

LET'S SERVE LIKE JESUS

Next Up, Pt.3

August 16, 2026

Hi BSCC: It's a joy to be back with you! = Everyone online: Hello, it's great to connect with you!...I hope you are doing well.

Before we get into today's message, I want to say a big THANK YOU to the staff for covering for me while I have been on vacation.

I had a wonderful vacation--Lots of time with my family. = A highlight was celebrating my dad's 94th birthday with him and mom, who is 93.

But I'm grateful for my church family, and it's great to be back with you today!

I want to thank Matt Blackford and David Judd for bringing the first two messages in our *Next Up* series. = I am excited that our children and students are studying the same topics we are during this series.

And I've been praying that God will be at work through the Family Discussion Guides that we are providing each week during this emphasis.

In this series we're learning from Jesus' example how to live a purpose-filled life. = The idea is that we are the "next up" in the long line of Christ followers that has spanned 2,000 years.

Today we're going to learn some things about what it means to serve like Jesus. = Our children are studying 3 specific passages from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount about what it looks like to serve like our Lord--We'll be looking at those verses as we go along.

But first I want to say a few things about our Ministry Fair which is taking place in our lobby this morning and next Sunday.

This is a great opportunity for you to learn about all of the areas of service and ministry we have going on here at BSCC.

There will be people at each table that can talk with you and answer your questions. = I want to read to you one of the ways Jesus described himself...

Matthew 20:28 "...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."(NIV)

Jesus said, "I came to earth not to be served, but to serve." = That is an amazing truth about the Son of God.--who He is, His character!

Jesus served every day in every situation all throughout his life. = As you and I choose to follow him in this way of serving, we will become more like him.

Your spiritual growth will skyrocket when you look at the church and you look at your life, and you ask: "How can I serve?...What can I give?...How can I meet a need and help someone?"

The Ministry Fair is a great place for finding your niche for serving the Lord here at BSCC. = So I hope you'll take some time after this service to walk around and learn about all of the different areas of service we have here.--Thanks!

In this message, we're going to look at 3 truths about serving like Jesus. = I want to begin with this statement...

***To serve like Jesus, love people no matter what. (TV)**

When Jesus served people, their lives changed. = The reason why is because he served them with unconditional acceptance--total, unconditional love.

Anytime I think of the phrase, "**no matter what**" when it comes to people and relationships, it makes me a little uneasy. = Because the commitment level we're talking about is so high.

We like to have a way out.--We like to have a way of escape...

It's not that people don't matter, but saying, "No matter what"....? = I mean, people matter unless the Chiefs are playing.

People matter unless they need something from me that I don't really want to give. = People matter until they say something that hurts me.--Until they do something that offends me.

People matter as long as I matter to them. = People matter as long as they believe what I believe.--As long they agree with what I agree with.

It's not that people don't matter, but: "No matter what."--That is pretty unconditional. = In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said--This is what it means to serve and love others...

Matthew 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."(NIV)

Jesus mentions 4 responses to someone who either mistreats us or wants something from us. = He's talking here about personal responses, not organizations or governments.

And he's certainly not saying that if you are in an abusive relationship, you need to sit there and take it.--Absolutely not. = You need to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Let me say a word about these 4 situations...

First, "to turn the other cheek" means to choose to not retaliate against the person who has hurt you.

Second, "to let them have your shirt" means to be deeply interested in what the other person needs...And ready to help them when you can.

Third, "to go with them two miles" means to be willing to do more than is required. = To consider the other person's problem as something that is important to you.

Fourth, "to give to one who asks of you" means to be not turn away from those who are poor and truly needy.

In these words, Jesus is teaching us that if we want to serve like him, we need to...

1. Serve _with grace_. (TV)

I want to read to you what Bob Russell says about this about this part of the Sermon on the Mount. = He writes...

****** "Jesus is not talking about a weakling who offers no resistance because he's afraid. He's talking about the strong person whose control of himself and love for others are so powerful that he rejects every conceivable form of retaliation." --Bob Russell

To serve like Jesus includes choosing not to harm those who have personally hurt you...But instead to be of help to them.

President Abraham Lincoln was once asked what he thought about a fellow politician who had constantly ridiculed him. = Lincoln was very complimentary.

The person who asked the question expressed surprise that Lincoln would be so positive about a man who had such hostile feelings toward him...

"Do you know what he says about you, Mr. President?, the man asked. = Lincoln responded, "You didn't ask what he thinks about me. You asked what I thought about him, I think he's a good man."

That's a example of serving with grace. = But we're going to turn to our Lord for a more in-depth example...Because he is the one we want to emulate in the way that we relate to others and serve others.

We're going to go to the story of Jesus' last supper with his disciples in John 13. = Seated to the right of Jesus was John.--And most scholars think that Judas was the one seated to the left of Jesus.

To be chosen by Jesus to sit next to him at this dinner was a special honor and privilege. = In verse 21 of the story we read this...

John 13:21 ...Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."(NIV)

The disciples begin looking at each other. = The text says they begin staring at each other.--What an intense moment that must have been.--As they stared at each other, wondering who this could possibly be.

Peter motions to John, who again, is sitting next to Jesus.--"Ask him who it is." = John says to Jesus, "Lord who is it?"

Jesus answers, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." = Now, we have to assume that this is a quiet conversation between John and Jesus. One reason the scholars believe that Judas was seated immediately to Jesus' left, is because of what Christ does next...

John 13:26 ...Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.(NIV)

What we need to know about this is that, when a host would do this...he was making a statement of honor and love.

In that culture to receive this bread dipped in that sauce was to be highly honored at the dinner.

And so, not only has Jesus seated Judas in the place of honor, he has also extended honor to Judas in this way.

John 13:27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." 28. But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what

was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. 30. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.(NIV)

I think there symbolism in that last sentence: I think John is saying, "And Judas went out and it was night." = A reference to Judas' entrance into the dark kingdom of the Evil One. With all the pressure and angst Jesus is experiencing, he has to deal with a traitor within his inner circle. = It says in verse 21, Jesus was troubled in his spirit as he talked about this. Judas had been so sneaky and deceptive that none of the other 12 suspected him.

In my opinion, in this dinner Jesus is making one final appeal to Judas. = He is giving him one last opportunity to change his mind.

But Judas wasn't the only disciple in the room that night that would let Jesus down. = In Luke's account of the Last Supper, Jesus says...

Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." 33. But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." 34. Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."(NIV)

What grace Jesus shows here! = He says, "Peter, I'm praying for you even though I know you're going to fail me...And afterward, when you repent and return to me, I want you to continue in your ministry."

What Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount about not repaying "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth"...And then the example at the Last Supper, that he provides of serving in this way...It can cause us to throw up our hands and go, "I can't do that...that is too hard!"

There's something that John says earlier in his account of the story of the Last Supper, that holds the key to serving like Jesus in this way. = John writes...

John 13:3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God (NIV)

Jesus knew who he was--the Son of God. = He was thinking about his relationship with his Father as he entered the upper room and had this last meal with his disciples.

This what enabled Jesus to serve the disciples with such mercy and love in spite of being under great pressure. = Knowing that he was going to the cross the next day.

Take a look at this...

***Serving like Jesus comes from being loved by Jesus. (TV)**

Serving like Jesus starts with receiving his love each day. = "Because he loves me, I can love others," we say to ourselves.

When you look at God's love for you, how deeply he loves you...How well he takes care of you and meets your needs. = And you let that be the motivator of your love for others...

Then not repaying "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" becomes something that we are able to do. = Even want to do, because we see the other person as more than just someone who has harmed us...We recognize their humanity and that they are someone God loves.

When you cup is filled with God's grace, you're gracious. = When you feel forgiven, you're able to forgive others, because you're like: "Jesus has been so merciful toward me, I'm going to show mercy to this person."

Before we go on, I want to touch on something else that I think is essential in being able to obey Jesus' teaching about serving with grace from the Sermon on the Mount.

Earlier in the sermon, Jesus says this...

Matthew 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."(NIV)

In order to serve others with grace, you have to learn what to do with your anger. = There is a progression to the Sermon on the Mount.--Before Jesus talks about serving with grace, he teaches us to not let our anger control us.

We get hurt or others we care about are hurt, we become angry. = That's natural, that's as it should be.--But we need to respond to that anger in ways that defuse its destructive power. Last Fall we did a 3-part series on anger that you might go back and watch on our website.

But anger management begins with admitting that I am angry and identifying why. = You want to ask yourself, "Why am I angry?...Why is this bothering me so much?"

Ask God to help you recognize what is triggering your anger. = I find it helpful to write it out, so that I get real specific about what is causing me to be so upset.

Then you want to release that hurt--the situation and the pain it has caused, over to God. = 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on God because he cares for you."

We're going to get into this more next week, when we learn from Jesus about loving our enemies.--But I wanted to at least touch on it this morning, because breaking the power of anger is essential to being able to serve others with grace.

Let's look at a second passage from the Sermon on the Mount about what it looks like to serve like Jesus. = In Matthew 6:1, Jesus says...

Matthew 6:1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4. so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."(NIV)

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that what matters when we serve or pray or fast, is the intentions of our heart before God.

If it is our intent to be seen by other people, so that we get something back from them--be it approval or praise or something else...God will not involve himself.

If on the other hand, what we are doing we do for him, he will respond to our good intentions and efforts. = Here Jesus is teaching us that if we want to serve like him, we need to...

2. Serve for an audience of one. (TV)

Jesus uses the term "hypocrites" here to describe the intentions of many of the religious leaders when they would serve, pray or fast.

This is a term used by Jesus alone in the New Testament, a word he uses 17 times. = It was used to refer to Greek actors who wore different masks while playing numerous roles.

But the word came to refer also to anyone who practices deceit. = It was Jesus who introduced this usage of the word--to distinguish between our outward appearance to the world and who we are in our heart before God.

In these verses Jesus is talking about a person who gives without regard to who is looking... And who does not even notice their giving as anything special that they are doing. = Good deeds just naturally flow from their character.

This is a person who lives as if the only one whose opinion matters to them is God. = This is how we serve like Jesus.

Again, I want to look not just at Jesus' teaching but also his example. = A story that came to mind is: The occasion when a group of parents try to get their children in front of Jesus so he can bless them...And the disciples attempt to stop them.--Mark writes...

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

16. And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.(NIV)

Why did the disciples try to keep this from happening? = Likely because they didn't view these children as being important.--So they thought they were doing Jesus a favor.

But Jesus, on the other hand, saw tremendous value and importance in these children. = He constantly made time for children, for the sick...For those who were poor, those who were in pain...those who were outcasts.

There was purity about the way Jesus served and loved others.--He had no ulterior motive. = There was never any sense that Christ was being self-seeking in the way he served.

To serve like Jesus, you want to give to others with zero expectation of any kind of reward in return.

Today, what is often done in the name of serving is something altogether different, that goes like this = "I'll scratch your back if you scratch my back...I'll serve as long as there's something in it for me."

The motive behind this kind of intent is: "What's in it for me?" = Serving like Jesus is not self-seeking, it is not contingent upon being repaid in any way.--It's done for an audience of one, for God.

To practice this way of serving, I encourage you this coming week to do some kind of secret act of service and kindness. = Send someone a gift...bake them some cookies...mail them a thank you card--Whatever it is, do it anonymously.

That way you can know you're not going to get anything back in return. = But you will be blessed, because "the one who sees what is done in secret will reward you."

Let's look at a one other passage from the Sermon on the Mount about what it looks like to serve like Jesus. = In Matthew 6:19, Jesus says...

Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."(NIV)

Treasures are things we try to keep because of a value we place on them. = The most important commandment in the Bible is to treasure God and his kingdom more than anything else.

Jesus teaches us here that to treasure the things of earth is not a smart strategy because...By their very nature, they are fragile and will eventually pass away.

Here Jesus teaches us that to serve like him, we need to...

3. Serve _with heaven in mind_ . (TV)

To store up treasures in heaven is to invest your life in what God is doing. = To treasure your relationship with Jesus and to devote yourself to the good of other people.

We saw this type of devotion demonstrated powerfully during our Multiply initiative the past couple of years.--When so many of you gave sacrificially to God's work here and around the world. = The same principles hold true in our serving.

When we live in this way, our treasures are absolutely secure. = What we do counts, and it counts forever!--It is preserved for us within the eternal life that God provides.

Upon our arrival in heaven, we will receive rewards from God for our faithfulness in serving him here on earth. = This is absolutely incredible to think about!

Imagine God saying something to you like: "Thank you for putting your spiritual gifts and life experiences to good use in serving others on my behalf...Thank you for spreading my love in a loveless world...

"Thank you for serving the poor in my name...Thank you for caring for others by telling them about my Son." = I believe we will be stunned by this experience!

The example we're going to look at of Jesus serving with heaven in mind, will also lead into our time of Communion.

In the context of persevering in our faith, we read about Jesus in Hebrews 12:2--That...

Hebrews 12:2 ...For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.(NIV)

The cross of Christ represents the greatest suffering in history. = For Jesus not only suffered physically...He also experienced God's just wrath, in taking upon himself the sins of the world.

What was the "joy set before him" that enabled him to endure? = The victory of heaven.--As he would take his triumphant position at the right hand of the throne of God...And then welcome all who place their faith in Him.

While on the cross, Jesus sees his mother, Mary. = In the midst of great agony and pain, he says, "John, you take care of my mother."...

He's been whipped and beaten...he's been ridiculed and mocked.--He's been nailed to a tree, and says, "Father, forgive them." = On the cross, Jesus served every one of us--meeting our greatest need!

In his death, Jesus says to us, "I forgive your sins no matter what you have done." = No matter what sins you've committed.

God loves you no matter how long you've been running from him. = He loves you no matter how broken you are.--he loves you no matter what kind of words you have spoken.

There is nothing you can do to make you matter more to God.--And there's nothing you can do to make you matter less to him. = That's how much you matter to God.

As we partake of the bread and the juice, let us rejoice that on the cross Jesus served us. = Enabling us to be forgiven and to live with the promise of heaven.

If you would like to talk with someone about the grace and love that Jesus is able to bring into your life, please reach out to us. = If you're online, email us.--If you're in the room, please stop by the Connection Point.

We have Family Discussion Guides available, so that you can share with your children and students what you have learned today about serving like Jesus. = Those are by the doors, please get one as you leave.

I hope you'll take some time to go through the Ministry Fair in the lobby. = I encourage you to visit all of the tables so you don't miss something God has in mind for you.

As you walk around, be in prayer, saying: "God, what area of serving do you have for me here at BSCC?"

This coming week, serve people like Jesus.--Love them no matter what. = Serve them with grace...Serve for an audience of one...And serve with heaven in mind.

Have a wonderful week!

