

Choosing to Excel as a Servant

Lesson #4

Scripture: Matthew 20:28 "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Introduction:

"In 1972, NASA launched the exploratory space probe Pioneer 10. According to Leon Jaroff in *Time*, the satellite's primary mission was to reach Jupiter, photograph the planet and its moons, and beam data to earth about Jupiter's magnetic field, radiation belts, and atmosphere. Scientists regarded this as a bold plan, for at that time no earth satellite had ever gone beyond Mars, and they feared the asteroid belt would destroy the satellite before it could reach its target. But Pioneer 10 accomplished its mission and much, much more. Swinging past the giant planet in November 1973, Jupiter's immense gravity hurled Pioneer 10 at a higher rate of speed toward the edge of the solar system. At one billion miles from the sun, Pioneer 10 passed Saturn. At some two billion miles, it hurtled past Uranus; Neptune at nearly three billion miles; Pluto at almost four billion miles. By 1997, twenty-five years after its launch, Pioneer 10 was more than six billion miles from the sun.

And despite that immense distance, Pioneer 10 continued to beam back radio signals to scientists on Earth. "Perhaps most remarkable," writes Jaroff, "those signals emanate from an 8-watt transmitter, which radiates about as much power as a bedroom night light, and takes more than nine hours to reach Earth." The Little Satellite That Could was not qualified to do what it did. Engineers designed Pioneer 10 with a useful life of just three years. But it kept going and going. By simple longevity, its tiny 8-watt transmitter radio accomplished more than anyone thought possible.

So it is when we offer ourselves to serve the Lord. God can work even through someone with 8-watt abilities. God cannot work, however, through someone who quits."

Craig Brian Larson, Pastoral Grit: the Strength to Stand and to Stay, Bethany.

Transitional Statement:

Church, God did not create the world to evolve around us. He did not place us in the lap of luxury to have our every want and whim addressed. God put us here to be His servant workers. To go and do as He directs. To be like Jesus who knelt down and washed the disciples feet.

Lesson:

I. A servant must be committed

A. Some Christians today kind of have one foot in the church and the other in the world.

1. But Spirituality demands people whose hearts are fully committed.
2. Once Jesus called some followers to make a faithful commitment to Him

- a. Some walked away....John 6:66
- b. So Jesus asked His twelve what their choice would be:

....And Peter said,
“...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69
We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy
One of God.” ...John 6:68-69

- 3. When I think of commitment, I think of Jeremiah 20:9

*“But if I say, "I will not remember Him
Or speak anymore in His name,"
Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
And I am weary of holding it in,
And I cannot endure it.”*

- B. Have desire, conviction and passion

II. A servant has the following characteristics.

- A. It is not about where we serve or what service job we get
 - 1. But it’s about who we serve.
- B. Recognition is not sought and even avoided in a servants heart.
 - 1. Because to God be all the glory is his motto
- C. A servant avoids anything that would take peoples attention away from God.
- D. A servant rejoices when his labor brings praise to God.
- E. Every thought of a servant considers pleasing the Lord first.
- C. Colossians 3:1-17

III. A servant engages his spiritual work

- A. He doesn’t take the position of a supervisor, standing back and watching others work.
- B. He rolls up his sleeves and get in there and works along with everyone else.
- C. A servant doesn’t care about having a prominent position
- D. But a servant places great value in humilityJames 4:10

IV. Jesus exemplified a real servant heart.

- A. Jesus walked among men and served them at every opportunity
 - 1. His miracles meet their needs
 - 2. His teachings helped their spiritual understanding
 - 3. He made time for people and listened to them
 - 4. He worked hard even to the point of exhaustion
 - 5. He bore the insults of many ...while glorifying God all the way.

- B. And on the cross, in enormous pain and treated with scorn and shame, Jesus asked for their forgiveness.

V. Jesus holds up the life of a servant as a requirement for spirituality.

- A. John 13:4-5

*“...got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.
5 Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet
Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”*

- B. Being a servant is about obedience, regard for our Master, devotion of heart and honoring God.
- C. A servant gains satisfaction in his Master's will being done.

VI. The Apostles struggled with understanding what being a servant meant.

- A. They aspired to rule and have authority over others.
- B. They jockeyed for position of importance
- C. They thought about an earthly kingdom and wanted to have their own place.
- D. They missed knowing the heart of Jesus

1. Jesus came not to be served but to served Matthew 20:28

V. Recognizing the heart of a servant.

- A. Philippians 2:3-8

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

- 1. Nothing from selfishness
 - 2. Humbly, think of others as more important
 - 3. Have concern for their needs
 - 4. Think like Jesus
 - 5. Give up personal desires
- B. The mind of a servant is clearly seen in the B-Attitudes of Matthew 5:1-10
 - C. And the very core of a servants heart is described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

VI. The driving force behind a servants heart.

A. Is an understanding of grace and the desire to share it with others.

Conclusion:

Service begins with a people-centered mindset, an attitude of giving and continues with a selfless pursuit of the glorification of God.