



**Building God's People**

# Service

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May**

Daily Devotions



## POWER TRIP

### Read Matthew 20:20-28

*Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the 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 your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28)*

It's all about power.

One of the best series on TV over the last few years is "The West Wing". It's a behind-the-scenes look at the White House. If there is one message you will take away from the show, it's that politics is about power. Every decision they make is about power, how to protect it, how to retain it, how to extend it.

But politics is broader than the White House. There are politics at work. People are looking to extend their power. How can I get that promotion? How can I make sure I have the bosses ear? How can I run down my enemies? How can I make myself look better?

Sadly, churches are not immune. There are politics even there. Those who are seeking to increase their power. How many decisions are made, not out of a desire to worship God, but because we want to advance our own interests?

Jesus turns the whole approach upside down. He is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He deserves worship and honour and glory. He deserves our service.

Yet, in His own words, He came "not to be served, but to serve." And His whole life is an example of service, climaxing with the great service He rendered to us on the cross. That is the example we are to follow. Not to seek power, but to seek the humility to serve.



## SERVING AND FOLLOWING

### Read John 12:20-36

*Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (John 12:26)*

Some people are fooling themselves.

Yes, it's harsh - but it has to be said. They say they are serving Christ, but they are not really. They are actually living to serve themselves, and they fit Christ in around the edges. Indeed, they are just paying lip service.

But see what He says? "Whoever serves me must follow me." If you claim to serve Christ you must follow Him. You must obey Him. It's not enough to live the life you please, and just say "I am a Christian." You must be a follower, and that involves a cost.

The real servant of Christ is seeking to please their Master. If Christ's will means nothing to you, then you are not a real servant.

Are you doing business in a dishonest way? You must stop. Are you in an immoral relationship? You must get out. Are you pursuing a greedy, materialistic lifestyle? You must change.

Serving Christ means following Christ. It means going where He goes. Ultimately, Christ's path led to the cross. That is where the path of the Christian leads as well - to the cross, and to crucifixion of all our sinful ways.

God will not be mocked. Those who are living to please themselves and are giving no thought to Christ will reap a terrible harvest of vengeance. If this is you, today is the day to repent.

So, are you really serving Christ?



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## **A HARSH MASTER**

### **Read Matthew 6**

*"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."  
(Matthew 6:24)*

Money is seductive.

It really is. It promises so much. It says "I will make you happy. I will make you fulfilled. I will make you feel good about yourself. I will take away all your worries and fears. I will give you a good life!"

But money is a liar. Money cannot do give you any of those things. Once you start serving money, all the sweetness it promised turns to dust and ashes in your mouth. Once you begin to serve money, money becomes your master. And money is a harsh master. While you are in it's service, you will have no real peace.

If God is your master, then money cannot be. How can you have two masters? You will be hopelessly torn between them.

But many Christians are trying to do just that. They say they serve God, but money looms large in their life - too large. And master money is very good at eating away our faith, undermining it, consuming it. If we wish to be true servants of Christ, we must throw off our enslavement to money - radical surgery is required.

Be honest - who is your master?



## SWEET SERVICE

### Read Genesis 29:15-30

*So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. (Genesis 29:20)*

Time flies when you are having fun.

It's true isn't it? Look at Jacob's experience whilst serving Laban. His love for Rachel was so great that the seven years of labour seemed only a few days.

How do we feel about serving God? I want to suggest that it should be a delight rather than a burden. Our ministry ought to be the most stimulating and satisfying thing we do all week. If it isn't, we will not be giving all we have.

Why is it that ministry is often a burden. There are a few reasons. Often its because we are doing a ministry that we are not gifted in - that always makes things hard. If that's the case we need to seek out a better ministry for ourselves.

Sometimes ministry is burdensome because our hearts are hurting and we are not capable of taking delight in God. If that's the case then we need to seek healing.

Lets do whatever is necessary to take great delight in serving our God.



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## **A DANGEROUS FREEDOM**

### **Read Galatians 5:1-14**

*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)*

Freedom is a dangerous idea.

Really dangerous. When the church rediscovered grace many years ago, there was great controversy. People were astonished by the idea that salvation came through grace. They were amazed at the idea of Christian freedom. "It will never work," they said. "If salvation doesn't depend on works, people will never do what is right. They can't be trusted with 'Freedom!'"

We who are in Christ have been set free. But it's not a freedom that indulges our sinful desires. Whoever sins is a slave to sin. So to indulge your desires is to throw away your freedom and make yourself a slave.

Rather, the apostle calls upon us to "serve one another in love". This is the true meaning of Christian freedom - the freedom to serve and the freedom to love. To serve yourself is slavery. To serve others is freedom. It makes no sense to the world, but it reflects the perfect wisdom of God, which is foolishness to those outside Christ.

Enjoy the gift of freedom - but use your freedom in Christ to serve each another in love.



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## **FEAR AND TREMBLING**

### **Read Psalm 2**

*Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. (Psalm 2:11)*

Fear is horrible.

You know the feeling. Like when a menacing stranger steps in front of you. Or you momentarily stumble at a height. Or the boss calls you into his office and you know it's bad news.

As horrible as fear is, it is a useful emotion - so long as you fear the right things. It is good to fear menacing strangers or the edge of cliffs. Without fear we would be far more reckless, and expose ourselves to risk and danger.

Scripture frequently tells us to fear God. Sometimes bible teachers try to remove the "sting" from this by saying it just means "respect" and reverence.

But I think the language is stronger than this. We are to fear God because it is dangerous to take Him for granted. It can lead to spiritual stupor and death. We are to fear God in the same way a sailor fears the sea. Not because it is bad, but because it is so awesome and dangerous.

That is how we should approach God when we serve Him - with fear and trembling.



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## **GOTTA SERVE SOMBODY**

### **Read Luke 4:1-13**

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' "* (Luke 4:8)

You gotta serve somebody.

Bob Dylan wrote a song about that. The chorus goes -

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,*

Think about it. Everything we do, we are serving somebody - either someone else or ourselves. You wake up and make breakfast for yourself - you are serving you. You make breakfast for your spouse - you are serving them. You do your work - you are serving your boss. You collect your pay - you are serving yourself.

But beyond these individual acts of service, there is a greater idea. Ultimately, we are either serving ourselves or serving God. It is a whole of life thing. Either God is king, or you are king. You are worshipping God, or worshipping yourself. You are serving Him, or serving yourself.

What does "serving God" look like? Well, you will adopt God's priorities, you will do the things that He wants done and you will get excited by what excites Him.

You will listen to His Words, you will speak to Him, and you will hang out with His people. You will hold nothing back. All that you have will become His. That's what it means to serve God.

Who are you going to serve?