



Solomon's Porch

to know Him • to be like Him • to make Him known

Celebration of Disciplines – Service

Are you willing to be inconvenienced by the Gospel?

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The world of today in a way pushes us to seek for the most comfortable way of life possible. At times we are consumed by how to make our lives the most comfortable way possible. Now there is nothing wrong with wanting to live a comfortable life but my question is what is consuming your life? What is consuming your energy today? What is consuming your thoughts?

"Service" but what is service? And what does service have to do with what I just describe? You say oh yeah service is for the missionaries, or for the once-a-year time when our HC has the chance to clean up church or going on a mission's trip.

Service is a position of our hearts and is divine when is led by the prompt of the Holy Spirit. When you position yourself to be willing to serve you come in collaboration with the Holy Spirit to do His work through us. He wants to use you and me!

Mark 2:1-5

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.

3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Imagine this- if these friends would have said: Sorry it's too crowded today or how can we get to Jesus? They did not give up and persisted to help their friend. They went out of the way to climb up the roof – and then dig up a hole through the roof for their friend to be healed.

How many of us would be so persistent to help someone? To serve? To go out of your way to serve someone.

Do you go out of the way to serve? Are you the first one that raises the hand to serve when the opportunity arises?

In this story we see many people were inconvenienced for the sake of a paralyzed man, but see Jesus's reaction is fascinating- and it gives us a glimpse of what Jesus heart is.

Verse 5 - *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Then in verse 11- the end result of this ordeal - ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

Jesus did not say well I am preaching; this timing is highly inconvenient for me. We see in this short passage something extraordinary happen because people were willing to be inconvenient.

Throughout the Gospels we see again and again that Jesus is willing to be interrupted, to be touched, to be inconvenience by people's needs. To be a servant means we genuinely need to care about people. Service is a position of our hearts and is divine when is led by the prompt of the Holy Spirit. But what do I mean by this?

It's keeping our eyes, hearts, and schedules open for **divine appointments**. Jesus was not stressed by time, what others thought of Him, or a list of tasks to accomplish each day. **Jesus was led by the Spirit of God and followed His promptings to serve, love, and help others. No task was ever beneath Jesus, and no person was ever unworthy every person its valuable in the eyes of Jesus to be inconvenienced.**

A story found in Luke 9:46-48

When Jesus gathered his disciples for the Last Supper, they were having trouble deciding who was the greatest. This was no new issue for them. "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest" (Luke 9:46-48).

Jesus answers is again fascinating- it's almost like Jesus goes the opposite and see what He said in verse 47

⁴⁷ *Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him.⁴⁸ Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.*

Why do you think Jesus used a child? I believe Jesus used children to say if you serve this one, this one that is vulnerable, this one that can't give you anything in return this one you must serve as you serve me.

Do you serve even when people have nothing to give you in return?

In the same situation in the Gospel of Mark's 9:41, a further statement from Jesus was recorded:

*"Truly I tell you,
anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name
because you belong to the Messiah
will certainly not lose their reward."
Mark 9:41 (NIV)*

Whatever you did for the least of these (Matthew 25:40)

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

In as simple an act of serving as, meeting a practical, simple, everyday need. Service is simple assistance in what it looks like trivial matters. In God's kingdom if you want to be the greatest you must serve!

The real meaning of greatness is to live a life of service.

"Service is the discipline of the many little deaths of doing beyond ourselves- It expresses into practical life."

Self-righteous service vs True service

Self-righteous service

- Comes from Human Effort
- Requires external reward
- It requires an amount of energy calculating
- It desires recognition
- It desires that people see and appreciate the effort.
- It seeks human's applause with proper religious modesty
- It is concerned to make impressive gains on
- is highly concerned about results
- is impressed with the "big deal." It is concerned to make impressive gains
- Self-righteous service picks and chooses whom to serve. Sometimes the high and powerful are served because that will ensure a certain advantage
- Self-righteous service is temporary
- Self-righteous service fractures community- glorify the individual

True service

- Is divine – prompt by the Holy Spirit
- We serve out of whispered promptings, divine urgings. How many times you've felt you need to help someone at Church or at work, or offer a hand or a word of prayer or to give you feel that prompt of the Holy Spirit
- Finds it hard to distinguish between the small or trivial matters of service and the large ones
- Is often drawn to even the smallest service because it doesn't see is as small when is genuine
- True service welcomes opportunities to serve
- True service does not discriminates
- True service is a life-style. It springs spontaneously to meet human need
- Builds community

How many of us would like to have the quality to be humble? I am sure all of us want to have more humility in our lives. Humility, as we all know, is one of those virtues that is never gained by seeking it. Therefore, we assume that there is nothing we can do to gain this virtue? I mean humility will not fall on our heads alone, right?

“Of all the classical Spiritual Disciplines, service is the most conducive to the growth of humility. When we set out on a consciously chosen course of action that accents the good of others and is, for the most part, a hidden work, a deep change occurs in our spirits.” - *Richard Foster*

Out of all the Christian Disciplines Service is the one that make us grow in humility. When we set out on a consciously chosen course of action that accents the good of others and is, for the most part, a hidden work, a deep change occurs in our spirits

You might think well I have served and people has taken advantage of me, I have given and I see people trying to take advantage of me.

Right here we must see the difference between **choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant.**

When we choose to serve, we are still in charge. **We decide whom we will serve and when we will serve.** We might have a hidden agenda, it's easier to serve the powerful it gives us good credit looks good on us, it's not so easy to serve the least or even our enemies. And if we are in charge, we will worry a great deal about anyone stepping on us, that is, taking charge over us.

But when we choose to be a servant, **we give up the right to be in charge.** There is great freedom in this. When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable. **It is one thing to *act* like a servant; it is quite another to *be* a servant**

We must seek to perceive what service looks like in of our daily lives. It is a ministry that can be engaged in frequently by all people. **It sends ripples of joy and celebration through any community of people. I pray that we would be known to be a Church that serves!**

When Jesus began to wash the feet of those he loved, Peter refused. He would never let his Master stoop to such a menial service on his behalf. It sounds like a statement of humility; in reality it was an act of veiled pride. Jesus' service was an affront to Peter's concept of authority. If Peter had been the master, he would not have washed feet!

The Service of Courtesy - Acts of courtesy are so meaningless, so hypocritical," we complain. That is a myth. They are extremely meaningful and not in the least hypocritical. Words of "thank you" and "yes, please," letters of appreciation and RSVP responses are all services of courtesy. The specific acts will vary from culture to culture, but the purpose is always the same: to acknowledge others and affirm their worth. The service of courtesy is sorely needed in our increasingly computerized and depersonalized society.

There is the service of listening. "The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them." We desperately need the help that can come through listening to one another. We do not need to be trained psychoanalysts to be trained listeners. The most important requirements are compassion and patience. To listen to others quiets and disciplines the mind to listen to God

There is the service of bearing the burdens of each other. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2)

You want to fulfil the law? Bear the burdens of each other Love is most perfectly fulfilled when we bear the hurts and sufferings of each other, weeping with those who weep. And especially when we are with those who are going through the valley of the shadow, weeping is far better than words.

The service of Prayer- Those in our community that are going through sickness or financial difficulties or depression because of Covid.- What do you do? How is your life inconvenienced to serve? If we care, we will learn to bear one another's sorrows. I say "learn" because this, too, is a discipline to be mastered. Most of us too easily assume that all we need to do is decide to bear the burdens of others and we can do When we learn to lift the sorrows and pains of others into the strong, tender arms of Jesus so that our burden is lighter?

The service of Encouragement- Encouragement can take someone out of the deepest feeling of despair, word bring life to others.

Jesus is giving us an invitation to go beyond ourselves and let Him lead us into those divine appointments in our daily. Are people as valuable as they are to Jesus? Are you willing to be available for God to use you to be a channel of blessing for others?