

**The command and example to serve is found in 1 Peter 4:10-11, Rom. 12:4-8 & 1 Thess. 1:1-3**

Humble service is the natural outgrowth of the Gospel message.

Ferguson Sinclair gives four principles of humble service:

- 1) Service is not others recognizing my gifts, but me recognizing the needs of others.
- 2) Service is not doing things at my convenience, but helping others when they are inconvenienced.
- 3) Service is not feeling that I have special gifts, it is for others that have special needs.
- 4) Service not an optional extra as a member, but it is woven into what a member is to be.

**The context of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples:**

- 1) 13:1, Jesus loved His own who were in the world: it included those in the room and those who had believed in Him. He loved them to the end: In Jn. 2:4, 7:8 Jesus' hour had not yet come, but now in 13:1, "His hour had come."
- 2) 13:2, Judas Iscariot would betray Jesus: Judas had been stealing from the money bag, and he realized Jesus wasn't bring an end to Roman rule. In his heart he too was filled with Satan's desire to kill Jesus and so would betray Him.
- 3) 13:3, All things in His hands: "All things" included all people that the Father had given Him, John 6:37. "All exaltation that was due Him, Phil. 2:9. All glory that was due Him, John 17:1.
  - a. He had come forth from God: Jn 5:24, to judge. Jn. 5:27, all authority. Jn. 17:2, authority over all flesh to give life and restrict who has access to life, also John 11:25-26 (Jesus is the way, truth, life, Jn.14:6).
  - b. He was going back to God: Jn. 17:5, He was going back to the Father and would come again to gather us together to Him, Jn. 14:1-4.
- 4) 13:4, Knowing all of these things from 1-3, He washed their feet.

John 13 is in the context of Passover supper having been served. The disciples would have been reclining and Jesus then takes off His robe and girded Himself with a towel.

- V5, supper was served. Jesus had previously taught that He had come to serve and not be served, Mk. 10:45. He had served thousands with His teaching, thousands by healing them, and many more thousands who had heard of Him. He had served the disciples for 3 years.
- V6-7, Peter asks Jesus if He was *going to wash [my] his feet?* They didn't yet understand why.

**4 Lessons Jesus Taught His Disciples at this Time:**

- 1) **V8, Jesus must wash away our sins for us to have a part with Him.**
- 2) **V9-10, Relationship forgiveness between the believer and God requires cleansing to be maintained. This is not for salvation, but to cleanse the heart and mind of the believer.**
- 3) **V11-16, Lessons on Humble Service were needed by the disciples.**
  - a. **An Example of Humble Service:** a pattern was given in V12-14 to wash each other's feet. Jesus girded Himself with a towel and without His robe on. His disciples would never forget the image of the Teacher and their LORD serving them the night He was to be crucified. If the Son of God washed their feet, they also would understand to wash and serve each other.
  - b. **An Explanation of the Outworking of Humble Service:** V15, they should do as Christ had done. In Luke 22:24-30, the disciples were headed to Jerusalem to observe this final Passover together before the crucifixion. They argued about who was the greatest. Jesus answered them in Luke 22:26, He told them that the greatest would be as the younger.

- c. **Mission of Humble Service**: V16 is not a command for self-improvement to become a master or lord, but that the disciples would realize that they would be persecuted for being followers of Christ, Jn. 15:20. The apostles would be sent on behalf of Christ to be His witness wherever they went and so Christ in V16, is transitioning from Him being the object of all the hate of others, to them being persecuted for His name.
  - i. Paul labored to proclaim Christ to mature the body of Christ, Col. 1:28.
  - ii. Acts 17:6 states that the disciples had turned the world upside down.
- 4) **V17, The Blessings of Humble Service**:
  - a. **Trust**: Eph. 4:1-2, to walk worthy of the calling with all lowliness and gentleness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. These would be believers who are not a drain on ministry, not self-seeking.
  - b. **Significance**: Phil. 2:3, those that esteem others better than themselves. Tabitha, in Acts 9:36-43, was a servant to all and was raised from the dead by Peter. Being the least among all makes your service significant to those whom you serve.
  - c. **Perspective**: Col. 3:12, "as the elect of God" the motivation of those chosen by God is to be holy, to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. The elect of God desire to live a godly life and serve others.

#### **Principles of Serving the Lord:**

- 1) **Be willing to meet any need with excellence**: Based upon our love for the Gospel, we serve one another as members of God's household and members of one another (1 Cor. 12 i.e., one body).
- 2) **Develop mercies necessary to serve other another**: Ask: 1) Am I gifted to do this? 2) Do I have a meekness in my service? 3) Do I own this ministry? Do I do this for the Lord?
- 3) **Serve because spiritual gifts are given to others not to you**. 1 Cor. 12:7, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." Eph. 4:11-12, "He Himself gave some...for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry." Rom. 12:6, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us," use them for the body. 1 Pet. 4:10-11, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another."

#### **Further Discussion and Application**

Do you want a ministry? Which of the following can you do: Serve those with physical and spiritual needs, pray for ministries in the church, welcome guests, pray for visitors, the lost, for the weary, encourage the body, encourage the leaders, encourage the elders, ask the elders which ministries need workers, invite others to church, be a good employee at work, speak gracious and kind words, encourage the young women and men, ask if you can help in student ministries, youth ministries, children's ministries, in member care, in writing and proofing ministry materials, pick up others for church, help at conferences, serve by earning and giving more to the work of ministry, help teach your skills to other believers. **Find a leader and ask to help!**

What have you learned about serving in this sermon? What is your motivation to serve the Lord? How can you encourage and build the body of Christ? Why is humility an important attribute to serving effectively and being useful? Why is pride a hinderance to service?