**More Like the Master**

In His Service and Sacrifice

Lesson 22

*““I am in the midst of you as he that serves”*

(Luke 22:27)

**Service With A Smile**

 Service to others and sacrifice is not popular today in our culture of selfishness and self-centeredness. It is easier for many to look out for themselves rather than care for others. It is easier to elevate oneself over others than to stoop below them and serve them. Selfishness is seen everywhere in our society. It is promoted in the media and it is practiced in every facet of life (the home, the government, the educational system, the workplace, the community). The key words in our modern society today are: “I”, “me”, “my”, and “mine”. There are millions in our contemporary world who are like the rich farmer in Jesus’ parable who constantly spoke of “I” and “my” (Luke 12:17-21). Many merchants will no longer offer genuine customer service. Many politicians will no longer serve their constituents. Many teachers will no longer serve their students. The mood and climate of our day is one of rudeness, self-assertiveness, selfishness, and laziness. “I don’t care about anyone else but me” is the slogan of many today. It is hard to find someone who will go the “first mile”, let alone the “second mile”. If there is any service going on today among some, it is serving the god of self (Romans 1:25; 16:18). If there is any sacrifice going on, it is sacrificing to modern idols (Acts 7:41; 15:29; 21:25).

 In contrast to our contemporary selfish world, Jesus said that greatness in his kingdom comes when one takes on the role of a servant and ministers to others (Matthew 20:26-28; 23:11; Mark 9:35; 10:43-44; Luke 22:26-27). Jesus’ followers must learn to serve because Jesus himself came into the world to serve (Matthew 20:28). Jesus also taught the importance of “going the second mile” (Matthew 5:41) and the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) which in turn promotes a servant’s heart.

 Regardless of how everyone else is acting today, Christians are to follow their Master in his example of service. Jesus told others to serve and he himself set the right example for them in his own service. He practiced what he preached about service. He said, *“I am in the midst of you as he that serves”* (Luke 22:27). Let us study how that we can be “More Like the Master” in service and sacrifice.

**Jesus and His Service and Sacrifice**

 Jesus served and sacrificed for his heavenly Father. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be the Lord’s suffering servant (Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 3:8; Matthew 12:18; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27,30). At the tender age of 12, Jesus knew and understood that he must be about his Father’s business (Luke 2:49). Jesus also reminded the Devil that God is the only one who is to be worshipped and served (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). He taught his disciples that they would have to choose between serving God or serving mammon (riches) because they could not serve both (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13). Jesus told his disciples that his “food” (what sustains him) is doing his Father’s will and accomplishing his Father’s work (John 4:34). Jesus came to do his Father’s will (John 5:20; 6:38; Hebrews 10:5-9). When Jesus prayed in the garden, he prayed three times, *“…not my will, but thine be done”* (Luke 22:42). Jesus was his Father’s servant all the way to the bitter end. He prayed in John 17, *“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do”* (verse 4).

 Jesus served and sacrificed for his fellow-man. Jesus served his fellow-man when he taught them the truth of God’s word. Jesus served his fellow-man when he performed miracles to heal them and to help them. Jesus set the example for service with his apostles when girded himself as a lowly servant and washed their feet (John 13:12-16). Every step Jesus took in life was a step of service. Ultimately, Jesus served his fellow-man by dying for them on the cross. Jesus is the world’s sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7). He *“took on the form of a servant”* and became obedient unto death for all mankind (Philippians 2:7-8).

 Jesus was a giver. All the serving and sacrificing of Jesus can be summed up in one word: “giving”. Jesus was a giving person. First, Jesus gave of his time. He spent much of his time teaching others (Matthew 5:1-2), administering to the needs of his hearers (Matthew 8:14-17), and exposing error (Matthew 23:1-36). Jesus’ days were often very busy and filled with service (Mark 1:21-34; 3:19 – 5:21). Peter said that Jesus *“went about doing good”* (Acts 10:38). Second, Jesus gave of his love and forgiveness. He taught love (Matthew 5:44) and practiced love (Luke 23:34). He taught his disciples to love one another and love by sacrificing (John 13:1, 35; 15:13). He showed love by caring for others (John 11:36) and by correcting others (Mark 10:21). Third, Jesus gave of his compassion. He had compassion for the multitudes and their needs (Matthew 9:36; 15:32; 20:34; Luke 7:13). He also taught others the need for compassion using the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35) and the story of the prodigal son’s return (Luke 15:20). Finally, Jesus gave himself. He came to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He *“gave himself”* so that we could have remission of sins and a hope of heaven (Galatians 1:4; 2:20; Ephesians 5:2, 25; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14).

**The Christian and Sacrificial Service**

We must serve and sacrifice for God. The life of a Christian should be one of service and sacrifice to our heavenly Father (Romans 6:16-22). We serve God *“in newness of the spirit”* (Romans 7:6). Paul wrote: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service”* (Romans 12:1). Like Paul, we need not be ashamed to tell others we serve God (Acts 24:14; 27:23) and we need to be thankful that we can serve God (2 Timothy 1:3). It is a privileged duty to serve God (Luke 17:10). Christians need to be fervent in their service to the Lord, not slothful and lazy (Romans 12:11). When we serve Christ, we are well-pleasing to God (Romans 14:18). We serve the Lord Christ (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 1:7; 3:24; 4:7; Revelation 1:1; 2:20; 6:11). When one obeys the gospel, he turns from serving idols to serve a living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:14). Christians must offer *“service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe”* (Hebrews 12:28). The author of Hebrews writes: *“Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”* (Hebrews 13:15-16). Peter writes: *“ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 2:5).

 We must serve and sacrifice for our fellow-man. The life of a Christian should also be one of service to our fellow-man. A Christian will love God with all his heart and will love his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:39-40). Jesus said that judgment will be based in part upon one’s service to others (Matthew 25:34-36, 44). Faithful Christians are supposed to serve and do good to all men as they opportunity (Galatians 6:10). The life of the Christian will also involve service within the local church. Local churches need to be full of preachers (2 Timothy 2:24), elders (Hebrews 13:17), deacons (1 Timothy 3:10, 12), and members (Romans 16:1; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 5:5) who are active in their service. Brethren need to be busy in the *“work of ministering”* (Ephesians 4:12). Their work is the work of the local church, not carnal things. Church members need to be serving in the work of evangelism, the work of edification, and the work of benevolence toward needy saints. Faithful Christians will not be influenced by the deadly selfishness gripping our age. They will not demand that things be done their way. They will not say, “It’s my way or the highway.” Faithful Christians will have *“the sacrifice and service of your faith”* that Paul wrote about in Philippians 2:17 (see also verse 18). Faithful Christians will always gird themselves with humility to serve one another (1 Peter 5:5).

 We must be givers. Like Jesus and faithful New Testament saints, Christians today need to be known for their giving. Dorcas gave her talents in service to others (Acts 9:36). Timothy and Erastus served Paul (Acts 19:22). Paul gave his life in service to God and others (Acts 20:31; 21:11-13; 26:16; 27:23; Romans 1:9, 14-15; 15:8, 16, 25, 27; 2 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Timothy 1:12). He said he would *“very gladly spend and be spent”* for others (2 Corinthians 12:15). Stephanus served the saints (1 Corinthians 16:15). The Macedonian brethren gave themselves and their contribution to serve other needy brethren (2 Corinthians 8:5). Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21) and Epaphrus (Colossians 1:7) were faithful servants. Timothy and Epaphroditus gave their lives in service to Christ (Philippians 2:22, 26-30; 1 Thessalonians 3:2). Onesiphorus and Mark were useful in their service to Paul (2 Timothy 1:18; 4:11). What will we give? Will we give our time, our talents, our bodies, our goods, our love, compassion, and forgiveness? Will we give even our own life for others? John wrote, *“because he laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (1 John 3:16). When we truly have a servant’s heart, we will be known for our giving.

**More Like the Master in His Service**

 Those we remember most in history are often the people who made some worthwhile contribution to others during their lifetime. They did something to serve others and to sacrifice for others and they are remembered for it. These people left something behind that was helpful and useful to others. Jesus, though he lived a shorter life than many, left much to be remembered. His life has changed history and his messaged has influenced many because of his service and his sacrifice. Jesus gave much.

 What will we be remembered for? What will we leave behind? What will our legacy be? All people will leave behind something, but will it be something helpful and useful? Will we be remembered for how we served others and sacrificed for them in some good way? Will we be remembered for our giving? Jesus wants us to follow his example of service and go out and serve others. He said, *“I have given you an example that you should do as I have done unto you”* (John 13:14-15). Let us get out and serve and God will give us the strength to do it (1 Peter 4:11).

 One day, all our hard work of selfless service will be rewarded. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them”* (Luke 12:37). Again, Jesus said, *“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor”* (John 12:26). There will be a great honor in heaven bestowed upon the faithful servants of Christ.

Our hard work of service in this life will allow us to be in heaven one day to serve God there: *“Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them”* (Revelation 7:15) and *“And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him”* (Revelation 22:3). Let us serve faithfully so that one day we will hear: *“Well done, good and faithful servant … enter into the joy of thy Lord”* (Matthew 25:21, 23). Let us be “More like the Master” in our service and sacrifice.

**Questions**

1. How is our modern world different from Jesus with respect to service and sacrifice?

2. What makes one “great” and “first” in God’s kingdom according to Matthew 20:26-28?

3. What are some things that Jesus did to serve his Father?

4. What are some things that Jesus did to serve his fellow-man?

5. What were some things that Jesus gave to others during his lifetime?

6. What are some things that Christians can do to show their service to God?

7. What are some things that Christians can do to show their service to non-Christians?

8. What are some things that Christians can do to show their service to their brethren?

9. What are some things that Christians can give others during their lifetime?

10. What reward will be given to the Christian who faithfully serves, sacrifices, and gives throughout his life?