

30. Not to be served, but to serve

2/22/2004

It is a common thing for many people to come to Christian churches and expect that the pastors, volunteers and churches to do something for them. Yes, that is a right expectation, but that is not all. Many people became takers, not givers.

The majority of American Christian churches are run by less than 10% volunteers to do all the works that requires to exist as church. Calvary Chapel of Sahuarita is very blessed to have many wonderful volunteers to do church works. They are involved in many ministries. We have about 40-45% of volunteer participation ratio.

Some of you might be a little embarrassed to do this, but I am asking to do stand up as I call out:

Those who work in the Children's ministry, the Extreme Teens for Christ Youth ministry, the Worship ministry, the Ushers and Hostess ministries, the All-Around ministry to set up and tear down the equipment, the administration, the sound ministry, the overhead project, web site proofreading, Chapel Bookstore, the hospitality ministry, bulletin ministries, the building committees, the New Believers Class, Missions and the prayer chain ministry, please stand up.

Many of these people are doing double duty as deacons, elder and the Missions director.

A. FIRST WILL BE LAST AND THE LAST FIRST

Matt 19:30-20:7 But many who are first will be last, and the last first. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

Early in the morning is literally "at dawn." This was usually about 6:00 in the morning. The third hour was about 9 am; the sixth hour was about 12 noon; the eleventh hour was about 5:00 in the evening.

Matt 20:8-16 So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

Jesus detected in Peter's question the possibility of a wrong motive for service. This parable has nothing to do with salvation. The denarius (a day's wages in that time) does not represent salvation, because nobody can work for his salvation. Nor is the parable talking about rewards, for we are not all going to receive the same reward.

1 Cor. 3:8 And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

The parable is emphasizing a right attitude in service. It is important to note that there were actually two kinds of workers hired that day: those who wanted an agreement for a denarius a day, and those who had no contract and agreed to take whatever the owner thought was right. The first laborers that he hired insisted on an agreement.

The lesson for Christ's disciples is obvious. We should not serve Him because we want to receive an expected reward. We should not insist on knowing what we will get. God is infinitely generous and gracious and will always give us better than we deserve.

B. PREDICTING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION FOR THE THIRD TIME

Matthew 20:17-19 Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

For the third time, Jesus announced His arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. In the previous announcements, He had not specified how He would die. But now He clearly mentioned the cross and resurrection, but the message did not penetrate the disciples' hearts, because they were busy thinking about who the greatest in the Kingdom of God is. When Jesus talked about the cross, they were thinking about their crowns, when Jesus talked about the resurrection, there were thinking about their reserved seats.

C. THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF JESUS

Matthew 20:20-23 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

These two boys James and John who are known as the Sons of Thunder because they wanted to bring down fire from heaven to those who didn't believe Jesus, wanted to bring an additional firepower to their competition for the greatest in the Kingdom of Jesus. They activated a lobbyist, their mama Salome. She came and knelt down and asked Jesus for her sons' positions in His kingdom. Like her sons, she couldn't think any further than the worldly rewards.

Jesus asked the boys if they are willing to take the same route as He would. The word 'Cup' represents Jesus' death and 'Baptism' for His suffering before the death.

Little did mama Salome realize that the path to the throne is a difficult one. James was the first of the disciples to be martyred, and John had to endure hard days on the Isle of Patmos. These three believers wanted their will, not God's will, and they wanted it their way. Salome was one of the women who stood under the cross at Golgotha. While she was witnessing the death of Jesus on the cross with two thieves - one on the right and the other left, I am sure that she was remembering this very conversation with Jesus.

When Jesus cried out to the Father in heaven, "*Father, forgive them. For they do not know what they do.*" I am sure she also remembered the words from the lips of Jesus, "*You do not know what you ask.*"

When we become power hungry:

- 1) **We become secretive and selfish.** - They brought their mama as the lobbyist.
- 2) **We lose our discernment.** - Jesus told her that she doesn't know what she was asking.
- 3) **We create dissension.** - A competition rises among brothers and sisters in the Lord. We find it in v24.

This doesn't apply only in Christian circles, but also anywhere in society.

Matthew 20:24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

The result of this request was "indignation" on the part of the other disciples. They were not upset because the brothers were out of line, but because the Thunder Brothers beat them to the punch.

This disagreement gave Jesus the opportunity to teach a practical lesson on leadership.

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

As the disciples were listening the first two sentences, they were thinking, "Being lord over the people and exercising authority over them. Alright, I like that idea." Then, all of sudden, Jesus said, "*Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.*" That is not exactly what they had in mind. They wanted to be big dogs, numero unos, not servants on the bottom of the rung.

But they couldn't argue with Jesus, because He was the One who was making servant examples through His actions.

What is servant? Let's look at it from the biblical perspectives:

- 1) **Servant is someone who makes other people lives easy.**
- 2) **Servant is someone who provides freedom to others.**
- 3) **Servant is someone who has a mindset of "Other-Centered" instead of "self-centered."**
- 4) **Servant is someone who truly is blessed by the Lord because of his or her service to Him and His church.**

That means if you are not serving, you are missing out tremendous blessings God has stored for you.

Real ministry is done for the benefit of those ministered to, not for the benefit of the person who ministers. Many people are in the ministry for what they can receive (either materially or emotionally) from their people instead of for what they can give.

There are two things I use to measure the maturity of individual Christian:

1) What percentage of individual income they give to the Kingdom of God
Please note that I didn't say giving it to this church. Giving to the Kingdom of God is our expression of faith in God.

2) Serving in the Kingdom of God

We all should know that we cannot work our way into heaven. Then why do we work for the Kingdom of God? Because God cannot get His work done without us? By no means. Our service for the Kingdom of God is our expression of love for Him. Because we love God and we want to serve Him and His people.

Without an apology, I can comfortably say this: I've never seen any mature Christian who does not give his or her money to God's work and does not serve in His Kingdom.

D. AN EYE OPENING EXPERIENCE

Matthew 20:29-34 Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Here Jesus put into practice what He had just taught the disciples. He became a servant to two rejected blind beggars. These two men without eyesight had remarkable insight to call Jesus, "Son of David" which mean the Messiah.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Our service should be for the glory of God, not for the rewards.

When we work for our God, we should not calculate who is getting what kind of reward in heaven. We need to just serve Him, because we love Him.

2) Jesus wants us to be the greatest in the Kingdom through servanthood.

He had never rebuked His disciples from wanting to be the greatest in the Kingdom. As a matter of fact, He showed them a "how-to." Being a servant of all.

3) Remove the concept from your heart that you need to be served in the church.

If you are thinking that you need to be served, you are not following the instruction of Jesus. As I told you before, we have 40-45% volunteer ratio. That is not enough in God's eyes. He wants all of us, 100% of us should be serving one another, not just a few. If you haven't start to serve yet, you will have an opportunity to do it after this service by helping us to tear down the equipment and setting up next Sunday morning at 8 am every week. That is a good start.