

Spiritual Disciplines: Service

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Date: 07 March 2021

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our online service for Sunday, March 7th, 2021. My name is Kent Dixon. I'm the lead pastor of Braemar Baptist Church here in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Welcome this morning, whether you're joining us live on Facebook right now, or you're tuning in later in the week listening to our podcast or however you're connecting with us. So welcome here this morning.

If you're finding yourself needing some prayer, we all need prayer. But if you have a specific prayer request, feel free, please, I encourage you to send an email to prayer at braemarbaptist.com.

That's our private prayer line. So if you have a prayer request, we'll receive that and they are completely confidential. If you'd like to connect with us online, visit us at braemarbaptist.com.

And we also send out a weekly message from me, from the pastor, as well as an e-newsletter. So if you'd like to be part of that, please send an email to info at braemarbaptist.com and we'll be sure to add you.

[1 : 04] Well, this morning we will be celebrating communion together and I'll be leading us in that. So gather whatever you have handy. Here's an opportunity to do that now. A glass of water, a glass of juice.

Don't worry that you don't happen to have actual communion elements at home. That's totally fine. And if you've celebrated a communion with us online before, you know what it's like and it's all good.

So please, I encourage you to do that. Also grab a cracker or a small piece of bread so you have that handy as well. Well, let's pray this morning. Father God, we praise you for the wonderful future you've prepared for us through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ.

We eagerly wait the day when we will enter into your presence for all eternity with holy bodies untainted by sin. Father, please help us not to lose heart when we face the many pressures, anxieties, and troubles that come our way in life in this fallen world.

Lord, let us take great courage and the knowledge that you've given us your Holy Spirit to prepare our souls for our kingdom dwelling with you, which is to come.

[2 : 21] Lord, we thank you that Jesus is with us literally in each moment and that your plan for his life on earth would change our eternal destiny forever.

And we pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, let's sing together, join together in worship singing this morning.

And we're going to sing three songs. We're going to sing, Nearer my God to thee, praise to the Lord, and now thank we all our God. And you'll be able to, as usual, follow along with the lyrics on the screen and the worship leader as he leads us in singing these songs.

So blessings on you as you engage in worship to God in this way. Sing out loud, don't be afraid. And so blessings as you sing now. Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee.

- Nearer my God to thee. Nearer my God to thee.
- [4 : 09] Nearer my God to thee. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee.
 Nearer from Him. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee.
 Nearer to thee. Middleer to thee. Nearer to thee.
 Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee. Nearer to thee. Let in my dreams I'll be nearer, my God, to
 Thee.
 Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer to Thee.
- [5 : 27] Nearer with my waking thoughts, bright with Thy praise.
 I'll hold out my stony grace, Bethel I'll raise.
 Sold by my woes to be nearer, my God, to Thee.
 Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer to Thee.
 Nearer to Thee.
- [6 : 35] There in my Father's home, safe and at rest.
 There in my Savior's love, perfectly blessed.
 Age after age to be. Nearer, my God, to Thee.
 Nearer to Thee. Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer to Thee.
 Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer, my God, to Thee. Nearer,
 my■■■■.
- [7 : 56] Almighty King of creation O my soul, praise Him for years My love, salvation All you hear
 Now to His temple, draw near Praise Him in glad I'd array Praise to the Lord who of all
 things So wondrously reigneth Shelter thee under His wings So gently sustaineth Hast
 thou not seen How thy desires have been

 And didn't worry your day Praise to the Lord who of all things In the Euturium All that has
 life and bread come now Praise it before Him Let thee, young man, Sound from His
 people again Light thee for I, we adore Him Sharing...

 dinheiro to his people Longer bed Now think we all are God With hearts and hands and
 voices Who wondrous things has run In whom this world rejoices Who from my mother's
 arms Has blessed us on our way

 With countless gifts of love And still is ours today Oh may this bounteous God Through all
 our life be near us With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us And keep us in
 His grace And guide us with purpose And free us from all ill In this world and the next Oh
 praise and thanks to God

 The Father now be given The Son and Him who reigns With Him in highest heaven The
 one eternal God Whom earth and heaven adore For thus it was, is now And shall be
 evermore The Son and Him who reigns Welcome back from singing.
- [12 : 57] I hope that was an encouragement for you this morning to sing those great hymns of our
 faith. And whether you're singing by yourself Or you have someone in the room with you
 Or you're listening online later However that looks for you Your praise to God is no less
 valuable It's no less special It's no less of a connection Between you and God Even if your
 connection is virtual Even if your connection is recorded That is all, that is all welcome
 praise to God It is all well received by God And our adoration and our praise to Him Isn't
 shaped by perfect words Or perfect circumstances Just an intentional heart And so I hope,
 again I hope you were encouraged by that this morning.

We're continuing in our sermon series Spiritual Disciplines Exercise Your Faith And as we've reflected Spiritual Disciplines are tools, skills Things that we learn Things that we practice Things that we train in To help us put ourselves before God Put us in a state of mind And a state of heart Where we can best interact with Him And we're concluding our exploration Of the outward spiritual disciplines With this sermon These are the disciplines The outward ones Or the practices That are most visible To other people Today we're going to focus On the spiritual discipline Of service It's pretty challenging For us to go through our day Without recognizing A need to be served Isn't it?

We rely on other people For nearly everything In our day-to-day lives And we rely on The service of others Whether we're buying groceries Or ordering food Or getting our hair cut Or any number of other things That you can think of They usually require Some form of service And we're served by many people Multiple times Throughout our day So much so that we may not Even recognize it We may not even realize it Depending on the activities That you have in your life In your job Or perhaps you volunteer somewhere You may also serve other people as well In that very traditional Understanding of it That basic understanding Of service Is really Very transactional Isn't it?

We give something Our time Or put ourselves out there Whatever it is We give money We whatever And receive something In return A service Some sort of an item That we get That kind of thing And that doesn't make it Wrong or bad But that's how limited Our sense of service Has become That's how we understand it In a basic way We tip Hopefully you tip We tip for good service We complain about bad service In a very basic sense We reward or punish Can you think back To the last time That you did something You did something For someone else Hopefully you don't have to think Too long Was it something that you did For someone you know Who needed help with something Helping someone move Or bringing them a meal When they've injured themselves

Or when they're not well Was it something that you did On the spur of the moment For a total stranger Who you recognized needed help Are you walking through A parking lot perhaps And someone slips on ice And you rush over To help them What did it feel like As you reflect on it To serve another person Did it feel good?

[16 : 51] Did you feel a sense Of fulfillment? I hope Did you feel proud of yourself? Did serving that person Did serving that person Cost you anything?

Other than perhaps your time? Or did you need to Consciously give something up Or let go of something yourself To make it possible For you to serve that other person?

When you consider this idea Of service Do you find yourself More interested as you reflect? Are you more interested In being served Than serving?

Well author Dallas Willard Points out that for him Service is an excellent way And I'm quoting him here It's an excellent way To train myself Away from arrogance Possessiveness Envy Resentment Or covetousness Willard suggests That service for him Creates in him A sense of freedom A sense of liberation In other words Many hard to reach areas Of sin Are confronted And transformed By this simple Definition This simple Discipline Of service And as we consider The idea of serving Other people Whether we recognize A selfish tendency In ourselves Or a selfless Tendency We have all Served people In one way Or another And likely We will

Again But a basic Transaction Or what we give Or give up In serving someone else Is that all there is To it? Is it that simple?

[18 : 46] Last week We explored The spiritual discipline Of submission And in many ways The discipline Of service Flows directly From heart And an attitude That is submitted To God We also recognize That in submitting To God We're called To follow The example Of Jesus And in Jesus' Example We recognize Not only Submission But the ultimate Example Of having The very heart Of a servant And living that out In visible And intentional Ways So how is The spiritual Discipline Of service Different from That transactional Kind of service That we've Considered?

Our focus Passage Right now Is Colossians Chapter 3 Verses 23 and 24 Where the Apostle Paul Says Whatever you do Work at it With all your heart As working For the Lord Not for men Since you know That you will Receive an inheritance From the Lord As a reward It is the Lord Christ You are serving So I've often Seen this passage As used As a means Of encouragement To someone Who perhaps Hates their job Can you relate To that?

Or really Really doesn't Enjoy what they Do vocationally Now remember Bob You're not Going to the Office that you Loathe Working at that Seemingly Meaningless Position you Have Doing work That doesn't Leave you Fulfilled Bob You're actually Doing the Lord's work Have you ever Had someone Give you That kind Of a talk Or have you Given that talk To someone else Yourself Yes The perspective Can be About having The proper Attitude And perspective On our Vocation And our Career But I believe It's definitely More Than that Far more Whatever you Do Paul says Work at it With all Your heart Paul doesn't Say whatever You do To get paid To make a living To pay your bills He doesn't Say that And he Doesn't say Work at this With all your Heart This Not so much You can let That slide Not at all

Paul is Suggesting that Whatever we Do We do it With passion We do it With the Reflecting on The fact That it is An opportunity From God And I Believe this Applies To our Perspective On and Our dedication To serving Others As well Because Working at Something with All our Heart And all Our skills And all Our talents That's not Just the Right thing To do Not just The ethical Thing to Do It's also My friends The Christ Like thing To do And just As we Would consider When looking When we're Working at Our job Ultimately When we're Serving Others We're Serving God And we're Following The example Of Jesus Himself As we Talked About last Week When we Considered The discipline Of submission Jesus Life Was about Submitting To the

Will Of his Father I think We would All agree On that But he Also Focused On the Needs And on Caring For Others When we Serve Others I hope That we're Absolutely Focusing On them How we Can help Them How we Can be There For them But we're Also doing A few Other things In the Process That I Think we Need to Recognize Can you Recognize That truly Following Jesus Example And serving Others Requires Humility It's not About It can't Primarily Be about The gratitude Or the reward That we might Stand to Receive From that Person That we Have Served It can't Primarily Be about That It can't Be About the Recognition We might Receive From others As we Who observe Us Serving As we

[23 : 17] Look out Of the Corner of Our eye And notice That someone Is watching That's the Wrong heart That's the Wrong Motivation It also Can't be About the Potential Stories That we Then have To tell Oh wait Till you Tell I Tell you How Kind I was To someone How much I gave Up For someone Else That's not What it's About either And I Don't know About you But I Hope As you Hear that Perspective It makes You feel A bit Uncomfortable Because it Should It can't Be about Our selective Desire To choose The least Painful Ways The least Undesirable Or uncomfortable Ways The least Costly Ways That God Might be Calling us To serve God Doesn't Call us To serve And give Us a Menu Of options That we Can pick From That's Possible But quite Often We're Presented With an Opportunity By God That may Not be Something

We would Pick But we Are called To obey By submitting To God And submitting To others In service We're Acting As And you've Heard this Before The hands And feet Of God The least Of these Is that a Familiar expression To you You may have Heard those Words before And they come From a parable That Jesus Tells in Matthew Chapter 25 In this Parable Jesus Speaks About a King Who Rewards People With an Inheritance The people Who are Rewarded Seem Confused The king Speaks Of the People Caring For him Serving Him Feeding Him Giving Him Something To drink Welcoming Him As a Stranger Clothing Him Caring For him When he Was Sick And the

People In the Parable Confessed That they Don't Remember Ever Having Done Any Of That For the King And so They Question Him About It And Jesus Says In Matthew 25 Verse 40 The king Will Reply I Tell You The Truth Whatever You Did For One Of The Least Of These Brothers Of Mine You Did For Me Wow Can You See The Power In That Perspective In Serving Others In Choosing Humility Over Status Choosing To Step Into Even The Most Challenging Situations Where We Recognize Need Jesus Affirms For Us That In Caring For In Serving Others We Are Serving The King We

Are Serving God Himself By Caring For His People Simple Acts Of Service Don't Depend On Money Or Having The Perfect Abilities Or Being The Smartest Person In A Given Situation Service Is Simply About Giving To Others Out Of What We Have It's Simply About Giving To Others Out Of What We Have It's About Humbly And Intentionally Seeking To Meet The Needs That Present Themselves To Us As They Come You May Remember That In Our Series On Stewardship We Recognize That Everything We Have Our Time Our Talents Our Treasure Our Money All Of These Things

Come From God And Ultimately They All Belong To Him They Are Not Ours To Hold On To And Hoard Service As A Discipline Then Is The Intentional Use Service Of Service As A Discipline Is The Intentional Use Of Our Time Our Abilities And Our Resources For The Good Of Others Service May Take Place In A Local Church Setting We Have Service Needs In Our Church There Are Things That I Looking Towards Planning For The Future That Are Outreach Opportunities And Things Like That That Will Require Hands And Feet To Make Them Possible We Have People Who Already Give

[28 : 19] Their Time And Their Talents And Their Money In Our Church For The Furtherance There's A Big Word Of God's Mission Through Our Church God Is At Work In The World And He Calls Us To Partner With Him In That You May Volunteer As With A Charitable Organization Of Some Kind A Not For Profit Organization You May Serve In That Capacity You May Serve You May Be The Kind Of Person That Serves In A Spontaneous Way In Individual Settings As They Present Themselves To You May Have Amazing Radar For People In Need And You Drop What You're Doing And Act So Friends It's Not Necessarily The Context Of Your Service That's Important But The Purpose With Which You Approach Serving And The Transformation That I Hope Takes

Place In Your Heart When You Serve Others I Whenever I'm Able To Help Someone Who's Struggling Or Come Along Side Someone Just In A Moment When God Drops Something In Front Of Me And I Act On The Opportunity It Feels Good It Feels Like I Was Obedient It Feels Like God Was Able To Use Me It's Encouraging And I Know So Many Of You Have Experienced That As Well Even An Act Of Kindness That May Seem Simple To You Holding A Door For Someone Helping Someone Carry Their Groceries Helping Someone Clean Up Their Yard Just These Basic Things Letting Someone Go First In A Line These Basic Things May Seem So Simple And May Really Cost You Next To Nothing But They Probably In Lots Of Situations May Actually Make A World Of Difference To

The Person Who Is On The Receiving End Of That Service So My Friends Seek To Serve Others Seek It Seek To Serve Others With Selflessness And Intention Here's The Challenge Ask God For Opportunities To Serve Ask God To Open Your Eyes To The Opportunities That Are All Around You Already And Have Faith That Your Father In Heaven Knows What Is Done In Secret Your Reward Is Yet To Come Amen This Morning As We've Reflected On Serving Others We're Also Going To Reflect On The Ultimate Expression Of Sacrificial Service Expressed Through The Life And Ultimately

The Death And Resurrection Of Jesus Christ As We Celebrate Communion Together And As I Speak About It For A Moment Just A Reminder To Get A Small Glass Of Whatever Liquid You Might Have Available With You Juice Or Water And Get A Small Cracker Or Piece Of Bread Whatever You Have Available Again No Pressure To Find The Perfect Thing So That We Can Celebrate Communion Together This Morning Together In A Unique And Special Way As We Do This Online Now Remember It's Not About What You Have Available To Eat Or To Drink Right Now That Are Important But What They Represent For Us My Friends We Refer To The Table Where We Celebrate Communion We Refer To It As The Lord's Table And You Are Welcome Here You Are Welcome To This Table By God's Grace Let's

Take A Moment Of Quiet Reflection Before We Come To The Table Together As We Read In First Corinthians Chapter 11 Verses 23 And 24 For I Pass On To You What I Receive From The Lord Himself On The Night When He Was Betrayed The Lord Jesus Took Some Bread And Gave Thanks To God For It Then He Broke It In Pieces And Said This Is My Body Which Is Given For You Do This In Remembrance Of Me Remember Jesus Body Was Broken For You And For Me My Friends The Body Of Christ Broken As A Sacrifice For You Let's Eat Together In 1 Corinthians 11 25 We Read In The Same Way He Took The Cup Of Wine After Supper Saying This

[33 : 21] Cup Is The New Covenant Between God And His People An Agreement Confirmed With My Blood Do This In Remembrance Of Me As Often As You Drink It Remember Christ Allowed His Blood To Be Shed So That Our Sins Could Be Washed Away My Friends The Blood Of Christ Poured Out As A Sacrifice Let's Drink This Together Let's Pray Father God We Are So Thankful For Your Gift Of Grace To Us The Sacrifice Of Your Son Jesus Christ Our Lord So That We Could Be For For For For And Made Right With You God Thank You For Welcoming Us To Your Table Thank You That We Can Experience Your Goodness Only Because Of Your Good And

Profound And Amazing Grace Thank You For Calling Us To Be Your Saints The Honor Of Being Your Church And Your People Sent Into The World To Tell Others About You So That You May Change Their Lives The Same Way That You Have Changed Ours Amen Hay Yeah Many Pay who need extra help, who need support.

And so times are different, obviously. And the reality of that looks different. But I encourage you, if you're connected to our church, or if you feel called to do that, please feel free to send offerings to our church towards the work that God is doing in and through Braemar.

And we pray that God would bless those gifts, bless those contributions. That would grow them and use them for his purpose. And I also, my friends, encourage you to look for opportunities to bless people in other ways.

To show kindness and mercy to other people. To serve others. Especially during this challenging time.

[35 : 55] Unlike other times, we recognize that most of us are experiencing stress, anxiety, worry. Even if we don't speak it out loud.

The pandemic is a hard, hard time. It's a time that has, in many ways, magnified the sense of grief, the sense of loss, the sense of anxiety for people.

And so, even a kind word to one another is a huge blessing. And you may not realize how much it is needed. Our benediction this morning comes from Numbers chapter 6, verses 24 to 26.

And may this blessing be with you this week. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. My friends, go in peace. And may you find God's blessing in your week.

[37 : 05] Amen.