

Service

Worksheet #1

Monday: Jesus defines reality differently!

Jesus marched to the beat of a different drum; he was profoundly out of step with the world around him. He lived outside of the box. He drew outside of the lines. His wisdom was not ours. He simply didn't do normal. Consider:

- The first shall be last the last first.
- The power of God is made perfect in our weakness.
- Those who lose their life for my (Jesus) sake will find it.
- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- Forgive as you have been forgiven.
- If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.
- You want honor, humble yourself; do not take the chief seat.
- Whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all.
- The Son of man came to serve not to be served.
- Whoever would be great must be your servant.

Jesus stood our worldly wisdom on its head. (Mark 8:31-38 & 10:43-45) Prayerfully consider these things as you talk to God today. Ask your heavenly Father if: your priorities, love, forgiveness, trust, thoughts and your attitude are in line with His.

Tuesday: Service is at the heart of Christian faith because it reflects Jesus' heart.

We see Jesus heart clearly in John 13:1-17. Jesus does the unthinkable, he washes the disciples' feet. Servants and slaves washed feet. Rabbis definitely did not. Yet Jesus takes the lower position and serves those who serve him. He charges those with him to wash one another's feet.

My mom's family was from coastal North Carolina. A portion of the Baptist faith expression, called Primitive Baptists, were found in that area.

We called them foot-washing Baptists. They looked at the accounts of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and saw that it had all the earmarks of other acts we acknowledge as sacraments: Christ instituted it; he told them to do it; and he reminded them the servant is not greater than the master. So "foot-washing Baptists" saw in this act a sign and reminder to all disciples to be **humble** servants, remembering that Christ forgave all of their sins. As a result, it was also a call to a radically sacrificial, grace filled life in the world.

Where and how do you serve? Where might God be calling you to serve in an area or manner you have not before? Reflect upon these things.

Wednesday: Service goes low.

The idea of true life as a life of service is shot through the Bible. Yet, from the beginning, in the garden, we aspired to be like God, to know good and evil, to control our and other's destinies. So, in Mark 10:43-45, Jesus' words to disciples indignant over James' and John's request come as a shock! *"It shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant (diakonos), and whoever would be first among you must be slave (doulos) of all."*

Our ideas of Lordship are turned on their heads. I don't know about you but this is hard for me. I am competitive. Last doesn't sit well. I struggle with pride and appreciate place.

Is there a person with whom or an issue in which it is hard to take the back-seat? Talk to God about this so that Christ's humility might be yours.

Thursday: Service defines leadership.

A *servant* is one whose life is given over first and foremost to the work of the Master. In scripture the idea of service is captured primarily by the Greek words: *doulos*=slave, *diakonos*=deacon, . . . servant, and *'uperetes*=under-rower. A deacon is one who obeys and serves another out of love; he or she is the king's willing servant or minister. A

slave is one who is completely in the service of another and has **no** freedom save to obey. An under-rower is an attendant minister or servant who has been given limited authority to act in the name of the master.

Our ideas of Lordship are turned on their heads. If you want to be first, you have to be last, willingly, lovingly last. This makes Dag Hammarskjöld's words remarkable! "Goodness," he said, "is something so simple; always to live for others, never to seek one's own advantage."

Where do you need to take a lower place so that God's Kingdom purposes can be fulfilled in your family, among your neighbors, co-workers, friends and those you meet during the day? Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to those needs.

Friday: Service requires paying a price.

Paul pointedly speaks to our need to remember at all times the price paid for us. In Philippians 2:1-11 he begins with a fourfold motivation:

1. 'If there is any encouragement in Christ' reminds us of our experience of salvation and the gifting of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever know consolation and strength in Jesus Christ? Of course!
2. 'If any comfort of love' points us to our rich experience of Christ's love. We were loved when unlovable all the way to the cross. It is a love that won't let go of us and from which nothing can separate us.
3. 'If any fellowship (*koinonia*) of the Spirit' pushes us to remember those times of fruitful missional partnership that have shown the Holy Spirit's filling, blessing and power.
4. 'If any affection and mercy' prompts us to recollect the heavenly mercy and compassion that came to us from Christ at our salvation, and now flows through us to others.

Paul goes on in verse 2, "*Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*" The thought

begins with the words 'the same mind' and ends with the words, 'of one mind'. Both speak of a life with a wholly unified purpose. That purpose is: the Gospel! Paul mentions the Gospel five times in the first chapter and in the fifth mention he challenges, 'let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel!' We display mutual care in **this mind**. We live humbly together in **this mind**.

Now Paul goes deeper. He points to first to Christ's humility in heaven and then to Christ's humility in the incarnation, ⁶ "*who, though he was in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,*" ⁷ "*but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,*" ⁸ "*he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.*" ⁹ "*Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,*" ¹⁰ "*so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*" ¹¹ "*and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

No wonder Eamon Duffy wrote, "The victory of Christ is a victory unlike any other victory, because it involved the rejection of any type of force, and it was won at no one else's expense." Jesus lays down his life to model that God's heart and nature are: loving, sacrificial, humble, and other-focused. His expectations for his followers are quite clear, "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46) ¹⁴ "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*" ¹⁵ "*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*"

Saturday: Why serve?

Why does Jesus wash the disciples' feet?

- As an example of Godly humility (John 13:14).
- As a rebuke to pride (Luke 22:24-27).
- As a picture of our once and for all and daily cleansing (John 13:10).
- As a warning to Judas Iscariot (John 13:11 & 18).

- As an illustration of his humiliation (Philippians 2:5-11).
- As a reminder of his union and communion with the believer (John 13:8)

For which of these do you need to thank God or take to heart as an encouragement or corrective?

Sunday: Worship is the atmosphere of our lives.

In this fallen world, believers in Jesus Christ follow another ruler and are citizens of another Kingdom in our world. As a result we are not all that different from the citizens of East Tennessee. During the Civil War the residents of that portion of the state rebelled against the rebellion of the Confederate States. We too, are in rebellion against the rebellion of God's children against him. The world's revolt against God's authority and its rejection of trust in God's goodness is illegitimate because the world was God's from the start. Although it feels real and is real in one sense, it doesn't alter the truth that it is all still God's, regardless of what Satan and those deceived by him may think. While the world may have rebelled against God, it cannot escape the fact that God is sovereign. The aims of this world and its ruler are 180 degrees different from what ours now are. That has serious implications for how we view the church. Instead of utilizing the means of the Adversary, we pursue our resistance to the resistance through sacrificial service lovingly offered.

Imagine, Christ followers' rebel against the rebellion through service!

For whose service can you thank God this morning?

Who is God calling you to win through service today, this week or month?

'Do you know what I have done to you?' ¹³ 'You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do

as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, happy are you if you do them."

Jesus reminds us of who He is: Master and Lord. We know that truth beyond the reality of earthly titles. By calling Him Lord, we recognize His authority over all of our lives. If Jesus, who has this authority, is willing and ready to wash our feet we should do the same for others (13:14).