



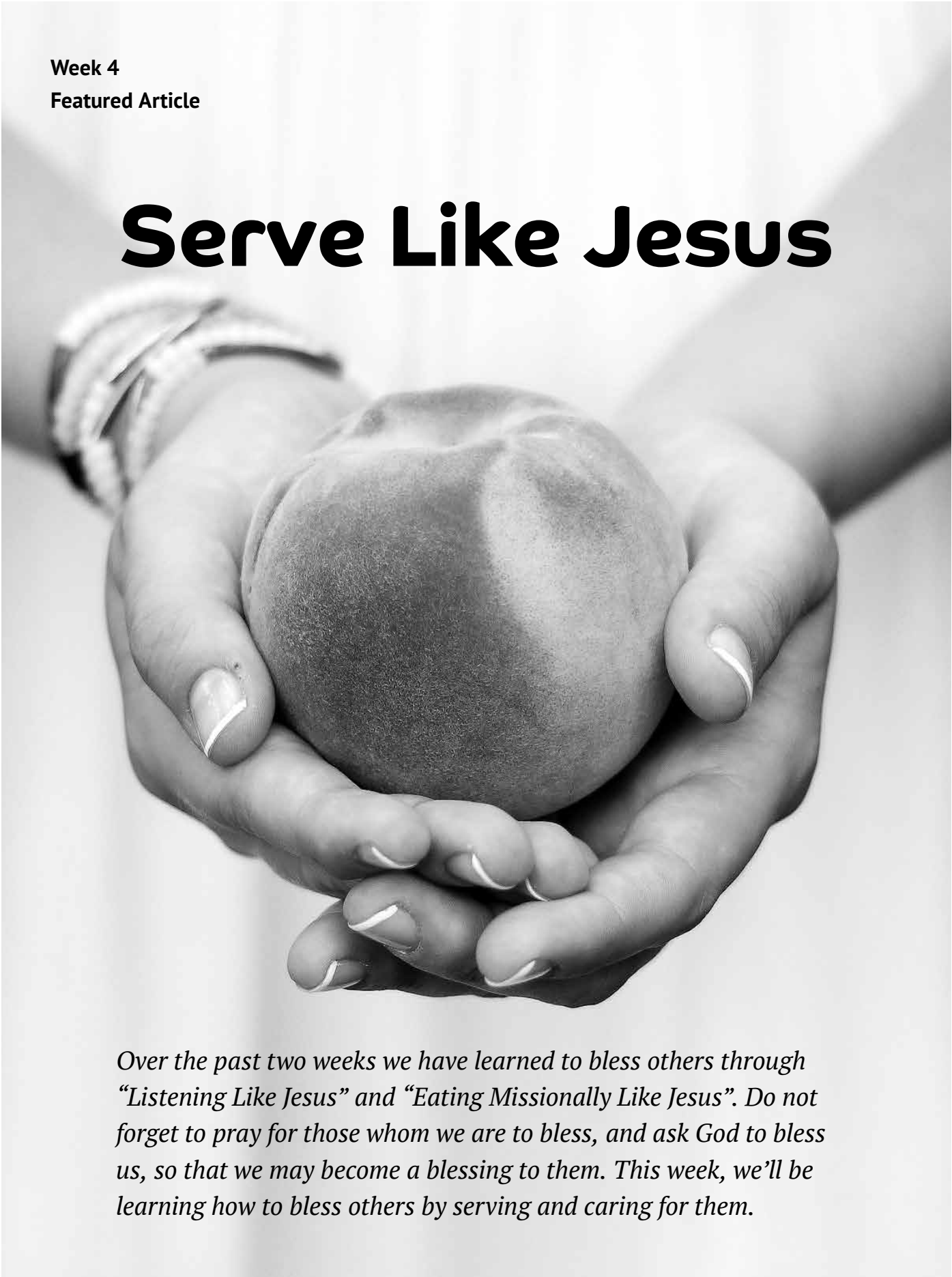
CALLED TO BLESS.



Serve
Like Jesus



Serve Like Jesus



Over the past two weeks we have learned to bless others through “Listening Like Jesus” and “Eating Missionally Like Jesus”. Do not forget to pray for those whom we are to bless, and ask God to bless us, so that we may become a blessing to them. This week, we’ll be learning how to bless others by serving and caring for them.

1. The Essentials of Serving

Serve in Proximity

The people we are going to serve should begin from those who are near to us. The locations where we live, learn, work, and even the people we meet while on public transport, are all arranged by God under His sovereign plan. This is by no means accidental; the people we meet, who God brings into various parts of our lives, are the people we serve.

Serve Perceptively

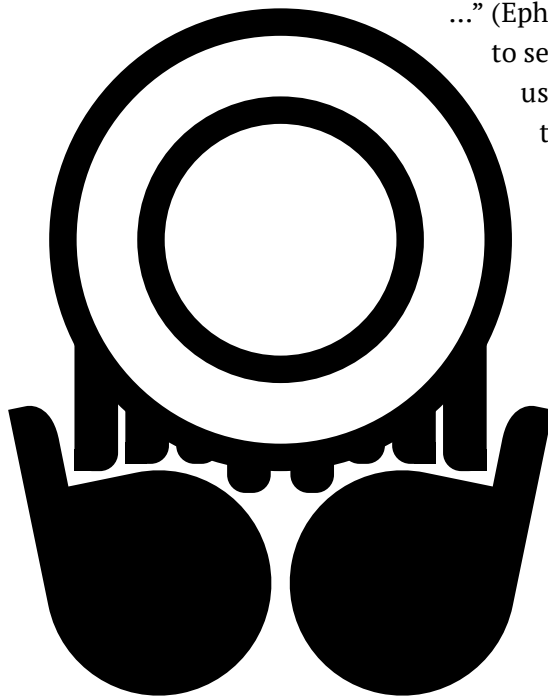
Before we serve others, let us first listen to them and share a meal together. We aim to not serve them superficially, but to meet their deeper needs. We are to learn to listen to them with a perceptive mind and empathize with their life stories, so that our service can pinpoint their real needs.

Serve Personally

We aim to serve at close physical proximity as well as to understand one's heart and mind closely. We are to attempt to feel what they feel. Be cautious, though, to set an appropriate boundary for ourselves. Don't just give into someone's demands. On the other hand, we should be filled with the Word of God and His love. Then our hearts will not be overloaded with the emotions of those we serve.

Serve Powerfully

Remember that the power with which we serve others does not come from ourselves. It comes from God the Almighty. Scripture says, "(He) is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us ..." (Eph. 3:20) Therefore, before we go out to serve, pray and ask for God to give us adequate power, since we know that we can succeed only when we lean on Him. And we are to serve in prayer too, for only through prayer seeking the great power of God are we able to complete what God has appointed us to do.



2. Attitudes of Serving

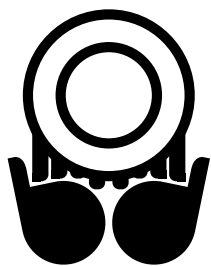
Serve Sacrificially

Jesus says, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) Jesus served sacrificially, by giving up His life to redeem us. Jesus did not demand that every believer sacrifices his or her life so as to serve others. But He teaches us to serve others with a sacrificial heart and mind. As our time, money and abilities are gifts from our Lord Jesus, let us surrender them to Him to be used for His purposes.

Serve Sincerely

No doubt we hope that the people we are blessing will come to know our Lord Jesus. However, let us serve them with sincerity, no matter how they respond to the gospel. Jesus knew full well that Judas Iscariot would betray Him; that Peter would deny Him thrice; that all the other disciples would desert Him as He suffered on the cross. Knowing that His disciples did not understand nor respond to His love, Jesus nevertheless served them by washing their feet during the last supper. (See John 13:5) Jesus has set a great example of serving others with sincerity, and we should all learn from Him.





Weekly Challenges:

- Write up an action plan to address the needs of the people identified (week 2).
- Write up an action plan to address the friend you wish to dine with (week 3).

Serve Sustainably

Serving is a channel for building relationship. Do not take serving others as a short term matter. Some services are one-off, but much of what we do to serve people around us is long term. Sustained serving tells others that we serve them sincerely and with love. At the least, serve without any complaint. Scripture says, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (Rom. 12:11-12)

Reflection:

What essential aspects and attitudes have I neglected as I served others in the past?



Week 4
Serve Like Jesus



Day 1

Serve for the Sake of the Gospel

■ Mark 8:34-38

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Jesus predicted His sufferings as the shadow of the cross was looming large (v. 31). He knew that the Jews would not expect the Messiah to suffer or die. He therefore taught His disciples three times on the cost and significance of being a Messiah (See 8:34-38; 9:31; 10:33). He started by teaching the crowd and His disciples: “whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 34).

Jesus wants His disciples as well as believers today to understand that following Him and taking up the cross are two sides of a coin. In the original text, the word “deny” means “renounce, reject, relinquish”. Self-denial is not an act of self-disapproval, but rather an act of self-surrender to God. This means that I am no longer the center of my life and living. The cross was a capital punishment tool at that time. Taking up the cross means to consider oneself dead in front of God and surrender one’s life to Him. For me to follow Jesus, I must take up my cross to follow. In other words, I must give up my selfishness and self-centeredness, and obey the Lord’s command to deny myself for others. Serving is this very act of renouncing oneself and bearing the cross to follow Him.

Why all these? Jesus clearly teaches: “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it” (v. 35). Losing one’s life means to both deny oneself and to take up one’s cross, as referred to in the previous verse. Some people commit to following Jesus’ example of sacrifice and dedication for the gospel. Therefore, they are willing to give up their aspiration, pleasure and interests, even ready to suffer for the Lord despite inconveniences and challenges. To them, serving others is a mean to serving the Lord. So, what would this attitude lead to? Jesus said, a person who lives his life this way “will save his life”. Are you prepared to commit yourself to following Jesus’ way to serve others? Are you willing to take up the challenge of the gospel mission?

Next, Jesus challenges us: “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul” (v. 36). If we gain the whole world, our return is temporary joys, yet we lose our eternal lives and destroy our souls. Comparing the two, which one is better for us? Besides, if we choose to love this world but lose our lives, the real us, what good is there? What can a man give in exchange for his soul (v. 37, The Message)? With this understanding in mind, we should not be shameful of the gospel, but rather be joyful in serving Him, testifying for His glory. This is indeed our wisest choice as we live in this crooked and bizarre generation.



Reflection:

Do I live for myself and set my goal to gain the world or do I let the Lord use me for His gospel? Which is more worthwhile and more meaningful to me and to others? Am I willing to pay the price for the Lord and for the sake of His gospel?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, teach me to invest my life in eternity and make good use of my time and resources actively sharing the gospel. Help me to do all these with joy and glorify God at home, at school, at work, at church and in the neighbourhood for Your glory. Amen.

Week 4

Serve Like Jesus



Day 2

Serve to Sacrifice

■ Mark 10:35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

One day, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask. Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (vv. 35-36) These two brothers sought to have the highest prominence and honor just next to the throne of Jesus in His glorious kingdom of the Messiah. But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink, or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (v. 38) "We can," they answered without hesitation (v. 39).

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." (vv. 39-40) When the other ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus then called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (vv. 42-45)

In response to the request of James and John to sit on his right and left for personal interest, Jesus said, "You do not know what you are asking." He considered it as a worldly maneuvering for glory and position and a failure to understand His repeated instruction on the cost of true discipleship. Do not be too quick to condemn James and John for their selfish ambition, but check our own heart and motives for serving God.

We are no better. Selfish ambition is not exclusive to a pursuit for worldly fame, glory and wealth. It may also exist within Christian service or ministries when one strives for personal glory and gain. Even the twelve disciples of Jesus had persistently argued about which of them was the greatest (See Mark 9:34) resulting in jealousy, envy, bitterness, anger and resentment.

People seek to rise to prominent positions of power and authority, but Jesus told His disciples not to follow their footsteps. Lord Jesus was not telling us not to respect authority, but instead taught us to take a spiritual perspective on it. Jesus reminded His disciples to serve with the humble attitude of a servant

(v. 43) for there is no place in the church for worldly domineering leaders (v. 42). As His disciples, we have to be servant of all (v. 44) and follow Jesus example of selfless sacrificial servant leadership, for even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (v. 45). God is always more interested in our heart and attitude than what we do for Him. Greatness in God's kingdom is not measured by our position of prominence but by our selfless humility and our willingness to be a servant of all! In the Kingdom of God, it is serving and self-sacrifice that count.



Reflection:

As a servant leader who seeks to imitate Christ, am I willing to sacrifice my time, energy, wealth and status, to leave my comfort zone and serve others for the sake of the Gospel?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, empower me to follow Christ's footsteps, to serve selflessly and sacrificially; not to seek for power, authority, personal gain and glory, but to be a faithful humble servant of God. Amen.

Week 4
Serve Like Jesus



Day 3

Serve to Give Jesus the Best

■ Mark 14:3-9

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages[a] and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

While Jesus was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head (v. 3). Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor" (vv. 4-5). They rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her" (vv. 6-9).

Did Mary (See John 12:3) see the criticism coming when she anointed Jesus with the expensive pure nard that other thought was too lavish? She seemed to not care about others' reactions. For the sake of loving Jesus, she would not mind if people misunderstood her.

From Mary's example, we learn three attitudes in serving the Lord: (1) Mary gave her most precious to the Lord. The perfume was worth more than 300 denarii (v. 5), equivalent to a worker's yearly wage. Can you see from her act that she valued the Lord more than the jar of perfume? Money does not mean much to one who loves the Lord. Do we treasure Him in the same way as Mary?

(2) By breaking the jar, Mary knew that she would not be able to preserve any left-over but she chose not to save any for herself. Are we willing to yield completely to the Lord? Are we willing to offer everything for the sake of loving Him? Are we willing to pour out our money, time and effort to serve the Lord, even to the point of facing criticism, blame and accusation?

(3) Mary loved Jesus without reservation, as evident in her lavishly pouring all she had on His head. Would we offer our best to Jesus, knowing that He deserves it all? In contrast, the disciples were making indignant remarks (See Matt. 26:8) to Mary for her act of love. When others love and passionately serve the Lord, do I criticize them?



Reflection:

Am I willing to sacrifice for the Lord without holding back, materially and spiritually?
Would I love the Lord without reservation because nothing is too precious for Him?
My love of the Lord, thirst for His truth, faithfulness in serving and commitment to your spiritual growth may draw criticism and misunderstanding, especially to people who do not identify with my faith. Regardless, Jesus is my ultimate pursuit. How would I serve to give Jesus the best?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, teach me to love Jesus without reservation and offer my best to Him. Amen.

Week 4

Serve Like Jesus



Day 4

Serve as a Humble Servant

■ Mark 9:33-37

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum. When He was in the house, He asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” They were silent because they were debating who was the greatest (vv. 33-34). None of the disciples responded since they did not want Jesus to know that their subject of argument was about “who was the greatest”. Perhaps they were so embarrassed, that they could not respond in words.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all” (v. 35). Jesus then took a little child, whom he placed among them, in His arms and said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me” (v. 37).

Man has a natural inclination to want himself to be the first and above all. However, how Jesus sees the greatest and the least are different from that of the disciples. Like us, the disciples thought that position and power would make someone great. Yet, Jesus gave a totally new standard for His followers, not based on position nor power, but rather to question ourselves: are we more humble than others? Are we willing to serve others? Are we not despising even the least? Are we serving others for the sake of the Lord?

Jesus wants us and the disciples to know that only those who have the humility to serve others are true leaders of the church. He led a child to their midst and took him in His arms to show that anyone who has the humility of a child is the greatest in heaven. Not only is humility key for Christians who serve, but also is it a basic requirement for entering the Kingdom of God

(See Mark 10:15). What the Lord asks of us is indeed completely opposite to that of our own value system. “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 18:14), which is the spiritual principle in the Kingdom of God: just like Jesus who “humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place” (Phil. 2:8-9). Are we willing to learn from our Lord and serve others with humility?

Jesus also pointed out that whoever cares, accepts, serves and helps the needy and vulnerable in His name or for His glory is doing it for Him (See Mark 9:36-37, Matt. 10:42; 25:40). Let us remember that humility does not come naturally to us, but is through discipline. So let us follow Jesus’ humble serving attitude in serving: for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45).

Response:

Examine my mind-set in serving. Do I enjoy being in charge or am I willing to share the burden of others at home, at work, and at church? This week, when I show courtesy and appreciation with love to people I encounter in the service industry, like cashiers and restaurant servers, will they think differently about themselves and about me?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help me not to be arrogant or proud; but to serve humbly like You – be a servant to others. Amen.



Week 4

Serve Like Jesus



Day 5

Serve with Complete Obedience to God

■ Mark 15:25-39

It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews.

They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!” In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

The crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is God’s plan of salvation for all mankind; it exemplifies the complete obedience of our Lord to His Father. He was betrayed by His disciple (See Mark 14:45-46), mocked and tortured by soldiers, put on a crown of thorns (See Mark 15:15-20), and ultimately nailed on the cross at Golgotha.

Hung on the cross for six long hours (vv. 25, 33), Jesus was bruised and rejected. Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross.” In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself (vv. 29-31). They thought that if Jesus were the Son of God, He would have the power to save Himself and His father would not let His own son die on the cross. They could not comprehend God’s plan of salvation being accomplished through the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, who was declared the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (See Rom. 1:4).

Jesus remained silent throughout the trial and ridicule. In the last three hours, in agony of abandonment by God, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (v. 34) Darkness came over the whole land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour (v. 33), for the darkness of our sins has hidden God’s face from us. Jesus Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree; He died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God (See 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). God had judged

the world through the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross – Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, forsaken by His righteous Father. He bore our iniquities and made atonement for our sins (Ps. 22:1).

At the ninth hour, with a loud cry, Jesus breathed His last (v. 37). At the time of Jesus' death on the cross,

the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (v. 38). The curtain has been viewed as symbolic of Jesus' torn body for our sin. A new and living way was opened for us through the torn curtain, that is, His broken body. Through Him, we can enter the house of God without fear. Through his death, we can approach the throne of grace, receive His mercy and grace in time of our need (See Heb. 10:19-20; 4:16).



Reflection:

To fulfill God's plan of salvation, Jesus surrendered His all to God the Father, even unto death on the cross. Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross! (Phil. 2:6-9) God wants you to be a humble servant like Christ. How can I cultivate the mind of Christ to humbly and sacrificially serve God and others?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, teach me how to serve with the mind and spirit of Christ; to surrender myself to God in complete humility and obedience like my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



This guide aims to help you to review, personalize and apply the sermons, along with the weekly featured articles and the devotion readings.

1. Review the Sermon (15 minutes)

- a. Can you think of a question that you believe the sermon message was trying to address or resolve? Share your question with the group.

How did the speaker answer this question through the sermon message?
How did the featured article help in answering this question?

- b. Which attributes of God were stated or implied by the sermon message?

- c. If you were tasked to give a one minute summary of the sermon message for a group member who was absent, what would you say?

2. Personalize the Sermon (20 minutes)

- a. What did you hear that encouraged and reassured you?

- b. What did you hear that challenged and convicted you?

3. Apply the Sermon (20 minutes)

- a. What personal application of the message has the Lord revealed to you?

How can you apply this message and integrate the "Weekly Challenges" into your life?

- b. If you were to diligently apply the message, what effect would it have on your schedule, choices, relationships, ministries, and daily walk with Christ?

Published by



**RICHMOND HILL
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**
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