

I. Loyalty, Gratitude, and Personal Testimony

The word of God teaches us to be loyal to each other. It is the thing that holds you together when nothing else really will. The second word that I hold dear in my heart is the word gratitude: never to take for granted the things that people have done for me. I know in Christianity today that it is all about getting and not about giving. I understand that. I know a lot of God's people, and many of you have experienced that with the people that you have worked with and tried to help, that people do not appreciate what you do for them.

I have a lot of problems in my life, and there are a lot of issues that I am sure I have to work on. But one of the problems I never had, and I hope I never have, and I can tell you I do not have it today, is that I am never not thankful for what someone has done for me.

When I got right with God in about 1972, after my father passed away, I was pretty much drifting in life. I had been in and out of church all my life, and I knew that things were not where they needed to be. I remember going to church with my mom after my dad died, and I had just gotten out of the army. I went to a church service that morning, and Tommy Thomas was preaching. Tommy Thomas was preaching on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was a booming voice, a very, very good old-time preacher. He said, "I want to ask you a question. Jesus is coming, and I want to ask you, are you ready?" When he said that, he grabbed his chest and his heart, and he began to slump over. He said, "Are you ready?" Then he began to fall. The last thing he said, and he died in the pulpit that morning and went on to be with the Lord.

I was sitting in the back row. The last thing that he said, screaming with everything that he had before he went home to be with the Lord, he yelled out, "Are you ready?" And he pointed. I do not know how many people were there that morning, but he was pointing to me. I knew I was not ready. That was the catalyst in my life after my father died that really made me know I had some things I had to change.

When I started going back to church, God put two men in my life: Mel Sabaka, who was my father in the Lord. He really taught me the Bible, and I worked with him in ministry there. He was a strong director and leader for four or five years before he went to New York. But God also put Herb Kuntz in my life. Mel and Herb were opposite ends of the universe as far as personalities. Mel was a junkyard dog with an extra set of teeth. Herb was the loving, kind, compassionate guy. Herb was a good balance in my life.

Herb taught me my first things of giving a witness and a testimony. We would go out on visitation together and we would go visit couples. We would go visit them and we would sit down. There were people that were not coming to church or maybe they had quit coming, and he would try to talk to them. I had just gotten right with God, and I was sitting there wanting to learn everything. He said to me, "Bob had a similar experience. Bob, why don't you give them

your testimony of what God has done for you?" That was the first time I ever got to open up my heart about what God had done for me.

We used to go to hospital calls together, and we would talk about everything. I watched his love for people. I watched his compassion for people. It really was a great balance in my life, and I never forget things like that. I know a lot of people will take what they can get from me and move on in life. I have never been that way. I am always thankful and respectful for the men that God has used in my life to put me where I am today and to teach me what I know, what little I know.

I have told Herb that any time he is in town, he just needs to let us know, and he will have a spot to preach. So he called me a couple of weeks or months ago and said he was on his way down to Springfield for fellowship week. I said, "The more, the better. You come by and preach." Most of you know him, but now you have a complete context for the visitors today. He is a guy that God used in my life. He taught me how to be, by his example, what I try to be in your life. I am eternally grateful for Mel Sabaka for all he did for me and for Herb Kuntz for all he has done for me. I just do not forget things like that.

II. The Great Symbol of the New Testament Church

I am very happy to be here. There was a dear black lady whose husband had passed away, and they were doing a eulogy for him. It went on and on and on. Suddenly, she got up from where she was sitting and she walked up in front and looked into the casket. Someone said, "What are you doing?" She said, "I want to make sure you are talking about the same man I was married to."

Bob is very gracious, and Barb. I agree. I am sure you have heard this before, but never take for granted what you have here. It is an anomaly to the nation. Who in the world would think that you could stand up and lead singing of songs people can understand? Who would think you would have young people that love the Lord, that sit in the front rows? Who would think you would have a church full of young married couples and older couples who actually want to get together? What a great gift that God has blessed you with. Not with perfect people, but a perfect Savior.

I have a question for you, and I have \$5 to go along with it if you get the right answer. When you think of the local New Testament church, what do you think about? What would represent the great symbol of the local New Testament church today? What is the great symbol of the church? Or what should be the great symbol of the church? I wanted to give you a chance just to give me a thought. What is the great symbol of the New Testament church or what it should be today? Since nobody got it, I will put that back in my pocket.

Our Lord always used life situations to teach truths. We are going to start in Luke chapter 9. It is an honor, I really mean it. It was a very great honor to be with you today. I consider your pastor probably about the best teacher of the truths of scripture in America today, holding to the authorized text. He is a great teacher. It is a blessing. You need to pray for him and his wife. Satan would love nothing more than to destroy this testimony. Never take it for granted. They

should be in your prayers every day for God's care and work in their lives, not as icons, but as servants of the Lord.

III. The Disciples' Strife for Greatness

Luke 9:46-48

There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

It is amazing what takes place in people's lives. The Bible says there arose a reasoning among the disciples, which of them should be greatest. Is not that amazing that Christians would wonder who is the greatest in the church? I am sure that would never happen in this church. Jesus, perceiving the thought in their heart, took a child and set him by him. Is not that amazing? Our Lord walks over and takes a child while they are talking. They are debating on who is the greatest. So Jesus sets a little boy in their midst, and said unto them, "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." That is something to attain to, to become the least in the right way. So He used the child to teach the eternal truth.

Luke 22:24-27

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

In the Gospel of John chapter 13, which is where we are going to go today, our Lord is on the way to the cross. He is in the upper room. While you are going to John 13, Mr. Luke gives us some thoughts that took place there. In Luke 22, the Bible says in verse 24, "There was also a strife among them, the disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest." This is when Jesus is just getting ready to go to the cross. He said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." That was rocking their boat, I believe, at that time.

It happens too often, I think, almost in scripture. One time, one of the mothers of the disciples was talking to Jesus, saying, "How about if you let my sons sit on one side of you and the other side of you in the kingdom?" The Lord said, "Listen."

Matthew 20:20-24

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom.

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

The others were watching. They heard it; they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. "What are these two dudes thinking they are going to be sitting right next to Jesus? What about me?" It is awfully easy to have a problem with "me." It is awfully easy to be difficult.

IV. Jesus' Example of Servanthood (The Towel)

So Jesus, He is in Luke 22, and now in John 13, He is in the upper room. It is interesting what He does and what He used to describe greatness.

John 13:1-17

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Father, we ask that You will speak to our hearts. Father, it is not about what I say, but it is about what You want to do. May each of us, Lord, realize what the great symbol ought to be, not only of the local church, but of each of us. For Your glory we ask, in Jesus' name, Amen.

John 13:2-12

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

When you trusted Christ, you are clean in the sight of God spiritually, but there is a daily cleansing that we need, and that is what He is really referring to in this area here. Peter always jumped to a lot of conclusions.

You think about that, and that is the most unbelievable thing in the world, that Jesus took a towel. I believe very honestly, He redefined greatness. You think about that, our Lord took a towel and redefined greatness, because He took that towel and got down on His hands and knees and served somebody else. The rabbis would never do that, but the rabbis are not Jesus. That was reserved for the person who really was the lowest on the ladder, but Jesus took a towel. I believe that a towel is the great symbol of the New Testament biblical church today, if we learn what Jesus wanted them to learn.

Can you imagine them looking and wondering what in the world our Lord was doing?

John 13:12-17

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

He is not denying His position. He is not denying His authority. He is not denying what God has sent Him here to do, but He is going to tell them something about what He wants them to do, the way He wants them to be. We live in a society today, the Z generation, they call it now, where it is all about "me, me, me." "What are you going to do for me?" If you are not careful, some of you came to this church this morning and wondered, "What is pastor going to do for me? What is going to happen here for me?" That is natural; our flesh is that way. Mine is that way, yours is that way. That is the nature of it.

He said, "Listen, do you know what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Then He made this statement, a beautiful statement, most of us want to be happy. He said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

I look at this, and as I said, Jesus redefined or defined greatness today. There are three or four things I would want us to keep in mind. He is not talking about foot washing; He just used that as an illustration, because we do not wear sandals and walk around in dirt most of the time. He is talking about an attitude of being a servant leader for Jesus Christ, doing whatever it takes to honor Him.

V. The Attitude of a Servant

You Are Never More Like Jesus Than When You Are Serving

The first thing to keep in mind is you are never more like Jesus than when you are serving. Think about that. You are never more like the Lord Jesus than when you are serving. Jesus said, "What I do now, you do not know, but you will know hereafter." He washed, and then He said, "Know ye what I have done to you?" in verse 13. "You call me Master," and that is right. "If I am the Master who has washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." Wow. He wanted them to see not the act of foot washing, but the attitude of serving one another.

When you come to the local New Testament church, you want to come to learn. But when you come to this local church, I have found that people who eat a turkey dinner every day are going to get fat. When we come and get what we get here, God's desire is, "Now, will you serve someone else with the meal that you got? Will you walk out of here with what you learned and share it with someone?"

I was telling a brother this morning, he works with the children in Sunday school here. He said, "I will not be able to be in there." I said, "Hey, you have tomorrow's leaders." My son, one of them, four and a half years old, came home from day camp, got on his knees, and said, "Mom, I am going to die and go to hell if I do not get saved." And he asked Christ to save him that day. Now he is a missionary in Kenya today, been there 13 years. It all started with someone who was willing to miss the service, but give the service. That is what God calls it.

If we are not careful, it is so easy to think, "What am I going to get? What am I going to gain?" The disciples were thinking, "Who is the greatest? Who is the greatest?" while Jesus was getting ready to go to a cross and be slaughtered. We come to the Lord's house, and we do not need to come with a false humility, saying, "I am nothing." No, you are a child of the King. You are a joint heir with Jesus Christ. We ought to rejoice in that. Nothing wrong with that. But we ought to always come as a servant. "How can I be a servant for the Lord?"

I was talking to one of the men where he works in the military with me. I did not like the job I was in, a bunch of guys who were hell-raisers. I thought, "God, are You mad at me or something?" Mel looked at me and said, "Maybe God thought He could trust you." It changed my whole attitude about where I worked. I saw that God was trusting me to go to that place of real darkness and try to shed some light there. That is the privilege we have wherever we are. Do we go as a servant for Christ?

John 13:15-16

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

God looks at every one of us here. We are pilgrims, yes. We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, yes. Some will rule and reign with Christ, yes. But while we are down here, the symbol of our life ought to be serving others, serving them however God can use our life to do that.

Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He became the ultimate servant for you and for me. God says, "Listen, you want to be like Jesus? Serve somebody else. Serve somebody else. Find someone else."

2 Corinthians 4:5

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

That is what a privilege to say, "God, in this congregation of people, there are servants who can go all over the Kansas City area and represent what Jesus wants us to represent."

What is a Servant's Attitude?

What is a servant's attitude? Be around people who are illogical, unreasonable, self-centered; love them anyway. Some of you work with people like this. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives; do good anyway. A real servant knows the good you do today may be forgotten by tomorrow; do good anyway. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable; be honest and frank anyway, you are a servant. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight in some people's minds; build anyway. People really need help and may attack you if you do help them; help them anyway. That is a servant.

When we think of ourselves, we are soldiers, we are pilgrims, we are saints, we are all of these things. But if we are to reach a lost world, the salt has to get out of the salt shaker and get where the people are. Here we come to get reinforced and strengthened, but then, and thank God you have so many ministries already, which is wonderful, but be wise in those ministries that you represent the King of Kings. Your privilege is to be a servant, not just to have someone serving, but to serve this One named Jesus. God calls us all to be that. What a privilege it is.

That word "servant" carries the thought of being a bondsman. It denotes someone who is not at his own disposal, but is at his Master's disposal. That is the servant.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Every day when you wake up in the morning, the attitude should be, "God, what is up today? Lord, this is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. How can I be used to be here today?" Sometimes there may not be something that day, but God will always use you. Whether you see it or not, someone will see and someone will know that something is different in your life. What a privilege.

The question is, are you carrying the towel? Are you hoping someone will use the towel for you? It is a real reality. When the New Testament speaks about ministering, it means not primarily preaching, but devoting time, trouble, and substance to giving them all the practical things that they need in their lives. You are God's soldiers to serve, to serve. It is amazing, as one man said, "We are not evangelical handymen or women, but we are always to have that attitude of a servant."

If you see something on the floor, do not wait for a custodian to pick it up; take care of it yourself. You see something these days out there? "Well, when are they going to take care of that?" When is "you"? So many times I have seen people; they watch them. "Who is going to take care of that? Why don't you do that?" "Well, that is not my job." No, no, no, we are servants. We are servants. Your pastor, he does that. They help, they do his thing. Too many of you do also, but realize the wonderful thing because what position did Jesus take just before going to a cross? A servant. Is not that amazing? He could have shown anything in the world. He could have walked in with the crowd and said, "Be like this, be like that, be that." No, no. He walked in

with a towel. He said, "Here is what a lasting impression I want to have, and when I am gone, if you want to be used by Me, if you want to glorify Me in a great way, be a servant."

Everybody wants a servant. My wife would love to have a servant clean the house. Then she looked at me, and I guess I am it. But everybody wants, you know what? If you want to reach someone, serve them. It is amazing what that does to people. It does not matter who you are, how much money you have; it matters what is going on in here. All around you, there is somebody that you can serve. What a privilege to do that. I have heard some people say, "Well, no one has served me." I can see why with that attitude. God looks at us and calls us that. Do not lose sight of that, a servant. Not denigrated, but I am pleased to be Jesus' servant. We are not those evangelical handymen; we are to have that attitude.

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

All that I do ought to be in two or three ways. One, I serve to see this church body built together. I serve to reach lost people out there. I serve to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in any way that I can. You look for opportunities like that, and it is amazing what God will do. Remember, the last thing Jesus did was show what a servant is all about. I believe that He looks down today from heaven. If you are being a servant for Him, it does not matter if you are a teenager, young adult, young man, whatever your situation is in life, He looks down with much favor towards you.

VI. Demands of Servanthood

Serving Demands a Flexible Attitude

Serving is tough. Sometimes serving demands a very flexible attitude, does it not? Sometimes it is not very easy.

Luke 17:7-10

And which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

In Luke 17, our Lord is speaking about service. He said, "Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?" If you have a servant working for you, you do not tell him, "Go sit down and eat." "And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and

serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?" In other words, "Servant, listen, I do not care what you thought your schedule was, it is going to be interrupted for you to take care of me." He says, "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him?" I do not believe he does, not in that day. But in verse 10, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

"Wait a minute, I did not bargain for this." You were bought with a price. Glorify God in your body and your spirit. If you want to be happy, Jesus says, "Happy are ye if ye do these things." The Bible talks about when we give, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. That is not just money, but when you give out of your heart life and you minister in other people's lives, He is counting it, He is taking care of it. Some may not like it, some may turn away from it, but as you do that, I can promise you this: you can walk away knowing that you have sought to serve Jesus the right way. One day our Lord will give you an account of that. That is the right way to go. But if you are counting on getting it down here, it is going to be a very poor price, a very poor goal.

Serving demands that flexible schedule. That servant who wanted to rest, "You cannot rest, go get rid of these things here." Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If you have a ministry that works, it is going to cost you something. Think of shepherds; they die for the sheep.

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Paul in Romans chapter 9 was willing to die for his people, willing to be used of the Lord, however He wanted.

The Five P's of Life

I always encourage people to keep in mind there are five P's for all of our lives when we keep these things in our mind.

1. You are a priest before God. Every one of us is.
2. If you are married, you are a partner with your mate.
3. If you have kids, you are a parent to your child.
4. If you have a job, you are a provider for your home.
5. You are a participant in society.

In all these things, be a servant. I encourage you to join the school board. I encourage any of those things. Be light, we can be light. Be a servant, we can be a servant. God calls it. "Wait a minute, priest, I want to see this, I need this, I need..." "Wait a minute. Check it in the Father. God, what do You want me to do?" Real shepherds say, "Lord, use my life, however You want to use it." Real shepherds want to be that servant that God can use. Real servants are individuals, no matter what your age is, you want God to take and use your life for His glory.

VII. Serving as Identification with Christ

It will be like Jesus you serve. If you are going to be like Jesus, you are going to have to have that flexible schedule. This is a neat thing. Serving is your badge of identification with Jesus Christ. You can witness and give people words, words, words, and we need to do that. But is it not interesting in the Bible in John 13, that same section where we were?

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Our Lord is speaking, and He says in verse 34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Now, love one to another does not mean you just come and give them a hug on Sunday morning. Love one to another means if someone needs a ride to church, "Hey, I am available." If we need something in the Sunday school, as God is enabling, "I am available." Whatever it is that needs to be done, you cannot do everything, but "God, open the door for me to be used of You for Your glory." Jesus, I believe, meant what He said there.

"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love is something that is not just an emotion; that is an action also. You show forth love to each other by helping them, meeting them in their needs, teaching them in discipleship, working with them in a Sunday school, helping them in the camp ministry, giving them the works of this church. I have never been in a church where they tell you to go in a book room and take anything out of there you want. I used to steal books for our sake. Is not that amazing though? What church does that? But that is the attitude of this church, because it wants to serve, to minister to you, and then through you to minister to someone else. If you take something, read it, or give it to someone else, help them to learn from the Word of God like that.

Make yourself available. Listen to God, "How can I be used?" Every morning when we get up, "Lord, what is going on today? Lord, use me some way for Your glory. Talk with someone, do this, do that, whatever, Lord." Every one of us is around somebody else that we can serve. There is always that kind of an opportunity. But do we live for it? Do we carry the towel with us every day? Are we ever available to the Lord Jesus? I am first of all a servant. The servant was the lowest place on the totem pole in the economy. The disciples wanted to know who was going to be the greatest. Jesus wanted to know who was going to be the servant. If you want to be something in the New Testament church, do not look to be the greatest; look to be the servant. Not that people take advantage of you, but that God can use your life in a special way. Make yourself available.

You say, "I do not know what God wants to do in my life." Go to God in prayer number one. "Lord, what would You have me to do?" The steps of good men are ordered by the Lord. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Be obedient to what He wants you to do that you know. What you do not know, consult with

your pastor or your Sunday school teacher. Say, "Hey, I am trying to do this, but I believe God wants something more from me." They might make some recommendations for you because all of us can learn and grow from each other.

I remember when I first thought about Bob, and he used to play his horn with the choir. He did not go out and play in dance bands on Saturday night or bars, I do not know where. But I was so impressed, and God just impressed him on my heart. "Hey, if you ever want to go call him, let me know." I would tell him, "Hey, I do not know if you remember this. I tell him, 'Boy, Bob, your dad is really proud of you.'" I visited his dad. One night when he came, Jack Ben-Ippey was preaching there. He came in the back, he said, "I want to go call him with you." What a blessing that was to me. What a privilege. Who would have thought that God would do what He has been doing through all these years? But it just starts by making yourself available. You never know what God is going to do if you will make yourself available. But you have got to be willing to be a servant. The question is, are you willing to do that? It is a badge of identification. God can use you if you will let Him. It is a neat thing to think about that. He can use anybody.

God Uses Imperfect People

Someone wrote this thought, and it is pretty good. "Well, I cannot speak." Well, Moses stuttered. He led probably close to a million people. David's armor did not fit. John Mark, Paul said, "Get him out of here." Some say Timothy had ulcers. Hosea's wife was a prostitute. Amos's only training was in school fig tree pruning. Jacob was a liar. David had an affair. Solomon was too rich. Abraham was too old. David was too young. Lazarus was dead. Naomi was a widow. Paul was a murderer. Moses was too. Jonah ran from God. Miriam was a gossip. Gideon and Thomas doubted. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal. Elijah was burned out. John the Baptist was a loud mouth. Martha was a worrywart. Mary was lazy. Samson had long hair. At least he had hair. Noah got drunk. Moses had a pretty sharp fuse. So did Peter and Paul and many other individuals.

Is not it amazing? Satan will look at you and say, "You are not worthy." Jesus says, "So what? I am." Satan looks back and sees our mistakes. God looks back and sees the cross. Every one of us will stumble. Every one of us will have things we do not like and wish we could change. Satan will want to focus on that. You focus on a Redeemer who loves you and loves you enough to take your place. If He loves you that much and He wants to use you, let Him use your life. Do not let Satan lie to you and say, "Listen, you have stumbled. You cannot get up. You cannot be used." Yes, you can. Believe Him for that. Let Him work in your life some way, somehow. Learn from the past; do not gloat in it. What a Savior who can take a poor lost sinner, lift him or her from the miry clay, and set him free. "I will ever tell this story shouting, 'Glory, glory, glory! Hallelujah, Jesus ransomed me!'" You say, "Why do not I sing it?" You would all flee this place if I sang. What a Savior. What a Savior. It is the badge of identification.

"Why are you doing that?" Here is what I told myself: "My best friend wants me to do this." I love to play golf. When I do, I always look for an opportunity to witness. I love playing with unsaved people. "Well, they cuss." Well, everybody cusses. I tell them, "I do not cuss, but when I spit, the ground burns, I can tell you that." If I am golfing, these guys are there. They ask, "What

do you do?" I just tell them, "I am into internal reconstruction." That gets them already. Or I tell them, "Well, I work for a Father-Son building business. Great spirit. Retirement out of this world. Medical? 100%. We have such total security, it is unbelievable."

I did this with a guy one time. He was rebuilding, rehabbing homes. He was pretty proud of how he was doing this. I started talking about what my Father-Son business I worked with did. He was amazed. The benefits were unbelievable because I had already been set up for retirement in a home that was already paid for. This guy began to look like, "Man, he would like to switch jobs with me here." I went on with that, and he kept looking, wondering what it was. I said, "I have got a copy of the contract." It gave him a tract. Why can we not boast in our Lord, not in ourselves? That is my privilege. "Well, you think you are something?" Nobody thinks Jesus is. "So you think you are going to heaven?" No, I know I am going to heaven. I ought to go to hell, but I am going to heaven for the mercy of God. But do it as a servant. What a privilege God calls us to be here. All these individuals, it is your badge of identification. Yet we need to share the Word. We need to know the Word. We need to memorize the Word. We need to give the Word of God, not like a hammer, but like a skilled surgeon to people. Let God use you in those things.

VIII. Serving and Happiness

Serving Leads to Happiness

The Lord also, it is amazing, tells you about happiness. I am in a world today where most people are not very happy. Most of the news is all bad. People all around you are so sad and so troubled.

John 13:17

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Jesus said in John 13 about this, after He knelt in front of those disciples, He said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." I wonder how many Christians really have joy in their heart. I am serious. Young people today, if they are not with the "in" crowd, they feel like they are left out. If you know Jesus, you are already in the "in" crowd. You have got to keep focused there.

I remember when I got saved, I went back to work the next day at the Federal Reserve, and I thought those guys would be happy I got saved. Not. And the guys I used to run around with, raise hell with. Not. That is tough. But I would get back in the book. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." When I settled that, I did not need those other individuals. Most people are codependent on anybody who will pat them on the back. Our dependency ought to be on the One who gave us this book.

Joshua 1:8-9

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

I challenge young people here. I have some young people in the church where I am; if they memorize certain verses, I will give them money. I would rather invest in something good than something evil. A bribe is an incentive to do evil, whereas a reward is an incentive to do good. Those verses will stick to you, will they not? I challenge them to memorize that last title. His name is Josh. So Joshua 1:8-9 looks pretty good to him. If your name is Ezekiel, you have a real problem.

When you get a verse like that and it is tied in your mind, you want to do something you do not. Maybe God, that verse will come back and speak to you, "You are a servant." You want to be prosperous? "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." It will guide you. Prosperity is being a servant. Prosperity is not having everybody look at me and say, "Hey, look at me!" No, prosperity is how can I reach into someone's heart for Jesus? How can I be that towel in their life? How can I be that towel in that widow's life, that person's life? How can I be that towel that Jesus called me? He said, "Happy are ye if ye do these things." That is where real contentment comes, pleasing the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, because it will not matter what anybody here thinks one day. One day to stand before Jesus and have Him say, "Well done, good and faithful sister." "Well done, good and faithful brother." Imagine, for all eternity, you have got the check mark from the King of Kings. That is where God calls you. Happiness. Happiness.

IX. Serving as an Expression of Love

Serving is an Expression of Love for Jesus

John 14:21

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Last thought, serving the Lord Jesus says, "I love You, Lord Jesus." I have heard a lot of folks tell me that they love the Lord, but I wonder where they are. John 14:21, Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." My flesh says, "Go this way." My flesh says, "Do not," says, "Live for yourself." Your flesh says, "Live for yourself." Your flesh says, "Do not read the Bible you have planted." Your flesh says, "Do not do this." Your flesh says, "Do not say that because some people are going to look at you weird," and on and on. But Jesus said, "You love Me. Here is how you show it. Follow My Word. Follow My Word. It will not be easy sometimes, but He says I will bless you for it." He says, "I love you, Jesus. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." You want to have more of the sweetness and knowing about the Lord. I believe that He reserves that for those people who truly seek to love Him and follow Him. Then you read your Bible, and God begins to teach you some new things out of the Bible. I believe He gives more understanding of the Word of God to those people who are already showing their love for Him.

I remember when I first got saved, seriously, I opened my Bible and I read that thing, and there is the Gospel of John. Then he has got some brothers. One of his name, one John, then there is two John, there is three John. I am serious. I did not know the foggiest thing about the Bible. But I know this: if you love Him, you begin to learn about Him. God will begin to teach you His Word as you learn it and want to learn it.

Are you a servant? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." If you wash their feet, you see everybody walks in a world that is impure. There are a lot of folks who walk in and make some mistakes; their feet are dirty spiritually. God calls us to be medics for this world. He calls us to put the Band-Aid of prayer on them. He calls you, Dad, with your kids, to put that strong arm around that child who needs God's grace. He wants you to be there for him to show him what a real Christian dad is all about. Mommy, He wants you to be that individual. I tell you, I have taken care of babies when ours were small. I thought, "Dear God, how does a mother do these things?" I mean that sincerely. My wife would want to go out for a few hours with some friends, girlfriends. I would say, "That is okay." She would go out, and I would say, "Kids, we all need a nap." I would pull the blinds down, turn the lights off. She would come home, the kids had a three-hour nap. They were ready to go at 10 o'clock at night.

But loving, serving, this world needs not to see the big cathedral; they need to see the cathedral in two feet, the cathedral that will walk up and help them. That cathedral will pray and say, "Lord, lead me to someone that I can minister to. This may interrupt my schedule, but it is okay. Lead me to someone that I can minister to. It may be tough for me to do it, but I want to be Your servant." Jesus looks on that, and He is blessed. My question to you and to me is, will we do that? He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." That is a pretty good deal. He calls me to do that. He said that the world may know that I love the Father, and the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Love helps you build people, not exploit them.

You young adults who are looking for perhaps if God wants you to be married sometime, I have told some of you before, run as fast and furious as you can in the way of the Lord Jesus, and if the opposite sex can keep up, you might want to introduce yourself to them. Why? Because I have watched so many wrecks of individuals who knew people who had maybe a great personality, did not know the Lord, did not care about the Lord, and they wanted to be married or something. No, no, no, no, better to be single with Jesus than married with the devil. Use your gift as a tool for faith and not a weapon for fighting. We do not need celebrities; we need men and women, young people, to let Jesus live for them.

X. Traits of a True Servant

Traits of a True Servant

What are the traits of a servant? I will give you three, and we will close here.

6. Faithfulness

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. A real servant has faith. If the pastor has a need about something around there, you volunteer, and then you are here and gone.

That is not a servant. That is not carrying the towel. You make a commitment. I encourage people to make a commitment for six months. Hold five things, six months. Make a commitment for six months. If after that you want to do something else, that is fine, but at least give it a shot. Nothing wrong with that. You are not a failure. I admire people who try to do something but then they realize that is not their area. That is okay.

I think I told you all when I was here last time, Mel wanted me to be the song leader of the 14th class when we started the class. I said, "Mel, you do not want me to be a song leader. I cannot sing." He said, "Anybody can sing." He was here before that. "Everybody can sing." I said, "Mel, I cannot sing." I was going to take singing lessons, and I went to the door with the music guys at the college. They looked at me and said, "Save your money." I am serious, that was it. So anyway, I said, "All right, I will do it." So I went in there, we had a crowd of 14-year-old kids, and I was leading singing. Mel walked in and said, "What is wrong with the organ?" I said, "We do not have an organ in here." "Good night, that is you, is not it?" I led music one day. Dr. Hennigar, when someone had started the old marriage class, Mel said, "He is already here." "Where?" He said, "Herb." I found this out later. He said he is willing to do whatever he can regardless. That started me on my journey. I found that God is looking for availability, not ability. There is something every one of you young people can do. Every one of us moms and dads can do. But we have got to come as a servant. We have got to take the towel.

Do you think Jesus loved getting down on His hands and knees in front of Judas Iscariot? Or loudmouth Simon Peter? Or doubting Thomas? And He washed their feet? He said, "Now I want you to know what I have done for you here, because this is what I want you to do out there. You are in a world that is trafficking sin. I want you to know how to wash their feet in the sense of taking them to the Savior. I want you to do what you can do so that they know that you care before they know what you know." When you do that, He said, "I will give you more opportunities than you can ever, ever believe if you will be a servant." I believe that is what God is calling us to be here.

7. Proper Use of Privileges

Faithfulness, proper use of privileges that God gives you. You have so many privileges here. Immature people use things and people to build themselves, and mature people use things and privileges to build others.

8. Holy Unconcern for Personal Recognition

John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

The servant is always concerned about the greatness of his Master. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Do not go around and say, "Well, I am nothing." No, no, you are a child of the King. You are a joint heir with Jesus Christ. You are something, you are special. You just realize who the King is and that He is coming back.

Illustration: There was a group of European pastors that had come to the conference ground in Northfield, Massachusetts, where Mr. Moody had these huge conferences. People came from all over the world. Following the European custom at that time, they would put their shoes outside the door to be cleaned by the hall servants overnight. It is America, and there are no hall servants. Walking the halls one night, Moody saw the shoes and determined not to embarrass his brothers. He mentioned the need to some of the ministerial students there at Northfield, "Hey, if you would like to clean these shoes, they would be very good." They just looked at him. None of them thought to do it.

He went back to the dorm. At that time, Mr. Spurgeon was probably the most well-known speaker in the known world. Moody went back to the dorm when these guys would not do something. He took up all those shoes in his own room. He began to clean and polish every one of those people's shoes. A friend who happened to stop by saw what happened. The next morning when those foreign visitors opened their doors, their shoes were shined. They did not even know who did it. Moody did not tell anyone, and they would not have known had the friend not divulged it. When they did, they said it was interesting. Every night after that, different men volunteered to shine their shoes in secret. You see, God used Mr. Moody because he was willing to be a servant. When you have a chance to do something, it does not matter if I see it, or you see it, or you see it. If He sees it, that is what counts.

I want to challenge you. What was the most important thing Jesus showed to the disciples before He went to the cross? The last thing, He showed them how to get down and be a servant. If you want to help others wherever you are ministering, He says, "Do not quit. Be faithful." One day the King will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

XI. Invitation and Call to Servanthood

I do not know your heart; that is something for you to determine. But be available and say, "Jesus, whatever." If you come in here today and maybe in your heart you have been wondering, "Where is Jesus?" Number one, He is seated at the Father's right hand. Number two, He said, "Here is how much I love you," stretched out His arms and died for you, died on the cross, buried for you, and thank God, rose again the third day.

I was witnessing to a fellow, 23 years in the military, and he was not quite sure if he was saved or not. I said, "May I say something very abrupt that you will not be upset with me?" He said, "Sure," a nice guy. I said, "I want you to know something, there will not be any Baptists in heaven." Because I knew he was a Lutheran. I said, "There will not be any Baptists in heaven, and there is not going to be any Lutherans in heaven. But there will be people who have been blood-bought by Jesus in heaven. If you have accepted Him as your Savior, you will go to heaven, not because you are a Lutheran, but because you are saved. Or you are not going to heaven because you are a Baptist, but because you are saved. You have trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior."

If you are here and you have never trusted the Lord, I am going to turn the service over to the pastor in just a moment. But the thing is, you need to pray a sinner's prayer. "God, be merciful to

me, a sinner, and save me for Jesus' sake. He paid my debt, satisfied Your demands, and You accept anybody who will trust Him as their Redeemer." He will do that. If you are saved, renew it to Him today. "Lord, I want to be Your servant. I want to be Your towel-bearer. I want to be a towel-bearer, and I tell You, wherever You want me to go." You will be amazed where God will take you. The trip is going to be worth it. He will use you, young people, be that towel-bearer.

Father, we come to You now. We thank You for the privilege to be here with brothers and sisters. Lord, You know hearts. This is Your church. These are Your people. Lord, it was so important to You that just before the cross, You dressed as a little lowly servant and said, "Do this." Help us to see out there people who need their spiritual feet cleaned, their spiritual heart won. Help us to be Your servants, Lord, however we can be for Your glory. Thank You for those who served so faithfully here. Lord, may we all be obedient to where You want the servants to go, in Jesus' name. Pastor.