the Lord. When you serve your neighbors, you are, in essence, **serving the Lord**, and by doing so, you **please Him**.

Consider the story of three masons working on God's temple:

- The first grumbled, "I'd rather do something else, but nothing else is available."
- The second sighed, "I don't want to do this, but if I don't, my family will starve."
- The third, however, beamed, "It is my joy working here. I am doing it for the Lord and His people."

Only the third mason truly saw the divine purpose in his work. As the Bible says, “Do everything for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

B. Serve Out of Love, Not Duty

Ensure your service to others stems from **love** (Galatians 5:13), not just a sense of obligation. Think of Jacob the son of Isaac who served Laban his uncle for seven years to marry Rachel, Laban’s daughter. “Those seven years seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her” (Genesis 29:20). Love transforms the effort.

C. Serve with Humility

When you serve, act with **humility** (Acts 20:19). Consider others better than yourselves. As Philippians 2:3 instructs, “Do nothing from conceit, but regard others as better than yourselves.”

For instance, during the 1960s, a group of all-white Christians went to the Deep South to help a Black congregation with repairs. The Black church's program coordinator noticed some in the white group were serving out of conceit. When he politely but firmly confronted them, the offended white individuals left for home. True service requires a humble heart.

D. Serve with God-Given Strength

When serving others, do it with **God-given strength**, not your own. There's a vast difference between service done by human effort and that empowered by God. It's like comparing walking to New York City versus driving there—it's far easier when you serve with God's strength than with your own.

For example, last year, when we undertook our outreach initiatives through prayers and invitations, we received 17 new members into our church. This growth was entirely possible due to God's power and initiation through our works together, not by my own efforts. When you serve others, be sure to ask God for His strength and wisdom (Psalm 86:16, 119:125).

The Reward for Our Services

What do we gain from serving? The rewards are profound, both here on Earth and in Heaven.

On Earth: Lives Changed and Transformed

Here on Earth, the reward is seeing **lives changed and transformed**. Through our service, we edify each other, contributing to each other's spiritual and emotional growth. God commands us to do so, as seen in Romans 15:2: *“Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.”*

Imagine you, standing by a neighbor who is building his house, offering him bricks one by one. Similarly, we are called to daily offer our service to build up our neighbors' lives through words of encouragement and acts of love.

In Heaven: Praise and Honor from God

In Heaven, our reward will be **praise and honor from God** Himself. He will acknowledge us with the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant! Come and share in your master's happiness!”* (Matthew 25:21). God promises to honor those who serve Christ (John 12:26).

Conclusion

Proverbs 14:35 says, *“a king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath.”* May God bless us to be wise servants who bring delight to our heavenly Father through our daily lives of service for others. Amen.