

Character / Serving

APRIL 23, 2023

MATTHEW 28:18-20

PROPS:

KIDS SERMON:

What do you like about your parents?

What do you like about your teachers?

What do you like about your garbage man?

It sounds like you all like how they treat you, that they help you and serve you. We all like people who serve us. And today your parents and I are going to see that in God's Word, we're all called to serve each other. And when we serve, people see Jesus more.

I need a volunteer. This ball represents someone who has chosen to serve God. The water represents everyone in the world. When you drop it, what happens?

*drop a ball into a bowl of water.

All the water gets impacted. Even a little bit of service can have big impacts. What if lots of people serve?

5 circles on page. This is like the ripples in the bowl. At the center of the service rings is God. Make sure to serve Him first. Then make sure to serve the people you're closest too... your family, and your friends, and then your service will start impacting your friends and neighbors and the rest of the world.

Let's Pray

Introduction:

Hey so is it just me, or do people ever annoy you? I mean, you have your friend who has a lot of likes on their posts. They're good at everything they do, and they make sure you & everyone else knows it. They're always the hero in the stories they tell! And sometimes you wonder if they want to be friends with you because they actually care about you? Or because they just want to have more friends. Any names coming to mind? This is a self-absorbed person.

But the egocentric person can also express their self-focus in the opposite way. They think of themselves so much that they become hyper-aware of their own shortcomings. Instead of expressing hyper-confidence, they become insecure, needy, they always need to be reassured. They always say they're sorry, fearing that they aren't good enough. Always talk about the ways others have hurt them, and how they themselves have blown it. Any names come to mind?

When you think about yourself too much, it seems like you either come to think that you're the worst, or you think that you're the best... or sometimes, you think you're both! And thinking about yourself too much is something that many struggle with. Anyone ever think about themselves too much? Anybody honest? We all do it!

But what's at stake when you think about you, more than you should?

Today, we come to the second part of the Last Supper in Luke 22, and guess what, the disciples were focusing on.... themselves.

Review:

Last week, we saw that Jesus has a mission for you, a mission to make disciples who make disciples. And He has prepared everything you need for it. Just like the Lego company prepares the box, and the lego pieces, and the instruction booklet, so that you can build a super cool Lego Set... Jesus has prepared everything for you to make disciples, you just have to know how to put the pieces together.

So in last week's sermon, this week's sermon, and next week's sermon, we're talking about the three things God has given you to make disciples. And its the last three meals of Jesus in the book of Luke.

Last week we saw that the first thing Jesus gave us is Himself. All of Himself. He didn't just give you His time, He didn't just give His affections, or just give you His work on the cross, Jesus gave All of Himself, and we're reminded of that every time we share communion.

To refresh our memories let's read that communion moment that Jesus and His disciples shared...

—> Luke 22:19-20 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.'

In order to make disciples, you need to receive Christ's body. All of Jesus in All of you. Which is our review principle on your sermon outline. To make disciples,

—> You *gotta* receive Christ's body. All of Jesus, in All of you.

Today we're going to discover the second thing you need as you prepare to fulfill the Great Commission. In this passage, we will discover that to make disciples,

—> You *gotta* follow Christ's character and serve others.

Jesus showed you an example of serving others.

And because most of us have grown up in a Christianized culture in the West, probably everyone here would say that serving others is a good thing. We've grown up with phrases like

- The Golden Rule, that Jesus said: "do unto others as you wish they'd do to you."
- Ronald Reagan - You can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone
- Albert Einstein famously said "Only a life lived in the service to others is worth living"

This is a Christianized understanding of service and we all know we should serve others. But not everyone serves. And those who do serve, at times, end up with a salty attitude about serving.

< So what is it that hinders us from serving others as we should? >

< What would cause someone to not serve others as Christ served them? >

Let's pick up the story in Luke 22:21, right after Jesus told the disciples He is giving His body and His blood for them. Jesus continues speaking, and He tells His disciples:

—> Luke 22:21-23 "But behold the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed! And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing."

Jesus just accused one of His twelve apostles to be a betrayer, and they all start wondering “Is it me?” “Am I the worst one here!?” The parallel account in Mark says

—> Mark 14:19 “They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, ‘Surely not I!’

WORST

One by One, they each asked, “Am I the worst one there is?” Is it me? Is it me? Is it me? ... And as humans, and as Christians, we do that don’t we? Sometimes you think of yourself as the worst person or the worst Christian ever... You didn’t read through the Bible this year? *phhhh* You’re not in a small group? You did what kind of sin? And you rehearse all the ways you’ve blown it... thinking you’re the worst! And you struggle with self-loathing.

And if that’s you, then you’re not alone. In Scripture, we have the story of this kind of fear-based, self-focused thinking that made Abram’s wife Sarai, not believe that a child would come through her, and for 11 years she kept thinking about how something was wrong with her womb, she couldn’t have the promised son for Abram, so she gave her maid, Hagar, to Abraham instead, who bore Ishmael, the father of the Muslims who we are still in conflict with today... If you struggle with thinking you’re the worst, you’re not alone, but there’s big consequences for thinking about your inadequacies too much.

Wondering if you are the “Worst” is not God’s intention for you. God said in the book of Psalms that you are wonderfully made, and God made you in His image. If you’re thinking of yourself as the worst... there’s a word for that... and in the kindest way I can tell you this, it’s pride, and it comes out as insecurity and fear. Don’t think of yourself as the worst. That’s not God’s intention for you.

BEST

But then the next day, you get a promotion at work, you crush it on an assignment at school, and you think you’re God’s gift to humanity. You’re not the worst, you’re the best!

And if that’s ever happened to you, then you’re in good company because the apostles flip flopped that fast too. The very next verse, right after they all asked which one of them is the worst, they fight over which one of them is the best.

—> Luke 22:24 “And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be the greatest.”

These guys can’t keep their conversations straight. Am I regarded as the worst? Am I regarded as the best? The word that’s translated “Regarded” is the Greek word

—> δοκέω dokeō perceived as

A subjective judgment, which may or may not be reality. The disciples weren’t even fighting over who was the actual best, they were fighting over who was considered the best. How much of your efforts do you put in to be considered the best?

Do you find yourself always saying “Yes” to everyone? Are you always available to talk or text someone back right away, do you always want everyone to be pleased by you. Maybe you decide which picture goes on Instagram based on what you look like, forget everyone else in the picture. Its when you casually name drop in a conversation. Its when you don’t own up to your mistakes.

And there’s a word for that too... it’s the same word. It’s Pride. And it manifests itself in you wanting everyone else to regard you as “The Best!” And that’s our culture today. A culture that cares more about PERCEPTION than about CHARACTER. So if you’re thinking of yourself more lowly or more highly than you ought, watch out.

—> James 4:6b ...God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble”

And we see the tragic effects of pride in our passage. In what should've been the most holy and intimate of moments Jesus and His apostles shared... the moment after Jesus gave them the bread and the cup, His body and His blood, the disciples make it about themselves.... “Who’s the worst? “Who’s the best?” ... Who cares!? It’s not about You!!

You know as a dad, a mentor of mine told me that in the baby’s first year of life, they should learn that the world revolves around them. And then they’ll spend the rest of their life learning that it doesn’t.

Because when you make it about yourself, you take the focus off of Jesus. Which brings us to our first truth from our passage today.

—> When you focus on yourself, You get in the way of Jesus.

You can’t see Jesus when you’re focused on yourself. And a lot of times you block others from seeing Him too.

< So what should you do? You know you shouldn’t focus on yourself, so who should you focus on? >

EXAMPLE

Well we’re at church so the answer is always Jesus. And in many ways that’s right. But Jesus gets a little more specific in our passage.

Right after the apostles argue about who’s the worst and who’s the best, Jesus gently reminds them about what He’s been trying to teach them about true greatness.

—> Luke 22:25 And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’”

Jesus is teaching His disciples that thinking of yourself too much, either in the negative or in the positive, is the way of the Gentile, the pagan, who didn’t follow God... its the Godless way, to claim grandeur over another. And it results in you being called a Benefactor. Someone who receives the credit for something they’ve done.

And hearing this, the disciples may have thought of King Herod. King Herod was the one who held the political title, King of the Jews. And Herod craved to gain the people’s praise. To be regarded as “The Best” Jew. So to garnish the people’s favor, King Herod rebuilt the Jewish Temple, and even though this was in service to the Jews, he did it for selfish gain. And was their “Benefactor.” Yet this was the Herod who tried to kill baby Jesus and murdered all the male babies under the age of two. Jesus says don’t be like this! Don’t try to be seen as the best. Live differently.

—> Luke 22:26-27 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

The servant doesn’t demand or even expect praise. The servant just serves. Jesus, the greatest of all, is before them as the one who is serving them. And if an unknown bystander walked into the room of the Last Supper, and they didn’t know who was the Messiah, they would’ve thought the Messiah was the slave.

In a passage you may be familiar with, a parallel passage of the Last Supper we read

—> John 13:3-5 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He

girded Himself. 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.

Have you ever had someone wash your feet? It's kinda weird in our culture right? I went to a Christian college and one day, the seniors all decided to wash the freshmen's feet one day and as a freshman myself, receiving a foot washing, I was trying to force some tears out, but the whole symbolism was kinda lost on me because its not something our culture does.

But for the disciples, this was unimaginable. The guest of honor, the Messiah would do the job of a slave. The bystander walking by would've thought Jesus was the apostles slave. Why? Why would Jesus do this? And it's not that Jesus did it begrudgingly. He served as a slave with excitement! Remember earlier in our meal,

—> Luke 22:15 And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;'

Other translations read that Jesus said "it is with desire that I have desired to eat this Passover with you..." Jesus was excited to serve! Why?

I'd like to propose that Jesus served His disciples, because He had disciples to make, and the way you make disciples is by serving them.

—>To make disciples, you *gotta* serve them.
Serving someone is a major part of discipleship.

But here's the thing, when you serve someone, you may not necessarily be regarded as the greatest... you may not be seen as the best. This word "Serves" in the Greek is

—> διακονέω diakoneō attending to another

We get our word "Deacon" from it. This word is also translated Minister. And when you serve, diakoneo, a beautiful thing happens... you take your eyes off of yourself, and you are forced to focus on someone else. Serving is never self focused. The word is never used in Scripture to refer to what you should do to yourself. I'm going to minister to myself... I'm going to serve myself... That's not in Scripture.

In the Kingdom of God, the youngest is to be considered the greatest. The leader is the servant. And that's why in Christianized cultures, you see doors opened for women. You see children prioritized. You see the owner of a company being the last to claim his or her paycheck. You see the captain go down with the ship, because the leader is the one who serves to the end.

You Sunday school teachers, I hope you know that your true title is not Sunday school teacher... that's the position you fill. Your title is disciple maker. And you do that, through serving kids in Sunday school. And as you serve them, you give them an example to follow, of serving others who will go out and serve others, and so on and so forth.

Discipleship happens by example. It is caught much more than it is taught. And Jesus gave you the first and greatest example of discipleship as He served His disciples.

—> John 13:14-15 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also out to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

And Jesus' example of serving disciples to make them disciples has been passed from generation to generation for 2 millennia. And someone served you and someone served me, and now we are disciples ourselves. Who are you discipling? Who are you serving?

Why is it hard to serve?

But you know a lot of times its hard to have a desire to serve. Because when you serve, something really weird happens. Servants often get treated like servants. You don't get thanked. People don't notice you.

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever thanked the people who set up the chairs you're sitting in? Do you even know who does it? You don't thank those people. You may not have even thought about them.

Bread winners, when was the last time you got thanked by your kids, for financially providing for them? Those of you who cook dinner or do the dishes in your home, how often do you get thanked? Not enough. But why is that? Why do you not get thanked very often when you serve?

We've been talking about how the Body of Christ, the Church, is like our physical bodies. And at KCC, t's all hands on deck right now. We all have a part to play. But I have to warn you, not every servant gets noticed, let alone thanked.

When was the last time you stopped to think about, or thank, your right knee for bending every time you ask it to? How often do you thank your fingers for typing an email? You don't. And I find the same thing happens in our families and in our church.

Should we thank and encourage each other? Absolutely. We're commanded in Scripture to do so. But properly functioning body parts usually don't get a lot of attention.

But you know what does get attention? Injuries. Things that don't work right get attention. If your knee's hurting, you think about your knee a lot. And when it starts to work, you're so thankful. For a day, and then you forget about it.

So if you find yourself not serving, or your serving with bitterness at not getting noticed, then perhaps that shows that there's an injury in there somewhere. And injuries can come from a sickness within, or from an added stressor from the outside.

I was playing basketball in 2013 against some teenagers. And I was smoking them. And I went up for a layup, and came down wrong and broke my right foot. They put a boot on me for 3 months. So I had to walk all funny, and my back took on a bigger load than it was supposed to. My back was never meant to handle that added load, but it did for three months. And you know what happened when I came out of my boot? I threw my back out.

Don't take a bigger load than you're supposed to. Just because there's a need, doesn't mean you have to fill it. But make sure that you're not being the body part that's not carrying any load. We all have a part to play in this body. Are you serving others?

< Having seen that the cure for focusing on yourself too much, the cure for pride, is serving others, and having seen that you've been given an example to follow in how Jesus served, how should you serve? >

HOW TO SERVE

I'd like to close with 3 Actions steps.

Action step #1)

—> Serve unto the Lord and not man.

—> Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men

Whether your volunteering at church, being kind to your neighbor, or doing the dishes for your roommate... don't do it for man. Do it for the Lord.

Honestly I often feel weird when I thank those of you who serve in this church. Its as if when I say thank you, that I'm thanking you for helping me with my project that I'm responsible for. And thats not what this church is. We're equally on a mission to make disciples in Kailua, amen!? So let's just do it together. And when we say "Thank you" let's know that we mean "Thank you for being faithful to Jesus.

Action Step #2

—> [Follow God's priority list](#)

Make sure you're living a life of service, but don't carry more of a load than you were intended to. Otherwise you'll throw out your back like I did and you'll be sidelined. I'd like to suggest that the priority list that Scripture lays out for you is as follows. And I'm open to dialogue about this, but this is how I live out my life.

- 1) God (Deut. 6:5) (love the Lord your God with all your heart)
- 2) Spouse (Ephesians 5:22, 25, 31) (You two have become 1, and your first diakoneo, service is to each other)
- 3) Kids (Ephesians 6:4) (bring them up in the disciple and instruction of the Lord)
- 4) Job (Gen 1:28)) God has called you to bring order, beauty, and abundance to this world. Do it.
- 5) Parents (Exodus 20:12)
- 6) Extended Family (1 Timothy 5:8) You have a Biblical obligation to honor your family, well.
- 7) The Church (Gal 6:10) Do good to all people, and especially to those whoa re of the household of the faith. If we don't treat each other right, why would anyone want to join this family? Being in this Jesus-family has a lot of perks. People who aren't in it should see how we treat each other, and beg to get in.
- 7) Your neighbor (Mark 12:31) First person outside of your family you should serve is the person who God puts in your path on the regular. Often its your literal neighbor, or your co-worker, or your barista.
- 8) Rest of the World (Matthew 28:19)

Action Step #3, if you are spending time with God, if you're serving your spouse and your kids, and honoring your parents and your family, and if God is calling you to serve in this church... there's a lotta needs where you can serve.

Sunday school: 25

VBS: 70

AWANA: 25

Youth: 7

Worship:

Tech:

Sunday Service Teams: 3 team leaders, and 20 more servants.

Meal train team: 1 team leader

Men: 5 more Bible study leaders

Women:

Ohana: 3 more ohana group leaders

Brothers and sisters, The harvest is plentiful in Kailua. We are seeing more people coming to Jesus and to church than ever before. But the workers are few. Therefore, join with me and beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38)

How will you be one of His servants?

Lets Pray.