

# The son of man came not to minister

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[ 0 : 00 ] Could we read again verses 43 to 45 in Mark chapter 10? But so shall it not be among you, but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

We live in a very me-centered society, a society where individual rights and freedoms and pleasures have priority over against community well-being, whether that community is the community of the family, or of the school, or the church, or the community at large. But Jesus calls us as his people not to a life of blissful individual satisfaction without regard to others, but he calls us to a life of finding fulfillment in serving, in serving him and in serving others, in living in community and in serving the community, the community of the church, and the general community. God created us in his own image. And while that gives the individual worth and dignity, it also means God's will for us is community. Because God himself is community, a community of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And so because we are made in his image, we are not made as little individual islands without regard to others. We're made to live in community. God created the human race, and he created us male and female. He created family. He created the community of marriage. This is part of our nature, part of our very being, as created by God.

And the Bible's diagnosis of what's wrong with the world is not sins, but sin. It's not that there are some people who are doing bad things or even very bad things, but it is that we are all sinners. Our attitude is wrong. Sin is being self-centered instead of being God-centered. Instead of placing God at the center of the universe and at the center of our lives, we place self at the center. The first commandment is you shall have no other gods before me. And Jesus' summary of God's law is, love the Lord your God with all your heart. And the second commandment is love your neighbor as yourself. God is at the center.

He is to be the first of your commitments. And your love for others should be at least equal to your love for yourself. Jesus even goes beyond that. He says that we are to love one another as he has loved us. And he laid down his life for us. We should serve as he served. And again, as it says in these words, in his service, in his service, in his ministering, he gave his life as a ransom for many. Of course, we are not called to that great work of atonement which he achieved. But we are called to follow his example of self-giving love, of laying down the life in the service of our Lord and in the service of others. But of course, in contrast to the great example of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is all too possible for us to carry over our sinful self-centered attitude into all our attempts at Christian service. And so we must be on our guard constantly to aim at being Christ-centered, Christ-centered in our service, Christ-centered in our work, and we must seek to avoid being self-centered in our service and in our work. We come this evening at the close of this communion season to express thanks to God for all that he has done for us. But I would suggest it's not enough for us to express thanks in words or in praise merely this evening. We are called to express thanks in all of our lives as Christian people, showing by how we live, how we regard our Savior, and how we regard other people, and how we work for our Savior, and how we work for others, that we are indeed truly thankful for what he has done. I would like to notice with you first this evening, self-centered service, and how we should avoid it, and then we want to consider Christ-centered service.

[ 5 : 54 ] You see, here we have an example in this very context of self-centered service. We have the wrong example, the bad example, the poor example of James and John. In verse 37, they come to Jesus and they say, Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand in thy glory.

Now, James and John looked to the Lord Jesus Christ. They trusted in him, and they wanted to serve him. They wanted to serve him. They wanted to serve him. They wanted to serve him. They wanted to serve him.

But mixed up in all of that was a selfish ambition. They desired status in the kingdom. We don't know exactly what form they conceived the kingdom of Jesus Christ in, but perhaps it was quite this worldly term.

But at any rate, they wanted status in that. And perhaps they were building on the fact that James and John, along with Peter, were the closest of the disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they felt they should have greater status when the kingdom fully was realized. You see, as Christian people, we have not got completely free of our sin in this world. There will come a time when all sin will be passed.

But as Christian people, we're still entangled in sin. And even in holy things, even in works of service, even in all that we seek to do as Christian people, we have to be on our guard against sin. And here we have James and John, the disciples of Jesus, desiring to serve Jesus, and yet self-service, self-centeredness is tangled up with their desire to serve Jesus. That's something we must be on our guard against, to desire, position, or work, or influence in the Christian church for self-centered reasons, to further our own status, our own ambition.

[ 8 : 12 ] Just because we're in the church, just because we're Christians, doesn't mean to say that we are immune to that kind of temptation. That's something we have to avoid.

Another area that the scriptures make clear, where we have to be extremely careful, is pride over knowledge. We know that the original temptation came to Adam and Eve in the form, you will be like God, knowing good and evil. They were tempted with this great knowledge that perhaps they didn't fully understand, but they were being tempted to have a knowledge like what God himself had. In 1 Corinthians chapter 8, the apostle tells us, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

You see, again, as Christian people, it's possible for us to exercise our own self-centeredness by gaining a certain kind of knowledge, to be able to display our knowledge, our knowledge of the scriptures, our knowledge of theology, to be able to impress other people with that. And we get a thrill out of it. We get a buzz out of it, because it's giving us a kind of power and authority over others.

We must be extremely careful of that. Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Yes, knowledge of the scriptures is good. Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is great. But we must use that knowledge in the way in which he's appointed, a loving way, telling of this knowledge so that others may come and believe also in the Lord Jesus, building up the church of Jesus Christ. Another area where we see this self-centeredness in this whole area of desiring power for ourselves, whether ambition, status, knowledge, is also the exercise of gifts. Our gifts are given to us, the New Testament makes abundantly clear, not for our own personal status. Remember how the apostle Paul talks in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, about how people were looking to himself and to Apollos and to Peter, and they were putting these men on a pedestal. They were regarding their gifts as something great, and they themselves wanted to have some kind of status rub off on them because they were associated with these men. And Paul has to say, what after all is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants through whom you came to believe as the

Lord has assigned to each his task. Each one had a work of service to perform. And Paul was saying they weren't interested and they should not be interested in who had the greatest status, who had the greatest power. The gifts were given to build up the church. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the apostle says, the eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you. And the head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you.

[ 11 : 35 ] And again, so often in the Christian church, we try to build ourselves up at the expense of others. And we give the impression that only one type of gift is really what's needed, and it happens to be our kind of gift. And we look down on the gifts of others and the usefulness of others.

So you see, there's this great temptation of self-centered service, of a desire to exercise power and to have influence and status over others. But then there is another area, and that is pleasure.

We can seek our own pleasure rather than the furtherance of God's kingdom. Now, pleasure, of course, may be in the obvious worldly senses of following physical and psychological drives.

In Galatians chapter 5, the apostle again is to warn, he says, 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. See, Christian liberty is a great thing.

I'm not sure if you're set free. We're set free from bondage to the law. We're set free from bondage and slavery to the traditions of men. But we are set free into service of Jesus Christ, not set free to indulge our own passions, not set free just to do as we please. We're set free to be servants of Jesus Christ, to dedicate all that we are and all that we have to his service, to make him known, so that he will be glorified in the world, and not us. He must increase, I must decrease, as John the Baptist said.

[ 13 : 29 ] But you know, it's not only the temptation that we may use our freedom for our own pleasure in, we might say, a positive sense, but also there's a negative way in which we just don't do things. Straightforward laziness.

Because, remember, the Lord Jesus Christ told in his parable of the talents, he spoke of the servant with the one talent in Matthew chapter 25. And in it, Jesus said, his master replied, you wicked, lazy servant.

See, it wasn't that the man had done something tremendously wrong in a positive sense. It's just that he didn't do anything. He didn't use the talent he had. He wasted it.

And you see, this is one of our great problems as Christians. We may say, well, I don't do that, and I don't do this, and I don't do the next thing. I don't do all these things that the world does, so I must be okay.

But that's not the case. The Lord Jesus Christ calls us not to be negative people, not to be people who are just non-doers. He calls us to be workers, to be servants. He calls us to do good.

[ 14 : 45 ] And so much of the time, our inactivity speaks of our own laziness in the work of the gospel. We need to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, who went about doing good.

And that's the kind of Christian life that he calls us to. And all our models of the Christian life must be formed on the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the traditions of men, not on what we might think is a holy life and just abstaining from things.

We must positively serve as the Lord Jesus Christ served. Another area in which we can have self-centered service is the area of prejudice.

Remember how John, it was the Apostle John again, who said in Luke chapter 9, Master, he said to Jesus, we saw a man driving out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he's not one of us.

Doesn't that have a familiar ring to it? Not one of us. You see, John was prejudiced against this man because he didn't belong to their group, the group of disciples, as he thought the only ones identified with Jesus.

[ 16 : 03 ] But this man was doing what he was doing in the name of Jesus. This man had just as high a regard for Jesus as John himself had. But because he was not one of us, John said, I should stop him.

We still have, of course, prejudice amongst Christians, prejudice against others who may belong to different traditions or different churches from our own. We may have negative attitudes to people, even within our own fellowship, because that person is not one of us.

They don't see things exactly the way we see things. And you see, the Lord Jesus Christ forbids John for doing any such thing. He says, he who is not against us is for us.

And so we must have something of that largeness of vision as well, so that our service is not self-centered, self-exalting, saying, we are the people and wisdom will die with us.

But there's another area in which we see prejudice in Christian service, and that is prejudice against people of other cultures. Remember how there was such hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans at the time of Jesus.

[ 17 : 25 ] And this stands for us as a standing warning against having such attitudes. Remember, again, it is James and John who are involved here in this passage.

In Luke chapter 9, when Jesus was amongst the Samaritans, we're told, but the people there did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples, James and John, saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them. And that attitude has not died with James and John. The same attitude is still in our hearts.

People of different cultures and maybe different religious traditions, we're prejudiced against them. Not seeing the opportunity that these people are to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, even although they may reject, even although they may reject for many years.

Because, you see, the time came when the Samaritans turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we read about it in the book of Acts. And so James and John's attitude here was wholly wrong. [18:40] This attitude of prejudice against them. We, today, have got to be careful of prejudices in such ways against people of different races or traditions or cultures or whatever it is.

And think, oh well, that person is not going to be interested in the gospel. Or we write off that person because they belong to a particular culture or they speak a different language or whatever it is. We've got to view people as Christ viewed them.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to Samaritans just as he spoke to Jews. The Lord Jesus moved easily across those cultural barriers. And he had no prejudice.

He had no prejudice against people supposing they were outwardly righteous or supposedly they were outwardly disreputable. He had no prejudice against people whether they were male or female.

He had no prejudice against people no matter what race they belonged to. Romans, Samaritans, Jews. And we've got to have something again of that great broad-mindedness of the Lord Jesus Christ as we seek to serve him and to serve him in the way in which he served.

[19:50] So let's look then at Christ-centered service. Because that's what Jesus is speaking of here. He says, And so we have this great example of service in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, of course, that is not all that there is about the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've been focusing this weekend on the great saving work that the Lord Jesus Christ performed.

That unique work that only he could perform. But in the scriptures, it is not left there. That is the great beginning of our faith.

Without it, we don't have faith. But from there, we are to go on to follow the example of Jesus.

Jesus himself said that he did things as an example for his disciples.

We're told of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 6 that he obeyed God's will, not his own. He said, For I've come down from heaven not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me.

[21:10] And so we are called not to do our own will, but to do God's will. Now, how do we know what God's will is? Well, Jesus himself. Jesus in his own person is the word of God.

He's God's communication to us. So as we look at Jesus, we see what God's will is. What it means to be a real man. What it is to be a real human being. Healed will.

These are the scriptures, says Jesus. These are the scriptures that testify about me. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. That's what he said to the religious leaders of that time.

These are the scriptures that testify about me. We can only learn the will of God. We can only learn the will of God in Jesus Christ by reading what it says about Jesus.

How he lived. How he treated people. How he died. All scripture, the apostle Paul reminds us, all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

[22:15] Jesus obeyed God's will. He obeyed the will of the Father. And in doing that, he sacrificed himself for others.

Now it's not only at the cross that he sacrificed himself. His whole life was sacrificial. In John chapter 13, we have that amazing passage where Jesus washes the disciples' feet.

And Jesus says this, Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

You remember the scene. The disciples are gathered in the upper room. And the normal procedure was in those days that a servant would wash the feet of people who came, invited guests.

But the disciples somehow or another had not made any arrangement. Not one of them volunteered to do it. And so they were all sitting around looking uncomfortable. And Jesus takes the basin of water.

[23:26] Jesus takes the towel. And Jesus gets down on his hands and knees. And Jesus washes their feet. Now there's not something mysterious about that.

It's just something so amazingly down to earth and practical. And Jesus says, I've set you an example. He put himself at the lowest.

The one who in reality was the highest. The one who was Lord of all. He got down on his knees.

And did the mundane task. The task that nobody else wanted to do. Now you see in the church so often we're competing to do the great thing.

And there's often ordinary mundane things that need to be done. That we've got to get on with doing. Just helping one another. Helping somebody who needs something. Showing the love of Christ in that way.

But of course supremely the Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for others in his death. Here in this passage we're told, For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[ 24 : 34 ] And again here amazingly the scriptures don't simply leave it at the level of atonement that he did that to liberate us from our sin. We're also told this is an example.

My command is this says Jesus in John 15. Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this.

That he lay down his life for his friends. Now that is a phenomenal standard of love. That's an amazing standard of love. That's we may think an unattainable standard of love.

Because Jesus laid down his life to deliver his people from their sin. But it's saying to us, we have got to follow that example of self-giving.

Now we might say, well if a crisis came I might be prepared to give my life for somebody else. But you see, what happens really in life so often is that the big crisis doesn't arrive.

[ 25 : 40 ] It's little things every day where we're asked to lay down the life. Where we're asked to do things for the Lord Jesus Christ and for others. Not the great gesture.

But in everyday things. Putting others before ourselves. I want to notice with you here, not only Christ's example of service.

But Christ's encouragement to service. Because he tells us that all service that is done in his name. All service that is done according to his will. It is service to him. Remember that great passage in Matthew 25. When he talks about the people who did things.

They visited the sick. They visited those in prison. And so on. And he says, I tell you the truth. Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine.

[ 26 : 38 ] You did for me. You see, and it's very ordinary mundane things that are being stressed there. But so important. The things that are done for his people.

Jesus accounts that it's done to him. And that's an amazing encouragement to service. So that what we do. The very least thing.

The cup of cold water. The hospitality. The kindly word. That we offer in the name of Jesus. Jesus receives it as service to himself.

But also Jesus encourages us. By here in this passage saying. That such service is a sign of true greatness. Here in verses 43 and 44.

He says. But whosoever will be great among you. Shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest. Shall be servant of all. Now you see this is turning the world's idea on its head.

[ 27 : 42 ] Jesus has just been taking the example. Of the kings of the nations. And the rulers of the nations. They wanted to exercise authority. They wanted to be the greatest.

But Jesus said. It's the opposite way around. The one who puts himself in the lowest position. The one who puts himself in the place of the slave. Because that's the word that's used. That person. Is the greatest. And we need to learn again. This from the Lord Jesus Christ. For often within the church. We seek status. We seek influence.

And we need. To put ourselves at the lowest place. To be the smallest. To be the humblest. To do the things perhaps. That others are not doing.

Not to draw attention to ourselves. But. But. Because. Because. We want to follow. Our master. The Lord Jesus. But then also.

[ 28 : 40 ] I want you to notice. Christ's expectation. Of service. And how. Exactly. He wants us. To serve. He clearly expects us.

To serve. In. The way he served. To follow his example. To. But what will that mean. The apostle Paul. Spells out.

One aspect of it. When in 1 Corinthians 9. He says. To the weak. I became weak. To win the weak. I have become. All things. To all men.

So that by all possible means. I might save some. Now that's something that Paul learned. From the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. The apostle Paul.

Wanted to make himself. Nothing. To. Win other people. He put his own status. And he put his own. Ideas. To one side.

[ 29 : 34 ] To follow the ideas. An example of the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus. You see. Would go to anyone. The Samaritan woman. At the well. Or Nicodemus.

Who came to him by night. Or the tax collectors. And sinners. Or whoever it was. Jesus. Would go to them. And therefore. He would by all means.

Save some. And that's the example. That the apostle Paul. Tried to follow. And that's the example. That we must try to follow. To become all things. To all men. Not in the sense.

That we. Disregard. What the Lord Jesus. Is teaching. And follow the. Example and ideas of men. It's not that at all. We become all things. To all men. By getting alongside.

Of everyone. And putting ourselves. In their position. And seeking. To win them. For the Lord Jesus. And then.

[ 30 : 30 ] Also involved in this. Is serving the church. We mentioned. Using gifts already. Our gifts are given to us. Whatever gifts. Our abilities. We have. Not for our glory. But for the glory.

Of the Lord Jesus. In Ephesians chapter 4. We're told. It was he. That is Jesus. Who gave some. To be apostles. Some to be prophets. Some to be evangelists. And some to be pastors. And teachers.

To prepare God's people. For works of service. Now in the older translation. It talks there. About the work of the ministry. And we might think. Oh that's talking about.

The work of the ministry. Of the word. Being a minister. But it's not. Because the actual meaning. Of those words. Is that. Those who are ministers. Of the word. The pastors.

And teachers. Are to prepare. God's people. For works of ministry. Or works of service. And you see. That stresses.

[ 31 : 23 ] That the gifts. That are given to us. The gifts of knowledge. Of God's word. The gift of teaching. Or whatever it is. Is given. So that we might serve. So that we might serve.

The Lord Jesus Christ. And serve others. You know the marvelous picture. That Paul uses. In 1 Corinthians 12. Of the church. As the body. All different members. In the body.

Hands. Feet. Eye. Mouth. All the rest of it. All having a particular function. And all working together. In harmony. That's the picture of the body. And so in the Christian church. We have all different types.

Of personalities. And abilities. And all are called. To be working together. To perform their own. Particular function. Serving. And building up the church. Building one of the church.

One another up. In love. And then of course also. There is communicating. We as Christians. Are called. To communicate. The good news.

[ 32 : 16 ] Of Jesus Christ. To others. In Acts chapter 1. Verse 8. Jesus says. To his disciples. But you will receive power. When the Holy Spirit. Comes on you. And you will be my witnesses.

In Jerusalem. And in all Judea. And Samaria. And to the ends. Of the earth. And we read. Then. That it's not just. The apostles. Who do this. But all the disciples.

There was 120 of them. At that time. On the day of Pentecost. They are speaking. God's word. And speaking it. In different languages. To all the people. Who are there.

Fulfilling the great promises. Of scripture. That this gospel. Is for the whole. World. World. And so. We are called. As individual Christians. As individual believers.

To be communicating. That word. Ministers may preach. In churches. Or wherever they get. Opportunity to preach. But every individual. Christian. Can speak to people.

[ 33 : 13 ] In a very personal way. To their own friends. Their own acquaintances. Their own workmates. In a way in which. The minister. Perhaps can't do. You can do things. That ministers can't do. And we are called.

As individual Christians. Therefore. To do that. To serve the Lord Jesus Christ. In that way. But of course. Also there is. The ministry of the word.

The pastors and teachers. As the apostle Paul. Describes them. There in Ephesians chapter 4. And we have a tremendous need. In our day. For this great service.

This ministry. To the Lord Jesus Christ. And so. That's a challenge. That comes. To young men in particular. To consider the call of God.

God. Because we need. There is a tremendous need. For those who will proclaim. The good news of Jesus Christ. In this age. To proclaim it passionately. To proclaim it relevantly.

[ 34 : 07 ] To proclaim it boldly. To proclaim it in a Christ-like way. To a lost and dying world. But then also we are called. To serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the wider community. The Lord Jesus said of us. We are the salt of the earth. And the light of the world. Now salt has got to be in touch. With what it's going to benefit.

And before it can benefit it. You're not going to get any good. From the salt. If it's in the packet on the shelf. It's got to be put in. The pan of tatties. Or whatever it is.

That's being cooked. To give that taste. And in the same way. The Christian. Is no good. In a packet. Simply in a holy huddle. All by themselves.

Christians have to be. There in the community. Bringing the good taste of the gospel. Bringing the light of the world. Into the dark places. Of this world. And so we are called.

[ 35 : 04 ] As Christians. To serve. To serve in this life. But also. Amazingly. We are called. To go on. Serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Forever. In Revelation chapter 22. Verse 3. The throne of God. And of the Lamb. Will be in the city. And his servants.

Will serve him. That marvelous picture of heaven. And it speaks of work. It speaks of service. Being performed. Now we don't know.

What great works of service. Are still to be performed. In the future. We normally think of heaven. As rest. And yes. There is rest. But also. There is service.

Delight. In serving. The Lord Jesus Christ. Delight. In serving. The Lamb of God. Who loved us. And gave himself for us. So here.

[ 36 : 00 ] Is the great challenge. To us. As Christian people. To express. Thanks to God. For all that he has done. For us. Not just. In this communion. But in all. That he has done.

For us. In Jesus Christ. And to express that thanks. Not only in words. Amongst ourselves. But to express that thanks. In the way we live. In the way we serve.

In the way that we try to show. The example of Jesus Christ. To others. This is the great challenge. Are you going to live for yourself. And achieve nothing that's worthwhile.

Or are you going to live for Jesus Christ. And find real fulfillment. In serving him. And others. Let's pray. Amen. Our gracious and loving heavenly father.

We have to confess. That our service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is so poor. And so often it is because. We have inflated ideas of our own importance.

[ 37 : 05 ] Or on the other hand. We have such. A self-deprecating attitude. That we think we can do nothing. Lord our God. Deliver us. From those falsehoods.

Enable us to know. That you call us. And you equip us. To perform the works. That you have asked us to do. And we pray. That each one of us here tonight. Might seek to rededicate ourselves.

In the light of your great love to us. To serve you. And to serve you. For the glory of Jesus Christ. We live in a world. That so desperately needs.

Such Christ centered service. Lord we pray. That you would have mercy upon us. Pour out your spirit upon us. Revive your church. So that we might be profitable servants.

Servants who delight to do. Their master's bidding. Lord our gracious God. Look on us in mercy. Pour out your spirit on us. Lead us.

[ 38 : 04 ] And guide us. And fully equip us. For all that you call us to do. And we ask these things in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen.