

"...about all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:3).

Developing a Servant-driven Church (Part 2)

Mark 10:42-45

I would like to begin again by having you turn to Mark 10 and follow along with me as I read verses 35-45; noting specifically verses 42-45 as the basis for this series of messages on being a servant-driven Church. In Mark 10:35-45 we read:

35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You." 36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 37 They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. 40 But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41 Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. 42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

From this text, we began last week to examine what it means to be a servant-driven church. May the Lord add His blessing now as we seek to understand and apply His Word. From this account, we take note of some key things. ***First*** was the fact that the disciples, particularly James and John, had misunderstood what it truly meant to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Rather than following Jesus for some form or personal gain, power or prestige, Jesus turns both their own as well as all conventional or worldly thinking upside down as He reveals that the true path to greatness is not found in title, or pedigree or from anything taken from this world. Rather, ***true greatness (to be a true somebody in God's eyes) is found in humble service, following the example of Christ Himself, constantly looking for opportunities to give of self to others to the glory and praise of God.*** So, we must learn to serve; and to serve with the intent of not drawing attention to ourselves, but directing people to the greatness and power of God.

We see an example of this very motive to serve without drawing all the attention to ourselves found in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus describes those who would follow Him as providing to any and all, the flavorful taste and wonderful insight of the goodness and glory of God. We read there these words of Christ:

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light

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to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

A fundamental goal of every follower of Jesus is to provide others with the flavor and vision of Christ to the glory of the Father. The goal of all our efforts is that people would indeed see our good works, our deeds, our service, and yet not see us, but rather see God and give Him the glory.

From our Mark 10 text, we asked ourselves some questions about how we might become a church of nine hundred minister/servants; or whatever number of ministers God would have us to be; hopefully equal to the number of attenders we have. The first question we must ask ourselves is this, **"Am I a servant-minister of my Lord Jesus Christ?"**

We broke down Mark 10:42-45 into three parts so that we might be able to answer that question, **"Am I a servant-minister of my Lord Jesus Christ?"** In the text, Jesus identified first the problem in verse 42, then the paradox in verse 43a, followed by the plan in verses 43-44. Let me walk through the first two points quickly as we covered these in detail last week so that we can again pick up the very practical applications we glean from this text.

First, the **problem** is stated in verse 42 when Jesus said, ***"You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them."*** Here the fundamental problem is this, that even the followers of Christ have a tendency to adopt the thinking of the world. This is to say, that without effort, we will default to learn and apply the world's definition of greatness even to things spiritual; even to things of the church and of ministry to others. Let me give you just one example. How many of you have ever measured your relationship to God in terms of how much or how little you read your Bible? "I read my bible today, so I must be right with God!" "I have read my bible for seven days straight, I am becoming a super-saint!" Or, "I did not read my Bible today, so God hates me." Or, "I have not read my Bible in a month, I must be the antichrist!" I know I am being a bit extreme, and as you all know, I value and exhort you to read your Bible consistently; but my relationship with God is not about my attainment, about what I can do to please God, because I cannot please God enough in my own effort. I please God only as I have trusted in and am being transformed by Jesus who alone has fully pleased the Father. And so, Bible reading, or any other spiritual disciple, is not to be seen as a means of my salvation; it is not what I do to pursue my salvation; rather it is simply to be an evidence of my salvation, the fruit of a transformed life. But do you see that the world's thinking is merit based? If you perform well at work, you get a raise; if the quarterback throws X amount of touchdowns, he gets a bonus; if you keep your grades up, you get a scholarship; if you drive within the speed limit, you don't get a ticket! While there is nothing wrong with this regarding the things of the world, Christians must beware of bringing that thinking into the church, and into their service. That would be the problem.

Next, we noted from verse 43a the **paradox** Jesus presented the disciples saying, ***"But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant..."*** According to the words of Jesus, to be someone, someone great, begins first by being a follower. A follower of Jesus. To be a servant-minister is not a title, it is a way of life. We noted that Jesus used two descriptive terms as to the goal and action of His followers. He calls them servants, or "deacons" – *diakonos*; a waiter; one who looks attentively to the needs of others and seeks to fulfill them. And next Jesus calls them "slaves, bond-slaves;" - *doulos*; one

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who is owned by another to do whatever he is asked to do. This is the way of greatness and it is a paradox because it goes against the world's thinking; that the true way up in God's economy is down; that one's high position is determined not by haughtiness, but by humility. Jesus said the same thing again later in His ministry as found in Matthew 23:11-12;

11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

That is a paradox. It does not make sense to the world; and apart from walking earnestly with Christ, it will not make sense or even be our practice as Christians. So what do we do? We need a plan and Jesus gives us the basis of this plan in verses 43 and 44 where we read:

...but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

So, how do we do it? How do we become servant-driven? What is the plan to that end? To achieve the goal of the plan, which is to be a servant-minister like Jesus Christ, we must have three things right. We need the right information; then the right motivation; followed by the right application. Last week we started looking at the right information needed to develop this servant-driven mentality.

I. The Right Information

To have the right information, *we must be a people who learn and live out the truth.* Beloved, we must think right before we can ever act right. We need the right information. Never forget that thinking biblically comes before acting biblically. It must become our desire to see each one of us thinking rightly about their duty and privilege of being a servant. For the more we all strive to become like Christ, the more we become servants. To that end, we must be imparting God's truth into one another's minds.

A. The Right Mind-set

To be a people who learn and live out the truth, we must *we must become "others-minded."* We must have the right "mind-set." In Philippians 2:3-4 we read these words, ***"3 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."*** To be true servants, we must be others-minded. We are to be a people who constantly think of and consider others and their needs. Please notice that this is not to the neglect of our needs and interests in favor of the others; but supernaturally, by God's grace, the addition and priority of the interests and needs of others. Do you take time to think about the needs of others? Do you put yourselves into their shoes? Maybe you have been there before and know of a way to make the burden or need of another easier. How often do you think about and look out for the interests of others. We must be others minded. We must have the right mindset, which means to come into any given situation with the thinking, "This is not about me, it is about Christ; this is not about me, but about others; this is not

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about what I can get; but what I can give; this is not about being served, but serving others to the glory of God.”

B. The Right Eyesight

Now moving on in having the right information, not only are we to be others-minded, but related to that we must be others-focused; we must have the right eyesight. Turn with me James 2 and let me read for you verses 1-13;

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? 8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, “DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,” also said, “DO NOT COMMIT MURDER.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

There is a lot of teaching in this text, but it is clear that not only must we be others-minded, thinking about the interests and needs of others, but we must be others focused. I call this having the right “eyesight” - seeing the lives and needs of each person and seeking the opportunity to serve those who have the greatness needs first. James 2 informs us that we are to be a people who see and pay attention to everyone who comes to this place, or comes to our homes, or with those we work with. You see, a servant of Jesus avoids the sin of partiality, of paying particular attention to just one person, or one group of people. If we love God, we are also to love our neighbors as ourselves. And who is our neighbor? Anyone with whom we come in contact with and have opportunity to serve. The servant of Jesus avoids favoritism. Why, well, let us look at this text in James where we are given three reasons to avoid favoritism?

First, according to 2:5, favoritism offends God. We read, *5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?* We must be careful not to desire to identify ourselves with the ones who may be rich in the things of the world, and have an air or spirituality, but who are actually poor in faith. Such is an offense to God. Who do you focus on when you gather with the saints?

Second, according to 2:6, favoritism offends the poor. We read in verses 6, *6 “But you have dishonored the poor man...”* If we are not careful to focus upon all with whom we worship

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or gather with, particularly with those of humble means, we become guilty of not only sinning against God, but also against other people who are created in the image of God. Whom do you pay attention to at church? Whom do you invite into your home? This does not mean to ignore others who are perhaps more well off than others. It means to be focused upon everyone and to serve everyone especially those who cannot repay your kindness.

Third, according to 2:8-11, ***showing favoritism offends the very Scriptures*** we hold dear. We read, *8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.*

The point is that we cannot pick and choose what we will and will not do according to what is revealed in Scripture. We are to strive to keep it all, the greatest commandment outside of loving God is loving or serving your neighbor as yourself. Are you others focused enough to not simply to serve to those who are easy and convenient to serve, but also to those who may require a bit more effort? Favoritism destroys a servant-driven mentality. Let us seek to avoid favoritism.

II. The Right Motivation

We can have the right information, but without the right information, all we may end up with is knowledge of what we ought to do but no movement toward doing what is right. We are in need of something to inflame our hearts to do what we know God has called us to do. Remember the illustration of the fireplace? We fill it with the good wood of the knowledge of God and His expectations of us; but we need a flame to get the fire going. What gets this fire going?

What is it that gets the fire going is a genuine love and passion for Jesus and specifically the desire and pursuit of becoming like Jesus. Do you desire to be like Jesus? Such affection for Christ will motivate you to serve. We see an example of this John 13 where Jesus washes the disciples feet. In John 13:5-17 we read:

5 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. 6 So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." 8 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." 10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." 12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. 14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. 16 "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who

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is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

At the core of this account is the willingness of Jesus to take upon Himself the lowliest, most demeaning task of serving these men, by washing the dirt and dung off their bare feet. In verse 16 Jesus says that the slave is not greater than his master, meaning if Jesus took the part of the slave, how much more ought those who truly are the slaves of Christ. In Luke 6:40 Jesus said, ***"A pupil [or disciple] is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher."*** Our motivation to serve one another is to be the example of Christ. We are to be a mirror image of Jesus. If we desire to be a servant-driven church it begins with each one of us determining to be servant. And according to Jesus' statement in Mark 10, if we want to be a leader in the church, then we must be servant in the church – we must be a waiter; one who looks attentively to the needs of others and seeks to fulfill them. Jesus, and our love for Him is to be our motivation for service. Remember what Jesus said in John 14:15? ***"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."***

III. The Right Application

We can have the right information and the right motivation; but finally we need also the right application. We need to purpose to put this information and motivation to practice in the right environment. Remember what Jesus said in Mark 10:43-44, ***"43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."*** There is both an inward and outward focus. We are to serve those "among you" and while the immediate context of being a slave to all is yet within the fellowship, there is an outward expectation. As seek to serve, we need to remember three areas of ministry.

1. We are to be gift-oriented.

If you are a Christian, you have been given a gift, or manifestation of the Spirit of God that is to be used to serve others. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, ***"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*** And again in 1 Peter 4:10 we read, ***"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*** Notice that there is not "ifs" or exceptions. Every Christian has a least one gift of the Spirit and is to manage it well to the glory of God. Do you know your spiritual gift or gifts? If not, why not? Do not be still, but seek God and the input of your spiritual leaders to search it out and then to exercise it. If you do know your gift, are you employing it in serving one another?

2. We are to be people-oriented

Ministry is not about programs; but rather about people. Some people like to hid, be behind the scenes, or lay low. To be sure, not all ministry is upfront and before people, but the motivation to serve must be to be engaged with one another. As Hebrews 10:24 reminds us, ***"and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds..."*** Each of us it to be engaged with others to stimulate, provoke, challenge, encourage, and exhort one another to greater acts of faith and trust in our God as we serve God, His people and the world. Who are the people you are personally impacting for Jesus Christ? Can you name one, or two people you

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are intentionally, purposely and relentlessly seeking to impact for Jesus? This is what it means to be people-oriented.

3. We must be ministry-oriented; servant-driven.

It is to become each of our desire to continually, systematically, and intentionally lay before people opportunities to serve. We can be infinitely creative, and be prepared and be ready to both serve and bring others along side of us to serve with us.

In conclusion, let us remember that we can have right information and see little impact for Christ if we are not rightly motivated and rightly applying the church. We can quote the great commandment to one another for years, ***Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength*** and make little progress. What causes the progress? When we are determined to be a group of dedicated, volunteer servants and slaves willing to go forward for the Master on a daily basis. Such a servant-driven church is not jealous or lazy. Their concern is not about whom among them gets the credit because they are more concerned with seeing Jesus Christ receive all the honor and glory.

The servant-driven church is make up of those who put into practice Luke 9:23, ***"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."*** This means they have become more interested in giving than getting, more concerned about what is best for the church than what they would individually want for themselves. Charles Spurgeon, in remembering the words of George Whitefield statement, *"Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of Thy work,"* once said himself, *"I think no servant of God is tired of serving his Master. We may be tired in the service, though not tired of it."* C.H. Spurgeon

Lord, make us servants who never grow tired of serving you. Help us to find continual and ever-increasing ways to demonstrate our love for you, by loving and serving Your people with the spiritual gifts you have given us, and by serving the lost through acts of kindness coupled with the gift of the gospel message that Jesus saves and Jesus saves alone!

Soli Deo Gloria

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