

Sunday, September 10, 2023 am

CLOSER TO GOD (3)

Disciples – 10

Servants

When you think of greatness, what typically comes to mind? The world's concept of greatness is typically measured in materialistic terms – wealth, power, fame, celebrity, talents, etc. But to God and Jesus, greatness is seen in serving others. As we continue our theme and being disciples of Jesus, today we want to address the subject of serving others. It actually builds upon the previous 3 lessons (we are members of the body and brethren). And we have alluded to it throughout our theme and in many other lessons. But let us take some time to focus on what the Bible says about being servants of Jesus.

I. **Jesus, our perfect example of service**

- a. **Jesus declared Himself to be here as a servant** - Matthew 20:28 – Jesus came to serve and give His life a ransom for many; Luke 22:27 - *For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*
- b. **He taught it directly** –
 - i. Matthew 20:25-27 – the context of the statement of Jesus above;
 - ii. Matthew 10:24-25 – He called His apostles to be servants by Jesus Himself.
 - iii. Mark 10:42-43 – he who desires to be great, let him be your servant. Matthew 20:16 – the first will be last, and the last first.
- c. **He taught it in parables** – the good Samaritan – Luke 10:29ff – Jesus illustrated who a genuine servant is – one who sees one with a need and helps – he is his neighbor; Matthew 24:45-51 – Jesus speaks of a faithful servant who is trusted while his master is gone. Similarly, Matthew 25:14-30 – the parable of the talents. Jesus often made reference to being servants in various parables.
- d. **He taught by example** –
 - i. He served the Father – John 4:34, 5:30, Matthew 26:39, etc.
 - ii. John 13:1-17 as He washed the disciples' feet. I always find it noteworthy that Judas was present as He performed this act. Then He used it to teach His disciples to serve others – note John 13:12-17.
 - iii. Throughout His life, He continually ministered to those with needs.
- e. **He taught it by application** – Matthew 22:37-40 – the greatest commandments – loving God and your neighbors.
- f. **He taught it as a factor in judgment** – Matthew 25:31-46, thereby demonstrating that true faith is found in serving others.
- g. **Ultimately, He died on the cross for us** – Matthew 20:28 – He gave His life a ransom. Philippians 2:7-8
- h. **He continues to serve as our High Priest** – Hebrews 4:14-16, 2:17-18 – in heaven He continues to serve us as He intercedes on our behalf.
- i. **Acknowledged in the New Testament epistles** –
 - i. Philippians 2:5-8, - He left heaven to die for us.
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 8:9 – for your sakes He became poor...
 - iii. Romans 15:8-9 - *Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ...*

II. **Serving One Another**

- a. **When we are reminded that we are disciples of Jesus**, the concept of service is necessarily implied – as we have seen, we learn from and follow Him. That's what a disciple is.

- i. We are commanded to imitate Him – 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21-24, etc. Luke 6:40 – a disciple is not above his teacher, but every who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.
 - ii. We are commanded to serve one another – Galatians 5:13
- b. **We are servants of God** – Matthew 6:24 – no one can serve 2 masters..., Romans 6:17-18 – we have become slaves of righteousness; Romans 12:1- present your bodies a living sacrifice which is your reasonable service – this is where being servants must begin. Without this as our foundation, what will our motives be?
- c. **How do we serve one another?**
 - i. With a proper attitude – there are many who may engage in an act of service, but with less than pure motives. “What is in it for me?” Do politicians engage in acts of service for the votes (to be seen of men) or out of genuine concern? Do some do acts of service as a “quid pro quo”? Do we as Christians engage in an act of service out of compulsion, or because we want to serve others? Many attitudes are associated with serving:
 1. Love – Galatians 5:13. We need genuine love for others. It is built into the command to “love your neighbor as yourself”. So did the good Samaritan (Luke 10).
 2. Meekness & gentleness – Colossians 3:12, we are called to put on various qualities including meekness – a word that means a mild, gentle and even-tempered disposition.
 3. Humility – Philippians 2:3-4 – look out for the interests of others; 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 - *Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.*
 4. Compassion – Jesus always acted with compassion – Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, etc. When we see others struggling, we need to be sympathetic and caring. Caring enough to do something if we able to do so.
 - ii. With awareness – if we to genuinely serve others and God, we need to be alert and looking. This will grant us more and greater opportunities to let our lights shine.
 1. Being aware of what is needed by others – Matthew 25:31-46 – notice how Jesus judged, “I was hungry and you fed me...” John 4:34-35 – after Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman and His disciples return, *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest*
 2. What we are able to do - our talents and their needs. God does not expect more of me than I am capable of, but He DOES expect me do what I can. Titus 3:8 calls for us to “be careful to maintain good works.” The word “careful” means to concentrate on or give serious consideration to something.
 - iii. With action – James 1:27, 2:14-17, 1 John 3:18. Whatever the needs of others are, as we are able, we need to act - physical, emotional and spiritual needs.
 - iv. With availability – are we there for them when needed? Time, personal involvement and resources. Am I willing to sacrifice to help others? Cf. 1 Timothy 6:17-18 – the rich were commanded to be “ready to give, willing to share.” 2 Corinthians 12:15 – Paul was willing to “spend and be spent...” Was it convenient for the “good Samaritan”? Was it convenient for Jesus to leave heaven and suffer the cruelty of the cross?
- d. **Serving others may lead to opportunities to teach them.**
 - i. As Christians, while our primary responsibility is to one another as brethren, we must NOT forget to be servants to all mankind. That is the essence of “love your neighbor as yourself” James 2:8 calls it the royal law.
 - ii. Matthew 5:13-16 – our example open doors for others to glorify God and see that your faith is genuine. James 2:18 we are to show our faith by our works.

- iii. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 – Paul did what he did in the hopes that he would win others.
- iv. One of the most effective ways to find opportunities is by helping others. BUT understand that what we do MUST be genuine! Evangelism may be a byproduct of the life of a servant.

In this lesson we can see that to be a disciple of Jesus, we must learn to serve others. It will certainly help us in our quest to draw closer to God. Remember, He said that if you want to be viewed as “great” in God’s eyes, it will be accomplished by giving yourself to others. What about you? Are you the servant God wants you to be? Do you have the “heart of a servant”? Think about it!