



Ridgedale Baptist Church

MARK: FOLLOW ME • TO SEEK, TO SAVE, TO SERVE • MARK 10:35-45 • MARCH 22, 2020

MAIN POINT

Because Jesus came to serve, service for the Christian isn't a burden; it's a gift.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What specific qualities make a great leader, in your opinion?

What words come to mind when you hear the word "servant"? What are some common assumptions we make or hear about serving?

What are some reasons leaders are motivated to serve others?

Leaders are often motivated to serve for a variety of reasons. Obligation, fear, social acceptance, peer pressure, concern for others, and tradition are common motivators. Christians are motivated to serve God for many of the same reasons. Some are appropriate while others are not. Serving is not optional for Christ followers. We can find our motivation in what Christ has done for us and what He desires to do in and through our lives.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 9:23-24.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus delivered quite the command to His followers. He asked them to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Jesus was addressing not just the twelve disciples, but all who claim to follow Him. It's a statement that leads us to wonder why, how, and to what degree we should serve.

What does Jesus require of someone who wishes to be His disciple?

What do Jesus' words say about our motivation for serving Him? Why should we serve?

What's the relationship between following Him and serving Him? Is it possible to do one but not the other?

How does denying ourselves and losing our lives for Christ's sake speak to serving God?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 10:42-45.

In Mark 10:32-34, Jesus taught his disciples that He was going to go Jerusalem where He would be delivered over to the religious leaders who would crucify Him. Rather than considering the selfless nature of Jesus' sacrifice, James and John responded to Christ's teaching on His death and resurrection by attempting to secure for themselves a place of honor in Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). In response to James and John's selfish request, Jesus called His disciples together and taught them about life as His followers. He drew a sharp contrast between pagan Gentile practices and what He expected from His people. In doing so, He redefined true greatness.

How was "greatness" most commonly demonstrated or pursued in Jesus' culture?

How is "greatness" defined in our culture today?

What does Jesus say about true greatness?

Jesus perfectly modeled the true standard of kingdom greatness. No one is greater than He is, yet He came to serve. Selfless ministry to others' needs marked His entire ministry. Not only did Jesus come to serve others, but also to give His life as a ransom for many. We need to redefine greatness according to Jesus' teaching.

In what ways are Jesus' words here counter-cultural both today and in Jesus' day?

What does this say about the condition of the human heart and our natural assumptions about service?

Have a volunteer read Ephesians 4:11-13.

To whom did the Lord Jesus Christ give these gifts? What do these gifts have in common?

How are the specific gifts in these verses essential to our mission of making Jesus known and making disciples?

Every Christian is called on to be a witness for Christ, but some are especially capable in this area. In a local congregation, gifted evangelists will encourage other believers in how to reach persons for Christ. Pastors and teachers provide leadership for local congregations. The word “pastors” is literally shepherds, referring to the need for God’s flock to be tended (see 1 Pet. 5:2). One way that shepherds tend is by feeding the sheep (teaching the Word).

According to verse 12, what is the purpose of these specific gifts? Does this make them superior to other gifts? Explain.

Are church leaders responsible for carrying out all the ministries of the church? Why or why not? What is the primary task of the leaders Paul mentions?

It’s not that the leaders do all the ministry; rather the ministry is to be done by all believers working together. Paul believed in “every-member ministry.” The leaders in a local church are like player-coaches. What happens when all the believers work together? They build up the body of Christ—the ultimate purpose of using spiritual gifts.

Who has been given the task of doing the actual ministry of the church? What are some examples of this “work of ministry” the saints have been given?

The word “saint” in verse 12 is related to the word “sanctification.” At the time of saving faith in Jesus, believers are separated in Jesus from the world. Therefore, all believers are saints. We participate with the Spirit in a lifelong process of transformation into conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (see Rom. 12:1,2).

According to verse 12, what should be the outcome of our ministry to one another in the church?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can we demonstrate authentic humility as we serve others this week? What’s one way you can humbly and selflessly serve others?

What are some specific gifts God has given you that you may not be currently using to serve God or to serve others?

PRAYER

Pray that we would reflect on the gospel daily and serve others as a response to what Christ has done for us.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 9:23-24

Jesus addressed all the people around Him, the disciples and a crowd (see Mark 8:34). He forcefully stated the demands of discipleship—what He required of His followers. Interestingly, He directed His words to the Twelve because they as yet could not accept that the Messiah would suffer and die; thus, they had no concept of discipleship that included suffering and death. Any in the larger crowd considering going with Jesus had to be aware of the cost of discipleship.

First, Jesus declared that anyone wanting to follow Him had to deny himself. He did not mean His followers must deny themselves something; they had to deny themselves. They had to replace self at the center of their lives and enthrone Jesus as absolute Lord. They had to remove selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-serving to develop the self-giving lifestyle Jesus modeled. They were to give up worldly ambition for prestige and power. Self-sacrifice was to replace self-indulgence.

Second, Jesus required a person who would follow Him to carry his cross daily. In the first century, a cross was not a fashion statement or an ornament of beauty or decoration, but an instrument of cruel torture and painful death. Thus, Jesus called people to follow Him, even to death. The word *his* indicates that each believer faces Jesus' demand of total commitment to Him and His redemptive purpose. The term *daily* emphasizes the consistency of loyalty and ministry He requires. Becoming identified with Him and His redemptive mission is risky and demanding, yet He summons people to walk with Him on the road less traveled: self-sacrifice. Contrary to popular Christian tradition, Jesus did not indicate that life's negative experiences such as ailments, wayward children, or lesser lots in life are crosses; the cross believers bear is the lifestyle of self-sacrificial service Jesus modeled.

Third, Jesus called individuals to follow Him. They were to keep on following Him in unflagging loyalty. Thus the third condition of discipleship is consistent obedience. Jesus used a striking paradox to emphasize His point. The person who purposes to save his life will lose it. The individual who hoards life—who seeks to gratify self—not only will forfeit full and meaningful

life, but also eternal life. Conversely, the person who loses his life because of Christ will save it. The individual who meets the demands presented in verse 23 and commits life to Christ will experience eternal life. Serving is a large part of this. Rejecting selfishness and self-absorption, Jesus' follower chooses the less-traveled road of selfless service for Him and thus experiences life to the fullest.

| MARK 10:42-45

This passage is part of Jesus' response to a question from James and John. Incredibly, James and John, brothers who were part of the disciples' inner circle, came to Jesus with an open-ended request. They requested places of honor in Jesus' coming kingdom. The place on a ruler's right was the place of highest honor, and the place on his left was next in prestige. Both were positions of power. When the remaining 10 disciples learned of the exchange between Jesus and the brothers, the 10 became angry—perhaps because they thought James and John had taken advantage of their relationship with Jesus to grab prized places in the earthly kingdom they expected Him to establish. They well may have wanted the coveted positions.

In sharp contrast to Gentiles' standard of greatness, Jesus' followers were to adopt a different and higher standard. Jesus indicated that greatness has a place in God's kingdom. The ambition to attain greatness can be healthy and laudable. His followers should want to be great—great servants! The Greek term rendered servant means “one who ministers or waits on” someone in the sense of waiting tables. It presents the idea of performing menial, personal ministry to others.

Jesus continued with a second surprising condition. Whoever wanted to rank first in God's kingdom had to be a slave to others. A master owned a bondsman outright, and the slave had only the rights the owner granted.

| EPHESIANS 4:11-13

4:11. This verse ties directly back to the last word of verse 7. Verse 11 picks up again the subject started in verse 7 to tell us the relationship between the call to unity and the spiritual gifts Christ has given us. Spiritual gifts are at the heart of Christ's strategy for building His church. The gifts are ministers (or ministries) for the church. While this issue is strongly debated, particularly by Pentecostal and charismatic theologians, evangelical doctrine has traditionally held that of those four gifts two of them are still in existence and two have passed away. The apostles and prophets seem no longer to be part of God's work in the church. The church was laid on the

foundation of the ministry of the apostles and prophets (see Eph. 2:20). Now that foundation has been laid, the evangelists and the pastor-teachers are being used by God to build the superstructure.

4:12. It is not the task of these gifted people to do all the work of the ministry. Their task is to prepare God's people for works of service. When believers are equipped and people accept the adventure of ministering to others, then the whole body is built up, matured, strengthened, and flourishes.

4:13. Diverse gifts create and build up one body in unity. This unity is in faith and knowledge of Christ. Christ does not try to build up superstars in His kingdom with superior faith or superior knowledge. He tries to build up a church unified in its faith and knowledge, each member being built up to maturity. All are to reach the fullness of Christ. The church's goal is that each member and thus the entire church will show to the world all the attributes and qualities of Christ. Then the church will truly be the one body of Christ.

Sermon Outline.

1. Misguided ambition (35-37)
2. Lack of understanding (38-41)
3. Jesus' teaching on greatness (42-44)
4. Lessons we learn (45)
 - a. He is our example
 - b. He is our ransom

Application: What is our response?

1. Worship Him
2. Serve others