

Serve!

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[0:00] John 13, we're going to hear about serving God, something every one of us can do as a believer. And are you a good servant? A good servant. We see the great example of our Lord and really the precious truths that he demonstrates for us here.

In John 13, we're going to take it up from verse 4. John 13, verse 4. It says of our Lord, He riseth from supper and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every which.

And ye are clean, but not all, for he knew who should betray him. Therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

[1:39] You call me Master and Lord, and ye say, Well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. He says, I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

Now I know some churches take this literally and have literal foot washing services. Now we don't do that practice as our church here, but really it's not so much that act of a ritual of washing people's feet.

It's more what it signifies. It signifies serving. And of course in the setting here, in this time of supper time, as they had come to a house, it was expected that the servant of the house would wash the people's feet.

In those days they didn't have the comfortable footwear or the same road services we have. It was a dusty and dirty kind of street that had come off into that home and it was the setting where the servant would come and normally they would attend to that.

[2:59] But no one had washed the people's feet. And the Lord Jesus saw that there was a need that this menial task should be done. And so he used this as an example, as a demonstration for us.

So what did he do? Our Lord, he served. He served. And what are God's people to do? To serve. We're all God's servants. As believers, we're all servants of God.

Let us be good servants. Good servants. So we'll see something about serving and what it means and unpack a little bit as we go along. What this signifies tonight, what our Lord demonstrated and how we can learn from that, put it into application into our lives.

In the Word of God, it's many references to serving and service. It occurs over 1,600 times in the Bible. So this is a subject that's repeated over and over again, right through the Bible, right from cover to cover.

People are serving, ministering, in service, attending, serving in all kinds of capacities. Really, it started right from the very beginning. As soon as God made Adam, he gave him a job to do.

[4:12] Right back there in Genesis 2, right at the beginning of your Bible, Adam and Eve were created. And it says, The Lord God took man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

So to dress it, to cultivate it, to keep it, to manage it. Adam, man, had a job to do right from square one. And so it's something God's designed us for, to serve.

And God commends service. Our Lord set that example as the good servant, as the very best servant. The perfect servant, really, wasn't he? And so, in your aspiration to live the Christian life, aspire to be a good servant of God.

And if you are a good servant, I put to you, you will, number one, take notice. The Lord saw a need. He saw that there was a need. No one had attended to this obvious task. This was the custom. This was general, everyday hospitality. This was expected, that you walk into a home to sit down to a meal and your feet would be washed by the servant of the home.

[5:18] But no one had done it. And the Lord saw that. He took notice. He saw the need. And he didn't have to be told, well, can't you see this? Someone has missed this. This is an offence.

This is inappropriate. This is not customary. This is something that should have been done and was not done. And he didn't have to be asked to do it. It may have been really just a little thing, but he saw it.

The good servant sees something that needs doing. Are we like that? Do you see that something needs doing? Do you see what needs doing? Or do we have to wait for someone to ask us, to roster us, to appoint us?

Some people are like that. They just sit back and just, I'll wait till I'm asked to do something before I actually do anything. And that can be really, it's slowing you down.

It's slowing you down in what you could be doing for God. Are we considerate of the needs of others around us? Being a good servant is looking out for the needs of others.

[6:26] We see that, for example, in Philippians 2, verse 4. Paul says, look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. You could put it, don't just look out for yourself and what you want, but look out for the interests and needs of other people.

You know, have we got that idea of thinking of others instead of just living in our own little bubble? Are we thoughtful about the interests of others or just about our own selves? As a kind of funny story to illustrate that, in a state in America, Illinois, they introduced personalised licence plates like we have here.

Personalised licence plates. And the motor vehicle department received over 1,000 requests for the number one. Everybody wanted to have the number one number plate. And the state official whose job it was to approve such requests, he says, I'm not about to assign it to someone and disappoint 1,000 people.

What was his solution? He assigned the number to himself. People want to be number one. That's the point, isn't it? People want to be number one. To be first. But our Lord shows rather true greatness is in being a servant.

Do you take notice to the needs all about you? Are you ready to serve? It's interesting how Paul exhorts Titus. He says, be ready to every good work.

[7:51] Have that readiness. That readiness to serve. Be ready to every good work. Titus 3, verse 1 in part. And then Matthew 25, verse 21, our Lord tells another parable to illustrate serving.

And he says how there's certain servants. And it says in Matthew 25, verse 21, the master said unto this servant, well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. So there's a setting there of serving and the master representing God.

He says that you've been faithful in a few things. I'm going to make you have more responsibility. Because you've served in the little ways, you'll get more to do.

That's for us, it's how we should be, isn't it? We want to please the master. We want to honour the master. We want to obey him and follow him. Even in the little things, like that insignificant thing that our Lord set that example about.

[8:58] Even those little insignificant things of life. And if we notice and attend to the few things that God has put within our reach of what we could do, God will notice that.

God will notice and he'll recognise that. And not only should we take notice, as our Lord took notice, he saw that need. Secondly, we should take responsibility. Take responsibility. The Lord not only saw a need, he did something about it.

He did not call another to do the task. You know, someone had been high and mighty that might have said, Oh, this is not good enough. We're coming to this house, this room, and we haven't been looked after.

You know, someone's to blame for this. Someone's not done their job. He didn't look for some lowly servant to blame or to bid to come and do this work. He took the responsibility upon himself.

And I know we touched on it real shortly this morning about having the mind of Christ. And that's really what is involved here. As Philippians 2 verse 5 relates, it says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself.

[10:08] He made himself of no reputation. And he took upon him the form of a servant. And it says he was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Here is the great example again of our Lord, who being in the form of God, he stepped down from heaven's throne, as it were, and came down, taking upon him the form of a man, being made a man, being made a man born of a woman, obviously virgin born.

And he became that man, the perfect man, the God man, while still fully God. And he came and he humbled himself to the very point of dying on the cross for our sin, to be our saviour.

What a servant. Are we like him? Do we have the mind of Christ, that we would have that humility, that we would not consider reputation or esteem of men? And sometimes when we do something for God, and it might be a little thing, we're not doing it for reputation or for getting praise or getting pats on the back, or some esteem of men.

It's not about pride or position. It's taking the humble place, and we can all do that. Every one of us can find that humble thing that we can do, and do it. Do it well. So check your attitude.

[11:33] As we see, our Lord gives us that example, the mind of Christ. That should be our mind, our attitude, humility. And when we serve, we check our attitude too.

Sometimes we might not really grasp the reality that even the little things that we do are important for God. There was a construction site, and it was a church building going on.

And there was these three stonemasons chipping away, preparing the stones and such. And someone asked them in passing what each of them were doing. One said, oh, I'm earning \$20 a day.

One said, I'm setting a stone, just chipping away. The third one said, I'm building a cathedral. They were all building a cathedral, but the other ones were kind of just focused on, I'm earning something, or I'm just chipping away at this stone.

But the other one had the bigger picture, that we're building a cathedral. It's something that, when we're doing something for God, it's actually something that's heavenly. It's awesome to do something for God, even just the little bits that we do.

[12:40] Obviously, they were all doing the same thing, but it was their attitude that made a difference. How is your attitude to serving? Do we just serve when we're asked to, or when there's kind of a pressure applied to serve?

What do we serve willingly, gladly, as Christ did, out of love, out of humility? He took it upon himself, it says. He willingly took, even the place of the cross, he willingly took it.

Willingly, freely, lovingly. Are we that kind of servant? Or are we too quick, maybe to point out another's shortcomings? To find fault with another, who we feel has let the team down?

To find someone else and accuse them of neglect, of duty, of shirking responsibility? Rather than take the initiative yourself. Take the responsibility to serve yourself.

Will we sit back and complain that the person rostered for a particular task has forgotten or not fulfilled their role? Or will we take it upon ourselves to humbly help and serve?

[13:44] Will we judge the work of others, yet not put our own hand to the plough? Now, it's easy to take that critical place, isn't it? Rather than saying, well, I could do that. I could help.

Are you a servant? Will you take responsibility? One of the big things, I think, as a servant of God, is to consider when we do serve God, and we all are servants of God, we represent the Master when we're doing it too.

Don't we? We represent him. I like to think it's probably not a very biblical word, and I kind of, um, Julie's got a joke about it, about someone being a vicar.

You know, the old English word for the minister is vicar, isn't it? And, of course, we know some would take it to the extreme. They're the vicar of Christ, which we know is totally unscriptural in that application, as that man takes it.

But there is a sense where we are vicars in the sense that we're, in other words, we're an agent. We are representatives, acting on the behalf of. There is the truth that that is true, that we are agents of God.

[14:50] We are his agents. We are his ambassadors. We're representing him. And so when we do something for the sake of God, have that thought that you're doing it for him.

You're doing it unto him. Having that thought that, and to act responsibly in that regard, that you are God's servant. That's something special, to be God's servant. And again, like I, I want to underline tonight, every one of you, as God's people, as believers here, everyone who is a believer can be a servant of God.

It's not some reserved title for someone who's had some qualification or some special appointment made or some title given.

It's for every one of us. Every one of us. The servants of God right through the Bible. Really, every believer is a servant of God. And so it's good if we can be mindful of that.

How will my actions be perceived? Does it bring glory to God? God. And I've had to learn that over time, really, myself, and to be very careful how I act and what I say to people.

[15:55] Because it's easy to be misunderstood. I know how easy it is to offend people. If I might ask someone to do a particular thing or to make a particular change about themselves, some people get very offended about that.

I've noticed that. And I don't want to cause any stumbling blocks to anyone to offend anybody. But I've learned over time that we all have to be mindful. We speak on behalf of our master.

What would our master say? And how would our master say it? It's important, isn't it, to consider that. Because we speak in his stead. In other words, in his place. Talks about how we're ministers of reconciliation.

And we speak in his stead. In other words, in his place. For his sake. As his ambassadors. So, when people look at you, and in the work setting, in the day by day of living, they know that you're a Christian, and they'll be scrutinizing you.

You can identify with that. You can identify with that, can't you? I know, for myself, in a secular work setting, it's often that they're scrutinizing and watching to find some fault.

[17:06] And so, we want to be mindful as God's servant. Actually, I don't want to give them any reason to criticize my God, who I stand for. When I stand and speak for him, if I'm acting on his sake, I want to try to be the very best I can be.

And it can be easy to get distracted at times by, I suppose I was thinking of late how, it can be true for me, of getting distracted by, you could say, splinter issues.

Splinter issues. They are still issues. You know, if you've got a splinter in your eye, I'd like to help you with that splinter. I'd like to help you get rid of it. But it's how you address it, isn't it?

When I'm picking on your splinter and I've got a beam in my own eye, you know, it's that sense where sometimes we can make minor things more than what they are. And when we want to help people, you know, as a preacher, as the pastor, sometimes when I try to correct someone, perhaps I can make a blunder of it and offend someone.

That's the last thing I want to do, is to hurt anyone's feelings. And so, it's the same for all of us, isn't it? When we're acting for God, when we're serving God, when we're doing something for God, when we're saying something on his behalf, people can judge you for being maybe too harsh or too picky, splinter issues and such.

[18:24] But let's be like Christ is what I would urge us to be, to have that Christ-like bias. And that's what I'd like to be as the pastor, in

what I do and say, to do it as a loving shepherd would, in guiding sheep, not harshly but gently.

And some sheep can be hard to get through to, I know, but it can be that in everything that we do, do we have the mind of Christ?

That's the point of it, really. It's to have the mind of Christ, to act in his stead, to speak on his part, to always frame things with that mind that, how would he put it?

How would he say it? What would he do? And to have that heart. So of our Lord in that setting of that upper room, as he came, he washed the disciples' feet. Not only did he take notice and take responsibility, the third thing was he took action.

He took action personally. He didn't pass the buck. He didn't turn aside. And being a servant means we actually do something. It means W-O-R-K. Perhaps arduous times.

[19:38] It might mean challenge and effort. It might mean putting ourselves out. Being a servant of God, it's not a title. It's a heart. It's an attitude, isn't it?

He didn't look around him to find the servant of the home who had obviously failed in his duty. He didn't look for someone to blame or to complain to. He got up. He laid aside his garments.

He took a towel. He wore it. He poured water in a basin. He washed the disciples' feet. I'd imagine they were smelly feet, if I could be so bold to say that these were dirty feet.

And he washed them. He washed them and he wiped them with the towel. He got down there on his hands and knees and he took action. He served. He washed them and he washed them and he washed them and he washed them. And when some people hear of work to do, they shirk.

It's been said some people remind us of blisters. They don't show up until the work is done. You know, let someone else do it and I'll just come along. Really, we can all take that easy place of not working.

[20:41] Really, it's carelessness, isn't it? Laziness. Someone else will do it. Well, why not you? If someone else can do it, why can't you do it? Really, work is honourable, isn't it?

It's right from Adam. It's an honourable thing. God gave Adam work to do. And he's given all of us a work to do according to his plan. And work need not be something irksome.

If we apply ourselves to something, when we have that mindset on building a cathedral, even if it's just chipping away at a stone, if we have the right attitude in approaching what we serve and how we serve, then it makes all the difference.

To use a worldly example, Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light globe, said, I never did a day's work in my life. It was all fun.

Really, it's having that right attitude, isn't it? Even the most irksome job you might have to earn a buck, it could be a hard job. But you can do it unto God.

[21:41] You can do it unto the glory of God. And you can be the best, whatever it is that your job is, to do it unto the Lord, to serve gladly and do it unto the Lord.

Notice the quality of our Lord's service too. He was thorough. He had everything in place. He had the bowl there. He had the procedure, the process. He knew what had to be done and he did it.

And he was committed to that. He was diligent. What about you and me? Do we serve God with that quality, with that faithfulness, with your whole heart? We see Paul commends servants of the day in Ephesians 6 and he says, with goodwill, doing service as to the Lord and not to men.

So when we serve, do it as to the Lord. So even when you might do your everyday job to earn a crust, that you can do it as to the Lord. Do it as to the Lord, not to men.

So you don't think, as another reference talks about, not with eye service, only when people are watching, but that you're living and doing the best job you can, even when no one's watching.

[22:48] So notice with our Lord the humility of his service. Our Lord did not shy away from being a servant. This was the most menial thing. This was really one of the lowest of the low jobs of the day.

It's like, I don't know what you'd compare it to today, but you could think of the job that nobody wants. He took that job. He did that job. I think back in my work career, how I've had different jobs in factories, cleaning a factory.

But there's no, really, there's no gradation of jobs as far as one job's better than another. There's honour in working as a factory cleaner. I'm not putting that down. There's people working in all kinds of process work jobs.

I've had that time myself in the past, and every job is honourable. There's an honour to working for a living, isn't there? To make a living out of whatever job you can get and find and do, and do it well. I think another job I had, which is probably one of the most demeaning jobs, is a telemarketer. Telemarketers, the people that you love to get those phone calls from.

[23:55] Or another job I had was a door-to-door canvasser, getting leads for an insulation company, knocking on doors and pestering people. As a market research interviewer, I used to do that job too.

I mean, they're sort of the kind of jobs that people might not really want to do, not very desirable jobs. But really, every job has got an honourable sense to it. We can do every job, even the most menial jobs, unto God's glory.

Our Lord did not shy away from looking like a servant, from putting himself out, from hard work, from uncomfortable work, from demeaning work. This was demeaning. This was unpleasant. So let us likewise have that same heart, to not shy away from the humble work, whether it be even doing the dishes, as it were, or cleaning the toilets, whatever.

Think of the most lowly things that you can do, and do that. Do that well. Do it well. For God's glory. Because God commands humility. He commands that. If God puts it on your heart to do it, then do it.

I don't want to put you in a square peg, in a round hole, and force you to volunteer to work in the IT booth. As much as Mandy will say, what a joy it is to be there.

[25:05] But there's lots of lowly tasks in this church. There might be, and you shut away there, and hidden away, but you're a silent achiever. You're a quiet achiever. It's making everything work, most of the time.

And it's helping project our service worldwide, for the ten people that might be watching on the internet. So it's all relative, isn't it?

Everything's important. Every little thing that you can do is important. The people that prepare the communion in the mornings. Sometimes it's just about, maybe come to church a bit earlier than one minute at six.

Try to get here a little bit earlier, and you can help out with some of the things that are going on before the service starts. Because there's work to be done. And sometimes it falls on just the few. But if we just took that initiative, maybe just come to church a little bit earlier. And we're not bagging anyone here tonight. It might have come at the last tick of the clock. We're not putting you down, honestly.

[26:02] Don't take offence. But if you were to come that little bit earlier, maybe you could help out a little bit more. You know, you might help with those things that people are running around, preparing the service, the furniture and such.

So it's finding those humble tasks and finding what I can do and doing that. It could be the lowly task. Look at the Apostle Paul in Acts 28.

It was cold and raining, probably a bit like tonight. And here he was, Paul. He was shipwrecked on this island of Malta. And it says they made a fire. And Paul went and he collected sticks.

Now, we know he got bit by the snake. But the point was that he went and collected sticks. That was a menial task, wasn't it? Surely that was beneath the Apostle Paul.

He did not look around for others to go and pick up those sticks and help get the fire ready. He put himself out. He served. It's just one trivial example. But it's kind of reflective of that heart, isn't it?

[27:01] That heart that he took the menial thing and he did it. So being a servant is taking the lowest place. Perhaps being disregarded as far as the world would count greatness.

When you think of serving God, sometimes it's not having a name in lights and some great worldwide recognition or some amazing praise from people. It's not glamour or prestige or position or praise.

There's maybe sometimes little esteem or honour there. There's not a lot to, you know, commend it worldly-wise. But yet it's unto him.

And it brings him joy. And there's a privilege to serve. So do something for God. Think of it. Think of it for yourself. As you could hopefully just wrap your mind around this and think, wow, what can I do?

What could I do? Our Lord says in Mark 10, Again, we see the example of our Lord.

[28:14] His whole life was ministry. His whole life was serving. His whole life was giving. Giving out to others. And he showed absolute humility, didn't he? He didn't expect really anything in return.

No praise. He did what was needed. In fact, he tried to avoid that publicity and that promotion, that self-promotion. Are we like him? Do we serve like that?

Serve him like that? For some Christians, it's all talk, no action. Being a Christian means serving. It's not so much about receiving but giving. For some people, their mindset of church is that it's all about gimme, gimme, gimme.

And I've said it before that they say, well, I didn't get anything out of that tonight. You know, I came to get something and I didn't get anything out of that.

Well, actually, it's not all about getting, it's about giving too. When we come to church, it's about giving. It's giving to one another. It's about encouraging one another, edifying one another, exhorting one another, putting others first.

[29:16] You might be here for others that are around you today so you can hear about their needs, so you can pray with them, so you can be an encouragement to them. It's not about you. It's about us.

It's about the body, isn't it? And we see that being a Christian is really having that heart to give, to give out, be a giver. And I'm not talking necessarily financially here.

It's about having the heart that gives. It's about having that attitude to give, to be pouring yourself out like an offering unto him. When we put ourselves out and faithfully labour and endure, putting others first and ourselves last at times.

Or when we go the way of pride, oh, I'm only going to do something when I get recognition. Out of selfishness, out of vanity. Rather be humble. Be humble. Be reliable.

Do your duty. Have the right attitude. And so when the accounting time comes, when the stewards are asked to give an account of their stewardship, in Luke 17, verse 10, another parable example, as our Lord talks about these servants, he says, so likewise ye, when you've done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

[30:32] We have done that which was our duty to do. He commended these servants that they had served, they'd faithfully served. And he says for us too, when the accounting time comes, when that time of our stewardship is called to account, I'm just doing what is my duty to do.

That's all. I'm just doing what is really the least I can do is to do that. And there's nothing about me to command.

I'm really just unprofitable, as it were. There's nothing praiseworthy about me. I'm simply a servant. And some people say, I'm willing to be a servant, just don't treat me like one.

That's the way some people are, isn't it? But really, in a way, and you know, some people have that attitude, oh, I've worked like a dog for this church, or whatever they say. Different people say things like that.

Oh, no one's recognised me, and I'm going to throw in the towel. It's no recognition. I'm just treated like a servant. Well, that's what we are. That's what we should be, isn't it? And here we see that example of true greatness, Christ.

[31:37] He's washing the disciples' feet. What a demeaning, lowly, humbling, you know, a yucky job. Dirty feet. Honestly. Our Lord did that, and he did that for us.

And he says, you do the same. Follow my example. So put your faith into action. Think of it for yourself. Brother, sister, what can I do for God? And serve. And not just lip service, too.

Saying, oh, yeah, I'll serve. And then you don't do it. Be faithful. And don't expect thanks. Don't expect necessarily any earthly praise. In fact, all the better, isn't it?

It's all the better if you don't get praised here. Because our Lord says, even what you do in secret, what you give in secret, you're fasting in secret, he's got to commend you openly then.

Your praise is yet future. You don't need people to say, what a great job you've done. Because one day he will say that. That'll be far better. Amen. So it's God's plan for all of us.

[32:34] We're called to be servants of our Lord. And it tells us, let us be not slothful. No, that's not lazy. Don't be slack. Don't be slothful in business, but be fervent in spirit.

Serving the Lord. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it? Do we serve God faithfully? Fervently? Think of these things, these qualities of a good servant. What our Lord demonstrated.

His example that he set for us. Our service reflects our love for him. If we love him, we'll serve him. We'll obey. We'll want to serve. We'll want to have that heart. We'll keep a ready eye for what can I do.

And I'll do it. Step out of the comfort zone and into the service zone. A good servant is ready to serve, to obey. And the servant is there for the will and work of the master.

I like to, as I've referred in time past, to think of that old-time example of servants in a house where there was maids and butlers and such. That they were there for the work of the master.

[33:35] They would listen for his voice. The tinkle of the bell. Oh, there's master summoning me. And yeah, they'd race there. Oh, I want to get there first to see what the master wants. They'd listen for his call, his voice.

They'd obey his commands. And a servant like that, they don't live for their own wants. According to their own timetable, oh, the master's calling, but I've clocked off. We don't go by the clock, as it were, as to our own timetable.

But we want to serve when our master calls us, we'll serve. We don't clock off. We don't have the attitude, oh, I need to claim overtime, whatever it be, as far as, you know, the attitude of the world that we can have.

That we're only going to do the least, or we're only going to do what we paid for, or whatever it be, having that kind of limitation to our serving.

But rather to be like those old-time servants, that what is important is what the master wants. That's what is important. Not our own schedule, or our own needs, or wants. Are you a good servant, is the question.

[34:40] You have a good master, don't you? There's only one master, the Lord Jesus. And think of it as we think of that example of serving. He's not some slave master.

He's not some master who will mistreat us. He cares for our needs. He's a loving master. He's a master that cares for us and supports us and gives us his very best.

And he thinks of our best interests. He brings purpose and meaning. Who is in control of your life? Will you follow the master? It's really an important question of speaking, really, preaching, really, to believers here tonight.

Maybe you're at a point where, actually, I don't know if I am a Christian. Who is in control of your life? Is Jesus your master? Is he your Lord? And this is not an irksome thing.

It's a blessed freedom, a liberty. It's a joyful service to know him, to belong to him. And as God's servants, we serve him willingly. He doesn't banter us or heavy us to serve.

[35:42] It's our privilege to serve, to hear his call and to act upon that. Perhaps you may think yourself unworthy. Well, what would God want me for? What have I got to commend to him?

You might think you're not worthy to be God's servant. You might think I'm too sinful to be saved. But really, right through the Bible, it's the ordinary ones that he calls ordinary men and women. Right through the Bible, men like Moses, David, Joseph, they all had faults and failings and inadequacies and human frailties and temptations.

And all the men and women of God through the history in the Bible and beyond have all just been really simple, everyday people, just like you and me.

There's nothing stopping you from being such a servant. Our Lord just wants a willing heart. Work according to his will. Depend upon him.

[36:43] As we see, our Lord says, If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be. And if any man serve me, him will my father honour.

It's an honourable thing to serve God. It's the most honourable thing you can do with your life, is to honour him in whatever capacity you can give yourself to his service.

Our master deserves our service. So be a servant. Think again of servants through the word of God. It's a repeated theme in the Bible. Joshua was called the servant of Moses.

Elisha, the servant of Elijah. Gehazi, the servant of Elijah. Apostles were servants of Christ. So we're all in that same.

We all are servants. Just as these people we talked about, we're all servants. So are we committed to serving him? Who we serve shows who our master is.

[37:42] And it is truly, it's a privilege to serve God. Think of what you can do to serve. Really, it's wide open, isn't it? There's a whole lot of leaflets that we could do with getting those leaflets out.

And that's a menial job. Letterbox deliverer. I've done that too. These are menial things. Oh, that's a scumbag job. Well, it's a job. It's a job that needs doing.

It's an important job. When you're giving out leaflets for the kingdom of God, that's the best job, isn't it? To do something for God, it's a privilege. Even the least things, the most mundane things. So when you serve too, think that how close am I to him?

Moody said this. Moody was a renowned evangelist, preacher. He said this, I quote, God always uses the man closest to him.

When we think through the Bible, it talks about Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king. And he was close to the king, wasn't he? And so the one who is closest to the king, he's used.

[38:50] And when you think, how can I get closer to God so that I can hear his voice, I can sense what he wants me to do, and I can act upon his will. It's for all of us, serving God.

Not a select class. It's for every believer. Every believer. Here's another quote I picked up. It said, half the trouble with the church today was that the members thought that they were merely passengers on the gospel ship instead of understanding that they constituted the crew.

This is a ship, fellow ship. And you're not just passengers. We are passengers, but we're also the crew. We've got a job to do on this gospel ship. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Think of these things. What our Lord demonstrated for us. And again, that one, will we be called a good and faithful servant? William Booth, well-known man of God, said, the greatness of a man's power is his measure of surrender.

If we would just surrender, God can use us. God can get a hold of our lives. Just surrender. Just be willing. Be willing. And God is not looking for more stars.

[40:10] He's looking for more servants. It's not about having a name in lights or being some famous person that the world would recognise or churches would recognise.

It's about just simply serving. Find that place to serve and do it well. One reason that people don't serve is ego. It's pride. Really, isn't it? Oh, that's beneath me to do that menial task.

But it's for every one of us. Decide. Choose. One master. Our Lord talks about how some try to serve two masters.

And he says either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon or money. In that sense where you can't have divided loyalties. You can't serve two masters.

You've got to have some decision to serve the one master. Of course, we know the world. Those who do not know the Lord, the Bible talks about how sin is their master. They're in this slavery of sin.

[41:11] It's a slave market. But deliverance is possible in Christ. He sets us free. And redeems us as his own servants. So, friends, just to wrap up, there's a contrast here.

As Paul preaches to the Thessalonians, he talks about how they turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God. They turn from idols to serve the living and true God.

And that's what happens when you get saved. As you know God, he's living, he's true. And you know him personally. You receive his salvation gift. Yes, Jesus died for me and I trust him.

I believe. I believe in him. And you enter his glad service. That minute that you trust him, you're his servant. He makes you his servant. And more so his son, his daughter. You become part of the family of God. And we enter that glad service of our king. It's being willing to obey him is a key as well in serving.

[42:22] We think, for example, in the Bible it talks about Naaman, the Syrian general who had all this leprosy. And the prophet exhorted him that he was to dip himself seven times in this mucky river Jordan.

And that was a humble thing for him to do. But when Naaman obeyed, it brought a blessing. He went through those seven times in this dirty water. Something that would humble him as this great general to be following such a strange request.

But when he obeyed, it brought blessing. And it's the same with being a servant of God, isn't it? When we serve this blessing, it's hearing his voice like the lame man.

Our Lord calls him. He says, take up thy bed and walk. He told him to do something. And when he did that, he was healed. So if we take action, blessing will follow. And when we think about this question, as we bring it to a close here tonight, we might say, oh, yeah, I'm thinking about serving God.

I kind of want to, but I'm a bit busy. Or there's other things I want to kind of get to first. And I'll just put it on the shelf and I'll get there one day.

[43:39] But really, the opportunity is now. It's for now. Really, the Bible talks often about this three-letter word, now. The time is now.

Of course, one that really stands out is today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time.

Here's a quote. It's a solemn thing to say tomorrow when God says today.

Because man's tomorrow and God's today never meet. We can always have the idea of tomorrow. Right? But God's day is today. It talks about today if you'll hear his voice.

Harden not your heart. Do what you can, where you are, with what you have, and do it now. Do it now. A Christian worker is good.

A worker with Christ is better. But Christ in a worker is the very best. Now we can try to work for God, work with God, but it's God working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

[44:38] Christ works in us. He does the work. He empowers us. He enables us. He makes us a better servant. He makes us to be a good and faithful servant. Because he's working his best out of us, into us, and out of us, through us.

That's the best of all. And so, it's about resolution here tonight. Can I leave you one last quote? It's of a man of God, of history, called Jonathan Edwards.

And he said this. He wrote a whole load of resolutions. A whole load of things that he wanted to determine that he was going to do. You can look it up on the internet, the resolutions of Jonathan Edwards.

And here's one of them that he said, resolved, that all men should live to the glory of God.

Resolved, secondly, that whether or not anyone else does, I will.

It's a good resolution to make, isn't it? We're not at a new year's resolution, but maybe almost at a mid-year's resolution, is to resolve. Resolve that all men should live to the glory of God.

[45:42] And result, secondly, that whether or not anyone else does, I will. I will. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that we can, by faith, receive your great gift of salvation.

You've taken us from the slavery of sin, the slave master of saints, and you've set us free to be glad, willing servants. Glad-hearted. Set us free, not only as servants, but as sons and daughters of you, our living and true God.

Lord, we thank you for the great redemption of your great purchase of ours, that we are no longer our own. We're actually owned by you, and that's a good thing, to be in your ownership, to be under new ownership.

Lord, we thank you that, Lord, we can think about for our own selves how we can take notice what might need doing, that we can take that responsibility ourselves, and that we can take action.

And we'll do it now. And especially if we get to trust you, that we'll trust you now. Simply that.

Receive your salvation. And the minute we're saved, we're made your servants.

[46:49] Help us, Lord, to have that heart, to be mindful of how you want us to serve, to be a good and faithful servant, and to serve gladly, willingly, freely.

And serve well. Lord, not that we can gather earthly praise, but that one day you will acknowledge the work that we've done.

Help us, Lord, to have the mind to that as we live our everyday life, to think of ways we can serve you in how we live and go about our everyday.

Lord, we praise you for these things. In Jesus' name. Amen.