

SERMON ON SERVING  
MARCH 22, 2020

In the name of Jesus:

When it comes to serving God, the motivation behind what you do is more important than what you do. We are as a congregation in the midst of a 40-day challenge to put Jesus' words into practice. We are calling it the Red Letter Challenge because in many of the Bible's the words of Jesus are in red. After all that Jesus has done for us, and the ways in which He's served us, and given His life for us, we are extremely motivated to represent Him well and do what He asks us to do. We aren't doing this challenge out of guilt or obligation, we aren't doing this challenge gritting our teeth together. We are doing this challenge because really at the heart of it, we love Jesus and we want to follow Jesus.

In following Jesus we are invited to put into practice 5 main principles:

**Being/Forgiving/Serving/Giving/Going**

We've looked at being and forgiving. And now we are looking at serving. There is a flow to living your life as a disciple of Jesus. When we "be" with Christ, when we spend time with Him we see just how

much He loves us. Just as important, we see that God has been gracious to us and He forgives us. After being with Him and receiving His forgiveness, now I'm ready and motivated to put His words into practice. In other words, after Jesus has done all the hard work, I'll now do my part in representing Him. Because Jesus loves me, I want to live for Him. Today we are talking about serving. **We want to serve Jesus because He has served us.**

Inside of all of us, we like the idea of serving. But sometimes we don't really want to. Perhaps you heard of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs? He came up with it in 1943. Maslow stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs in life and that some needs take precedence over other. Our most basic need, so at the bottom of the pyramid, our very first, most basic foundational needs are physical needs. We need food, water, warmth, and rest. Then the next need is a safety need, we need security and safety. Once those needs are met, we need love needs. We need intimate relationships and friendships. Then esteem needs: prestige and feelings of accomplishment. And finally at the very top of the pyramid for Maslow, in other words, to reach our highest level of fulfillment is that he came up with is self-actualization needs, in other words achieving one's full potential.

This has been a major tool used in psychology courses for many decades. But as they studied it they've now added three other levels in the pyramid, and amazingly, they added a need that's even higher on the pyramid. Psychology now says the greatest need in this world that we can meet, the one at the very top of the pyramid, which used to be self-actualization needs, but they said there's a higher one. It's called transcendence needs. In other words, once you have achieved your highest potential, self-actualization, the thing that will bring us the most fulfillment is actually when we who have achieved our highest potential actually help others reach their highest potential.

When you serve and help someone else that brings you the greatest fulfillment in this world. Let me put it this way: what psychology has determined is that **nothing fulfills you more than serving others**. Serving others invites you into a life that is bigger than yourselves.

Our purpose will always flow out of our identity. The Bible tells us very clearly that Jesus was in fact a servant. He actually says to His disciples at one point that He did not come to this world to be served but rather He came to serve us. As believers we have God's Spirit living

on the inside of us. We were made in His image and so if He is a servant, then when we represent Him best in this world, so too, are we.

The reason we get so much joy out of serving others is because that's how God made, that's how He wired you. Being servants are a part of our identity in Christ. When we serve people we are not just thanking Jesus for what He did for us but we are actually stepping into our God given identity. Serving others brings us Joy because as we serve others out of our new Identity in Christ we fulfill our God- given purpose.

The American mindset is that "The customer is always right." And businesses and restaurants try to make it as easy as possible for the consumer to have it just the way they want it. Burger King had the right idea when they started the, "Have it your way" slogan. We have turned into a consumer minded nation. We've even turned into consumer minded churches. Consumer minded Christians.

Unfortunately, this consumer mindset has made its way right into the church. People now choose churches based on their own likes, or if it makes them feel good. It is a self-centered; the world revolves around me approach. The thinking is that I need to find a church that makes me happy. No wonder some people are constantly changing churches. They are never happy with the preaching or the worship or

the home groups or the youth ministry. They change churches every six months because they never find what they are looking for. God didn't make us to find pleasure or to seek things that will meet our needs.

**Rather you and I have been made by God to serve and to live for something bigger than ourselves.**

People complain today that they don't get anything out of church. The reason they are getting nothing out of church is because their view of the church is wrong. The church is not a business that is called to meet your every need. The church is a movement of people that has been called to serve and guess what? You are one of those people that form the church.

Jesus says: <sup>34</sup> ***"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.***

Essentially Jesus says, "When others are consumers and think fill me fill me fill me," what nourishes me is when I pour into the lives of others. The disciples were more worried about consuming, but Jesus was more worried about contributing. He looked out and saw that the people from the village were coming out to him. He felt more revitalized, more rejuvenated; more filled when He was serving others and leading them to faith in him.

Jesus' motivation was to give of Himself so that others would live. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve. So too, as His followers, we are called not to be served but to serve, to give ourselves to others in the name of Jesus, as Christ lives in and through us. He has made you and me to serve.

God's plan is made known in the Bible, and God is consistent in keeping with His plan. Just listen to what God says to His people, the Israelites: **'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup> you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'** He called them specifically to represent Him for the sake of the rest of the world, not at the expense of the rest of the world. As they would grow, and obey God, He would make them prosperous and many would see and when they did, they would point all glory to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is our God.

This is what God has called us to do, that, as we follow Jesus, we serve others and lead them to Jesus. The Apostle Peter says:

**<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**

Jesus calls us His chosen people, a royal priesthood; a priest is someone that mediates between God and the people. We are called just like the Israelites to be His light in this world. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 5: <sup>14</sup> **“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

You and I are God's plan A. There is no Plan B. We have been called to be His people, to represent Jesus in all we do. We have the opportunity to point people back to Christ through what we do. And we do it through how we serve.

God has done and continues to do amazing things in this church. Children are baptized and brought to faith in Jesus. People volunteer to help feed the hungry, to give shelter to the homeless, and give hope to the hopeless. There is much more we can do, but more ministries will

never happen unless we have more faith filled people willing to volunteer to serve and help others know the love of Jesus. And that is where you come in. The Bible says that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. That is to say that there is lots to do, but the workers are few. Statistics say that between 85 and 90% of people receive Christ before they turn 18. This is the mission field. And with our preschool we have a tremendous opportunity to serve. Our church has tremendous opportunities!

It's all about serving Him. Not gritting our teeth together because we have to. But excited and grateful that God would not only die for my sins and welcome me into eternal life with Him, but also that He would invite me into a life of purpose and meaning as I go out and serve Him. And we do it all because Jesus did it for us.

To the glory of God and in Jesus' name.  
Amen