

Stepping Out In Faith Msg 4 – Serving Others  
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl  
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church  
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THE BIG IDEA

SERVING ISN'T JUST SOMETHING WE DO

A SERVANT IS WHO WE ARE

Becoming a SERVANT is something that is COUNTER-CULTURAL in our society today.

I was reading this week about the career dreams among our youth.

It used to be that kids wanted to grow up to be Astronauts, or Firemen, or Policeman.

Apparently, not so much anymore

In fact, if I ask you what do you think is the most common career that a teenager wants?

What is the vocational aspiration of the common teenager today.

What do you think it would be?

Well I'll tell you.

54% of teenagers, for a career, want to be a celebrity.

They want to be famous.

I want to be a sports star

I want to be a pop star

I want to be a YouTube star.

As a career, 54% of teenagers today want to be a celebrity.

What do they wanna be?

(Studies Show That Children Just Want to Be Famous)

<https://guardianlv.com/2013/08/studies-show-that-children-just-want-to-be-famous/>

They want to be the GOAT!

How many of you know what the GOAT is?

What does the GOAT stand for, G-O-A-T,

Say it with me . . .

The GOAT is . . . The, Greatest Of All Time.

I don't want much.

I just want to be the GOAT!

I want to be the greatest of all time.

It's really not a new ambition.

You see that same desire among the first followers of Jesus.

You see it in the twelve disciples.

It was a Thursday night and the disciples were about to eat what we today call "The Lord's Supper" or "The Last Supper."

But before the meal something happened.

Luke 22 tells us that a great dispute arose among them.

And they were arguing with one another

What was the argument about?

What they wanted to know: Who's the GOAT?

Who's the GOAT?

Who is the greatest of all time?

That is exactly the argument that broke out, right before Jesus went to the cross

And it wasn't a new debate among them . . .

In the gospels we're told of at least three times when this same argument took place.

**Matthew 18:1-4, Mark 9:30-37, Luke 9:46-56, Luke 22:24-30,**

And that's not even counting the times when the disciples had others try to settle the debate for them.

**Matthew 20:20-28**

Like when two of the disciples who were brothers, James and John, had their mother Mrs. Zebedee come to Jesus and ask whether her two sons could be assigned the seats of highest honor when Jesus came in his kingdom.

We're not told the details of the argument that took place at the Last Supper, but you can imagine how it might have gone.

Who is the greatest among us?

Simon Peter, never slow to speak would have said . . .

*"Remember when Jesus walked up toward us on the water? And everybody else stayed in the boat?"*

*"Who was it that got out of the boat and walked on water?"*

*It was moi, me, not you, but me, "you set your derriers on the boat 'cause you were afraid, "sitting over there, I was the one walking on water."*

Andrew would have said, *"The way I remember things you sank"*

And Matthew might have said, *"I could have done that, but I didn't want to show off."*

And James and John would have said, *"Do you have any idea how many parents are going to name their kids after us?"*

And Thomas would have said, *"I doubt that."*

And Bartholomew would have said, *"What about me? I think I should be in the running for which of us is the greatest."*

To which the others would have replied, *"Bartholomew, we didn't even know you were a disciple, "nobody's gonna remember you."*

And Bartholomew keeps quiet because he's Bartholomew

And it's against that backdrop that Jesus is going to teach them a powerful lesson.

John 13, verse 1 tells us. . .

***"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love." John 13:1***

Which begs the question of "HOW"

What did Jesus do to show the full extent of his love?

Verse 3 answers that question . . .

***"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God: so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.***

***After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." John 13:3-5***

Jesus, through his actions was putting into practice something that he had taught them on multiple occasions.

It's the truth that's contained in our memory verse for this week.

It comes from Matthew 23:11

Let's read this out loud together. . .

Memory Verse

***"The greatest among you must be a servant." Matthew 23:11***

This morning I want us to look at . . .

Three Biblical Principles About Serving

1. Serving needs to be a LIFESTYLE not just and ISOLATED EVENT

Christian theologian Richard Foster makes an observation that illustrates this.

He writes . . .

***"There's a difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant."***

He says . . .

***"When I choose to serve I retain control about who I serve and when I serve. When I choose to be a servant I have given up all rights and all control."***

This morning I want us to look at someone who personified what it means to do that

I want us to look at a Portrait of a servant from Acts chapter 9

A servant named 'Tabitha'

She was actually the first Greek female mentioned in the New Testament.

Her name means "gazelle," so some scholars think she might've been a beautiful woman, we don't know for sure.

But what we do know, is what she was always doing, what does the text say?

*"There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor." Acts 9:36*

Underline those words . . .

*always doing kind things for others*

What was she always doing?

She was *always doing kind things for others and helping the poor*

Why was she always doing these things?

She was always doing these things because she understood ...

SERVING ISN'T JUST SOMETHING WE DO

A servant is who we are

If you read on in the passage you'll learn that. . .

What she actually did, is she made clothing and she would give it to those who were struggling – many of them widows.

Her ministry evidently was so important that when she died, God used Peter to raise her back from the dead; and a revival broke out in her community, because here is this woman - - here is this servant - -

and her ministry was so important that she was brought back from the dead because she was always doing good.

She was always using what she had to make a difference in other people's lives, serving, because she knew who she was

Which raises a question that I'd like you to ask yourself.

And the question is . . .

ASK YOURSELF:

WHAT ARE YOU ALWAYS DOING?

If somebody were to describe you USING the word "ALWAYS," what would they say?

*"He's always doing such and such"*

Or *"She's always doing this."*

The question is this: What would others say that you are always doing?

They might say you're always encouraging, they might say you're always complaining.

They might say you're always finding fault, or they might say you're always finding good.

What would they say that you're always doing?

Maybe they'd say he's always working.

Or, she's always working out.

He's always sharing his faith.

She's always scrolling on Instagram.

What would others say that you are always doing?

Think about that, because it's one of the things you're going to be talking about in your life group this week.

First principle . . .

1. Serving needs to be a LIFESTYLE not just an ISOLATED EVENT

Second principle . . .

2. MOTIVES MATTER: WHY you SERVE is as important as WHAT YOU DO

Let me share with you two verses on this, which at first glance could appear to be contradictory, but once you look a little closer, I think you'll see that they're not.

Matthew 6:1 says . . .

***"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven." Matthew 6:1***

Matthew 5:16 says . . .

***"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Matthew 5:16***

Well which is it?

Am I not supposed to do my good deeds publicly?

Or am I supposed to do them publicly and let them shine out for all to see?

The answer comes down to MOTIVE.

It's not just about WHAT we do

It's about WHY we do it.

And when it comes to MOTIVE our MODEL has got to be Jesus.

Philippians chapter 2 says . . .

***"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."***

What attitude was that?

We're told . . .

*Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges. He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being."*

*"When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names."*

*"That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in Heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:5-11*

Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve, to give his life as a ransom for many.

He humbled himself and the result was that God exalted Him.

Which leads to a third Biblical principle that relates to service and it's this . . .

3. Your Service will be Rewarded

You know the primary reason that we serve should be because God calls us to serve.

We should serve out of obedience.

But there are also some benefits that we get.

God meets your needs as you meet the needs of others,

God blesses you as you are a blessing to others.

Which is one of the reasons why as a church we like to continually set before you opportunities to serve - - both here locally, as well as globally.

We have an opportunity to serve and make a difference in Central America just about six months from now.

Through a partnership we have with a ministry called

Living Water International

I want you to hear a little bit about the BENEFITS of being part of an outreach like this

VIDEO – 5:15 <https://vimeo.com/292355838>

Up on the screen you'll see that we have a team heading out in six months.

July 20-27 we're going to Guatemala

We almost have a complete team

Emphasis on the word ALMOST

Again, look at the screen.

You'll see pictures of 10 individuals

That's almost a complete team.

We're allowed to take 12 on our team.

We have 10

We're looking for two more

And one of those two are sitting here among us right now.

If you'd like to learn more let us know . . .

using your CC or talk to one of our team leaders . . .

Your service through a ministry like this will make a difference.

It will make a difference in the lives of those you minister to

It will make a difference in your life because there are SERVICE will be REWARDED

Think about the rewards that Tabitha, received from being such a person of service.

Acts 9:37 tells us

***"About that time she became ill and died"***

If the story ended there, there wouldn't be much to encourage you.

It doesn't seem like much of a reward.

Thankfully it doesn't end there.

We're told that her friends prepared her body for burial and laid her in an upper room.

Later on Peter arrives and asks them all to leave the room.

He kneels down and he prays.  
 And then turning to the body he says, '**Get up Tabitha!**'  
 And she opened up her eyes.  
 When she saw Peter she sat up, he gave her his hand and helped her up.  
 Then he called in the widows and all the believers and he showed them that she was alive."

Now her service was rewarded, wouldn't you agree?  
 Tabitha was so beneficial to God's Work that when she died, God used Peter to bring her back to life.

Now, I wish I could promise that to all of you.  
 But I can't.

It seems that this was a sort of "**one and done**" kind of thing in the history of the church.  
 It seemed like God used this just to highlight the power of service.

It's as though God said, "**I want to show you how important the habit of service is, so I'm going to bring somebody back to life just to demonstrate it.**"

And I believe that Tabitha got up and went right back to making coats for the poor and making garments for those in need.

She kept on serving.

Even though I can't promise you that if you become a servant you'll experience the exact same things that Tabitha did, I can promise you a reward.

And the reason that I can make that promise is because that's the promise that God makes to us.  
 Look at the verses on that inside page of your notes. . .

Luke 6:38-39

God says He will bless you according to how much you serve others.

**"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full - pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."** Luke 6:38-39

So if you just give a teaspoon of service, God just gives you a teaspoon of blessing.

You give like a big bucket full of serving, God gives you a bucket full of blessing.

This is how He meets your needs.

God meets your needs by calling you to serve other people.

The way that the world measures greatness and the way that God measures it are exactly the opposite

The world measures greatness by how many people you have serving you.

God measures it by how many you serve.

He sees what you do and he promises a reward.

**"Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."** Matthew 6:4

Where do you start?

**Action Step** Start where you are, but don't stop there

In some ways it's easier to take a mission trip than it is to be a servant to those closest to you

You know what I know about a lot of us here?

When we commit to something we like to do it big.

I'm going to serve but I'm going to do it big.

Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize for being a servant so you know what I'm going to do?

I'm going to fly to Calcutta and serve with Mother Teresa."

There's a couple of problems.

NUMBER ONE, she's no longer there.

She's with the Lord.

NUMBER TWO, ninety percent of you have no idea where Calcutta is.

AND THREE, if you went there as someone I know did and said, "I'm here to serve,"

Mother Teresa would have said, "Go back home and find your own Calcutta."

We think we've got to go big.

What I want to say to you, the servant's life begins with the small.

Mother Teresa said late in her life.

"Little things are indeed little but to be faithful in many little things is a great thing."

Little things mean a lot!

This week, as I was preparing this message I asked myself the question. . . when I think of SERVICE what picture comes to mind.

And the picture that came to my mind was a Sunday morning worship service that took place here a number of years ago.

It was actually PALM SUNDAY

And in order to add authenticity to the celebration we had palm frawns lining the aisle and we even arranged to have a live donkey enter during one of the songs.

One of our members (Teddy Treadwell) lived on a ranch and had a neighbor who could lend us a donkey for the morning.

I don't know who it was who first said, "Never work with children or animals."

But now I know why.

We had been promised that the donkey would do fine on our carpet, or maybe more to the point, not do on our carpet.

The owner of the beast said it wasn't rocket science, but a very simple formula.

Just don't feed the donkey that morning.

If nothing goes in, then nothing comes out.

We took their word for it.

Not a good thing to do.

We came to the point in the service where the song was sung and right on cue, the donkey entered, and as it came down the aisle, about ever 6 steps it made boom boom on the carpet.

The wave of laughter started in the back and rolled to the front.

Everyone sat there in shock, with no idea of what to do next.

Everyone except one man, he bolted out of his seat and headed for the exit.

I was tempted to yell out to him, "Sir, sir, most people usually don't head for the exit until I've started preaching." But it was too late, he was gone. And he was actually the chairman of our church board.

But he wasn't gone very long before he returned with a wastebasket in one hand and a stack of paper towels in the other.

He walked the aisle where the donkey had walked, and every place where the donkey had made a deposit, he made a withdrawal.

That picture is the picture that I think of when I think of the word "SERVANT."

Later on I asked that man how he would sum up his time serving as chairman of the board at ERBC.

He said, "It's a wonderful church, with a whole lot of great and loving people."

I asked him, "Anything else?"

He said, "Well we do get the occasional donkey that comes through, but when that happens, I just do my best to clean up what they leave behind."

I wonder are you looking for a place to serve?

Do you know any donkeys?

Doing the work of clean up may seem like a little thing, but it can be great in God's eyes.

There are opportunities to serve all around you.

There is the promise of reward if you'll seize them.

Why?

Because according to the clear testimony of scripture, when you're doing for others, you are actually doing for him.

Jesus told a story, in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 25.

And Jesus said, "One day, at the end of time, "all the people are gonna be standing before me, "and I'm gonna separate them. "I'm gonna put the sheep on this side, "and on the other side, I'm gonna put the GOATS."

The GOATS, who do you wanna be?

I wanna be the greatest of all time.

Not a wise choice.

Because to the GOATS, He is going to say "*I'm sorry, but we didn't know each other.*"

And he'd say to the sheep,

*"Welcome into the kingdom I have prepared for you, "and I just wanted to tell you, thank you. "*

*Because when I was thirsty, you gave me a drink. "*

*And when I was locked out, you invited me in. "*

*And when I was sick, you prayed for me. "*

*And when I was in prison, you visited me."*

And the sheep will look back and say, "Um, glad we're getting in, "but I don't remember that happening. "When did I visit you, "when did I give you something to drink?"

And Jesus would look back at them and said, "What you did to the least of these brothers, "you actually did to me.

"When you visited someone else in prison, "you were actually showing love to me.

"When you offered a drink, to someone in another country "that didn't have access to clean drinking water "and you contributed to helping them get a well, "you were actually doing that to me.

"When you welcomed somebody who didn't feel welcome, "and you showed them love and grace, "you were actually welcoming me."

How do you become great?

You become great by being less about you, and more about him, therefore more about other people.

Because serving isn't just something that we do, a servant is who we are.

It's our essence, it's our core,

And then Jesus would look at his sheep and he would say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Because serving isn't just what we do, a servant is who we are,

Let's pray