

Become Like a Servant, to Be the Greatest

by Charles Banna

To be great, we must have a servant's attitude, being humble and selfless in our actions, and willing to serve others without expecting anything in return.

Duration: 20:13

Scripture: John 13:4

Topics: "Servant Leadership", "Humility"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, servanthood, and selflessness, drawing examples from Jesus' life of service to his disciples. It highlights the need to serve others without seeking recognition or honor, following the example of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve. The message challenges listeners to have a servant's heart, focusing on genuine humility and selfless service as the core qualities of a true servant of God.

Transcript

We have seen to an extent this morning the heart of God, how good and how loving and how forbearing He is. We read in Matthew 20, verse 25 onwards, brother read, Jesus said here, In the world, the rulers of the Gentiles lord over it, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.

You want to be great, be a servant, and whoever wishes to be first, be a slave. You see the stages there. You want to be great, be a servant, a paid servant.

Servant is always paid. And you want to be first, be a slave. Slave is not paid.

Slave is a bond slave that you bought with a price and he or she has to remain with you for life. That's the difference between a servant and a slave. And just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

We know Jesus, how many times he served his disciples. We read in the next chapter, 21, verse 18. Jesus was going in the morning.

It says that he became hungry. Matthew 21, 18. And then he goes to the fig tree to eat and he doesn't find any figs there.

You know, I was thinking about this. How is it that only Jesus was hungry? It never says that the disciples were also hungry. I have a feeling that probably Jesus served the breakfast to the disciples and probably there was nothing left for him.

And he said, okay, we'll go. And they were going to the city and he became hungry on the way. You see, in the Old Testament, we read God, the father, giving them manna every day from heaven and provided quails and provided fresh water from the rock.

But Jesus didn't do that for his disciples when they were hungry. We read in chapter four of John at the well of Jacob. He was hungry.

The disciples went to eat and then they brought food for Jesus. Why didn't Jesus make a miracle and just like that get some food for them? He could have done that. Satan tempted him and said, why don't you turn these stones into bread? He didn't do that.

He never used his prerogatives and his inner power to fulfill his own requirements and the requirements of the disciples. They worked and they ate. And you know, this is how Jesus served them.

Even in the last supper in Matthew, John 13, we read that Jesus, before he served food and wine to them, he washed their feet and then he served them. Even after the resurrection, you look at Jesus in John verse 21, verse 12, I think, it says, Jesus says, come and have breakfast. The previous verse, it says there was hot coal on which bread and fire was there and he cooked for them and he called them for, you see all his life, Jesus served his disciples.

He said, I never came to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. Why do we want to be served? Because of one thing, selfishness. I think I am somebody great.

In Galatians 6, it says, he who thinks he is somebody, when he is nobody, it says, that means basically we are all nobodies, but we think we are somebodies. That's why we have demands. We expect this and we expect that from one another.

When you have expectations, then you will be disappointed when it is not met. When you don't have expectations, whether it is met, if it is met, you will be thankful. If it is not met, you are not bothered.

You see, we always live in a kind of pyramid, all selfish people, a pyramid, I, me, mine, myself. It is always like that. When I have that kind of pyramid in my life, I always expect people to serve me.

But when I do away with that and destroy that pyramid in my life, and then others come first for me. You see, Jesus said about, he told this thing in Luke 17, Luke 17 verse 10, he says here, he says about a servant, but which of you were servant, having a slave, ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come home from the field, come immediately and sit down and eat. No master says that to the servant, when he comes back home after working in the field.

He says, but he says, he will say to him, prepare something for me to eat first and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk and afterward you eat and you drink. He does not thank the slave because he did this thing which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all these things which are commanded you, say we are unworthy slaves, we have done only what we ought to have done. I remember once, more than 10-12 years ago in my office, once I told office cleaning lady to deposit a cheque in the bank which was next door.

She went and deposited and came back and gave me the counter foil and I said thank you to her and immediately she shot back at me and saying, why do you thank me sir, I am only a servant. Then I said, shouldn't servants be thanked? You know it spoke to me that day that the servants, especially the slaves, they never expect you to thank them. Do you thank them when your servant is going back after finishing all the work? Rarely.

Some out of maybe courtesy they do. But generally people don't thank the servant and I learnt something there. The servants don't expect to be thanked.

Even if you thank they feel sort of embarrassed because they say it is my duty to do. I was reading that in the original it says, here it is euphemistically written here saying that unworthy slaves but in the original it says we are useless and good for nothing slaves. Useless, think about it.

Useless and good for nothing slaves and we have only done that which we should have done. In the original it says we have done or we have repaid our debt what we should have paid. That's all.

Good for nothing and we have repaid our debts. Is there anything great in that to glory in? You see when the prophet Elisha was called, you know the story, Elisha was ploughing the field with 12 pairs of oxen. He had such a huge piece of land, not one or two or even half a dozen, one dozen pair of oxen he was using, a yoke of oxen to plough his field and he was the 12th one.

Even though he was such a rich man he was working along with the servants. No wonder God called him. You know when God called him what was his, this thing how people recognized him.

You turn with me to 2 Kings chapter 3. 2 Kings chapter 3 verse 23. No I'm sorry 2 Kings chapter 3 verse 11 last part of it. It says about Elisha the son of Shabbat is here who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.

You know how he was known. He was known as a man who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah. And Elijah when he went and threw his mantle on Elisha, you know Elisha could have said what are you doing, go from here.

He didn't say that even though he was such a rich man, he recognized what his calling was. His calling was not to continue with this ancestral property but to leave that and go behind this man who is like a nomad. He has no house, no proper clothes and he comes here and throws his mantle, maybe it was some animal skin or probably a blanket or something and he recognizes that God is calling me for something higher and he goes and he breaks the yoke and with that wood he cooks a meal cutting those oxen and throws a big party and then he comes and joins this man.

But what was he known as? A man who was pouring water on Elijah's hands. Probably when Elijah went anywhere he used to first wash his hands and Elisha used to be there to pour water on his hands. And after Elijah ate, then again Elisha would come and pour water on his hands.

That was his ministry. That's all. He was known as that.

He was not known as a rich young real estate owner or something like that. People never referred to him as that. Not even as a rich young ruler like we read in the New Testament.

He was known as someone who just poured water on Elijah's hands. Just think about that brothers and sisters. A menial thing brought that man to a place where he could have the double portion of the spirit of Elijah and he became that because of his attitude.

He humbled himself in such a way like a slave. No wonder it says in Philippians 2 that even Jesus Christ, even though he existed in the form of God, he humbled himself and took upon himself the form of a bond slave. Bond slaves are slaves for life.

You bought them and they are your property. You can treat them any how you like. You can kill them.

Nobody will ask you why you killed because it's a property. They were treated like furniture. You know there's a verse in Song of Solomon, chapter 5 verse 2 I think it says, I was asleep but my spirit was awake.

Just think about that verse to live in such a way that even though when we are sleeping, our spirit is awake. We are tuned to, our ears are attuned to heaven like Samuel was sleeping and the Lord called Samuel. Samuel immediately got up and went and asked Eli, did you call me? See to be like that, to be always attentive to God and to listen to his voice and to listen to what he has to say, even if it is a menial thing that I have to do.

The Lord says, I mean the Lord gives grace to those who humble. We heard if you want to be great, be a servant. If you want to be first, be a slave.

What is the reason that I humble myself for? Do I humble myself so that one day I'll become great? So that one day I'll become a leader? Is that my motive to serve one another? Many serve like that. I'll start cleaning the toilet and sweeping the floor and mopping. One day I think the elders will recognize me and then you know they will ordain me as a deacon or an elder.

Is that my ulterior motive in serving and doing menial things or is it because I serve someone, the king of kings and the lord of lords came down and became a slave and served me, took my filth away, washed me, cleansed me and called me. He was not ashamed to call me his son or his daughter. What is it that I am aspiring for? The basic necessities of a servant is humility and selflessness.

If I have humility and selflessness, that is the basic requirement to be a servant. If I don't have these two, then I'm only acting. You know it's an attitude.

It's not so much that I do some service in church. Young brothers and sisters, if you're not cleaning your toilet at home, if you're not sweeping and solving and running errands for your parents, if you're not obeying your parents at home, don't come and do it here please. You're doing it here only for honor seeking.

Please resign from that post and give it to somebody else. Don't take that so called honor. It is honor seeking.

You're not doing it as unto the lord. You're doing it with an ulterior motive. You're not doing it first of all at home and you want to come and do it here to get honor.

You push somebody's wheelchair so that others can see you. Oh what a humble brother and sister he is or she is. Why do you do that? So that others can see you and come and say thank you to you afterwards.

Judge yourself. We all can judge ourselves. The bible says if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged.

Just think on the final day when at the judgment seat of Christ everybody is coming there and you're there and one is being judged and the lord sees you. You come next and the lord says no not you, you go next. Why? Because you judged yourself while you were on earth.

You lived before god's face while you were on earth. Then there is no need when we judge ourselves we shall not be judged it says. So when you have already done that job then god will not have to judge you because the record is clean and clear and the lord will say not you, you next.

Think about that brothers and sisters to live in such a way that when my turn comes the lord has nothing in my record to say judge me against. He says okay you're all right you go. Let's covet that and one last verse in Luke 12.

Luke 12 verse 37 it says about being in readiness be dressed in readiness verse 35 and keep your lamps alight and be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes truly i say to you that he will gird himself to serve and have them recline at the table and will come up and wait on them. Think about that verse 37 blessed are the slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when the master comes back truly i say to you that the master will gird himself like the servant or the servants and have the servants recline at the master's table and will come up and serve the slaves or the servants imagine this the master the lord the king comes and finds his servants faithful and what does he how does he reward them he rewards them by taking their clothes putting on himself like jesus wrapped a towel around him and took a basin washed the disciples feet feet made them sit at the table and wash it wash their feet jesus god will do exactly the same on that day when he sees you faithful and ready he will have you recline at his table and he himself will serve his servants imagine the king of kings and the lord of lords the creator of this whole universe coming and serving you because you have served him here on earth and in heaven he'll serve you even on even after the resurrection we saw in john 21 that jesus serves breakfast to them come and have breakfast he says let's have this attitude let this mind be in you it says in philippians 2 verse 5 i think which was also in christ jesus let this attitude be in you which was in christ jesus the same condescending attitude coming down to earth not to be served but to serve not to push people down but to lift them up and to give them a helping hand and strengthen them encourage them may god help you now brother baggage

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