

## The Art of Following Jesus

### Part 5: What difference can I really make?

Matthew 20:24-28 - [watch online](#)

#### Summary:

We all have the ability to be the change we wish to see in the world. But this type of life doesn't just happen by accident. It's the result of conscious and committed choices about how we live... but we don't have to do it alone. The secret to becoming the change we wish to see is discovered when we practice the art of following Jesus.

#### Main Points:

[01:34] Jesus is the hope of the world and he has chosen his church to shine that hope to the world.

[02:36] One of the most central and most difficult practices in the art of following Jesus is practicing service on purpose.

[03:51] We often view following Jesus through the lens of "What can I get out of this?"

[05:06] Following Jesus requires a complete transformation of how we see the world.

[07:15] In the Kingdom of God, greatness is measured by how much of our life is spent meeting other people's needs.

[08:15] We practice service on purpose because Jesus purposely served us.

[09:36] When your focus is only on you soon you'll only have you to focus on.

[10:17] Service exercises our trust in Jesus

[10:46] Our goal is to become a community of "blessing people" who practice service on purpose

[16:39] In the art of following Jesus we love God by purposely loving our neighbors.

#### Invitation: [11:07]

Commit to contributing at In-Person Gatherings.

Commit to personally blessing three people a week (Encouragement, Kindness, Gifts).

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Share an example of someone purposely serving you. What was your reaction?
2. What do you think are some of the most common excuses and/or objections we have to not serve on purpose? How do you think Jesus would respond to those?
3. Read Luke 9:23-25. What stands out to you?
4. What steps can you take this week to practice service on purpose?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**INTRO:** I know something about you... You truly have the ability and potential, as Gandhi said, to "be the change you wish to see in the world."

Now if you've lived long enough you've probably learned, this type of life doesn't just happen by accident.

It's the result of some conscious and committed choices about how we live our life... but we don't have to do it alone.

The secret to becoming the change we wish to see is discovered when we practice the art of following Jesus. So let's talk about it... together.

**WE:** If we have our eyes open, then we know there is so much hurt and pain and injustice and inequality in the world. And if our ears are open, then we know that each individual we encounter has their own story of struggles, worries, pain, and hopelessness.

That's why the story of Jesus is such good news... we are not alone. God sees us, sees our pain, knows us, and is willing and able to do something about the hurt in the world.

He lived among us. Healed diseases, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead to show that what we are facing now is not too big for him, and that it will not last forever...

And then Jesus left. But he didn't leave us alone... he sent the HS (the personal presence of God himself) to live in and guide and empower his followers (the Church) to bring his hope, peace, healing, and comfort to the rest of the world

**Jesus is the hope of the world and he has chosen his church to shine that hope to the world.**

And every one of us can find a place in this Jesus community.

Where we are empowered and supported to use our God given abilities/gifts to be the change we want to see in the world.

But unfortunately so many people don't realize their true potential to be used by God this way.

Because to actually do this requires choices and decisions that go against our natural inclinations... goes against what our culture has told us we should be and work toward...

We have to choose to go against our culture. We have to choose to fight against our natural self-preservation... We have to learn and practice the art of following Jesus.

And as we discover more of what this life looks like and study more of who Jesus is... we discover **one of the most central and most difficult practices in the art of following Jesus is practicing service on purpose.**

Let me explain... and I have to warn you... you might not like this at first... but if you stick around and take what Jesus says seriously, your life will change forever... it won't always be easy... but it will be worth it.

It's something his first followers had to discover as well...

**GOD:** Jesus' disciple the former tax collector Matthew recorded for us an interesting exchange between Jesus and two of his other followers... and their mom.

Jesus has spent about 3 years saying he was bringing the KoG to earth, healed diseases, gave the blind their sight, even raised people from the dead...

And all of this was really exciting for his closest followers mostly teenagers...

Jesus was claiming to be the Son of Man... the king promised by the prophet Daniel who would reign forever...

And Jesus had even them that they would rule with him one day.

Got two brothers (J&J) thinking... if we are gonna rule... then there's going to be a hierarchy...

and we don't want to be lower than that tax collector Matthew or Thaddeus or Bartholomew... what kind of names are those anyway...

Let's make sure we are the highest of the high.

**We often view following Jesus through the lens of "What can I get out of this?"**

- And it's not even our fault... it's just the message we've been raised to believe
- We apply it to every part of our life including our faith.

J&J get their mom (Salome) to ask Jesus for a favor...

Mom goes to Jesus and they are basically hiding behind her skirt.

She kneels before Jesus and asks... In your kingdom can my sons be your top guys... the ones closest to you?

I picture Jesus then lifting Salome up and putting his arm around her... he turns to the brothers and with maybe a shake of the head says...

Jesus - 1st you have no idea what you're asking. Can you handle the suffering I'm about to go through?

J&J- "Of course!"

Jesus- "Well you will have to suffer for me... but I don't decide those things... my Father has already decided what that will look like."

Then the other 10 disciples hear about what J&J tried to get their mom to do behind their back...

Interesting John didn't record this scene in his biography of Jesus... Anyway here's what happens... **Matt 20:24-25**

Disciples: Sure do... the powerful enjoy their power. And do whatever they can to hang on to it. Might makes right...

And we're sick of being the ones without the might, power, and respect!

We can't wait until you conquer Rome, become king and we rule with you! Then it'll be our turn to lord it over them!

But then Jesus turns our whole view of how the world works on its head...

## **Following Jesus requires a complete transformation of how we see the world.**

**V. 26**... D's- What?! No. I signed up to rule... Jesus- Hold on... let me finish... it gets worse.

**V. 27**... Slave: No rights, position, respect, or authority,

Their lives were completely used for serving their masters.

Serving others was their whole identity... all of society was structured around who was free and who was slave.

“How is this possible Jesus? We are YOUR guys! If you are who you say you are then the whole world should be bowing to us!”

Jesus- “Not the point of all of this.”

Greatness in Jesus’ kingdom is not measured by how many people...

- Know who you are, answer to you, you are above, click like or share on your posts

Or how quickly people do what you tell them to do.

- How respected you are.

## **In the KoG greatness is measured by how much of our life is spent meeting other people’s needs.**

Then Jesus says something so profound and so obvious they should have already known all of this...

**V. 28** Jesus is the perfect example of purposeful selfless service.

Creator of the universe, all authority, had every RIGHT to demand obedience...

Instead he planned from before the beginning of time to give up everything to meet our needs.

- Suffered, tortured, humiliated for our needs.
- Rights were completely abused.

But he chose to serve us with his life and his death.

And if we are practicing the art of following Jesus we are to do the same thing.

## **We practice service on purpose because Jesus purposely served us.**

NOW... Most of us nod and agree with this... but when it comes time to actually do it... it's a whole 'nother pokemon.

In real life, in our moment by moment existence... this type of service goes against everything we've built our lives around

- Our comfort, wants, dreams, hopes, AGENDAS.

We discover serving isn't always comfortable, serving means giving up what we want to do for something we might not even get recognition for.

It means making sure someone else gets something while we might get nothing out of it.

It means letting others get ahead even if we work harder.

Why would anyone want to actually do this?... Because it is the best way to live.

The most miserable people in the world are those that fight for what they want, their way, their rights, their success... who cling to their own comfort and whose life is focused only on their own little world.

**When your focus is only on you soon you'll only have you to focus on.**

**- Luke 9:23-25**

It might be the best way to live but service on purpose is not easy... won't pretend it is... like I said it goes against our ingrained nature and our 'get ahead and be comfortable at all costs' culture.

That's why **service exercises our trust in Jesus**

- When we give up what we want/rights/comfort we have to trust that He's the one who will take care of us, our reputations, our needs.

That's why it's something that needs to be practiced.

**YOU:** At CCC we have created opportunities to help all of us practice service on purpose.

Both with our community and in your own personal area of influence.

**Our goal is to become a community of "blessing people" who practice service on purpose**

**Invitation:**

Practice being a blessing person with each other in the Crosscreek Community- **Commit to contributing at In-Person Gatherings...**

Not to keep the machine of this organization running... yes we can't run w/o volunteers... and the few that do things will burn out...

BUT the main point is to provide opportunities to practice together being a blessing people...

- Providing a place where we can be trained and coached
- Where we literally can schedule opportunities to purposely serve.

Purposely serving each other teaches us to be on the look out for and see needs around us in our lives...

It also creates an ownership and a camaraderie within the community.

These gatherings stop just being another service provided for you to consume... something just to add to your life of you... it transforms us from being simple spectators to becoming full participating partners... together.

We have a lot of opportunities to practice service on purpose...

Set up/Clean Up... Food/Communion... Greeting... Youth Connect meals

Kids:

Exciting opportunity... Add another class for elementary... in fall

Nursery- Pre-k class, a K-2nd class, and a 3-5 grade class.

- Observe/Learn/Train in Summer for the fall launch

If not part of CCC (Spain?) find a local church... not into church? Find a local non-profit to serve with regularly.

2nd practice... Individually: **Commit to personally blessing 3 people a week...**

- 1 from our CCC community
- 1 not from CCC
- 1 dealer's choice.

From list 2 weeks ago?

We might not be able to change the entire world but we can be part of changing someone's world.

- We can relieve some of the burden
- We can encourage, strengthen build them up
- We can help them breathe a little easier and alleviate their stress and worry

We can as **Andy Stanley says- Do for one what you wish you could do for all**

This will allow the HS to start transforming how we see those around us... not as tools to get us what we want but as opportunities God is giving us to show his love to those he loves.

It allows us to purposely live out our purpose as fishers of people. B/c to truly bless someone it has to be something that they would consider a blessing... which means we have to study people... we have to listen to them... we have to interact with them.

3 types of blessing...

### **Encouragement**

- Note, email, text, card
- Communicates: I see you. I know. I care. I am with you. How can I help?
- Ex: Encouragement I've received from texts/emails

### **Acts of kindness**

- Practical acts of service that lightens someone's load
- Babysitting for someone. Or Chores you don't usually do (not just cooking but also planning meals?). Offer to help with yard work

- This church probably wouldn't exist if my parents didn't serve us and our kids so often

### **Gifts**

- Doesn't have to be something large/expensive
- Shows they are known, seen, cared for, and valued.
- Benji's retainer

One way is to participate in our For Salem opportunities

- Pay it backward
- Donate needed items
- Lady who hides For Salem cards with \$5 in grocery stores etc.

**WE:** If a majority commit ourselves to this service on purpose... it will create a culture of blessing.

Imagine if being a blessing people was just part of our lifestyle and identity?

Where our neighbors might be skeptical about our belief in Jesus rising from the dead but were blown away by our love for them and each other

And then they start asking questions like...

- Why do you love me like this?
- Why do you all love each other so much?

Imagine being able to see ourselves being used by God daily to love the people he so desperately loves.

The more we practice service on purpose and become a blessing people, the more opportunities God will bring us and the more impact we can have in and on the lives of those he has put in our path.

It won't always be easy but it will be worth it.

The difference we make might not always be immediately measurable but every act of service will be seen by our heavenly father and it will have difference that will last for eternity.

**In the art of following Jesus we love God by purposely loving our neighbors.**