

All right. Everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad you are here with us today. Whether you've been here with us all year or you're newer with us on the journey, we are so glad that you are with us because we've been in a year-long series simply called A Different Way, Do What Jesus Did. And we've taken an entire year to kind of stop and ask ourselves the question, maybe there is a different way to live our lives? Maybe there's a better way to live our lives. We've taken an entire year to just talk about what does it look like to be a disciple of Jesus, to be the kind of person that lives like Him and acts like Him and talks like Him.

And maybe Jesus knows a better way than the way that we tend to live our lives. And so, we've been coming to Jesus in this series, not just as Savior, but as Teacher. Too often, we just relegate Jesus to a Savior, the One who forgives our sins and gives us life after we die. But He also wants to be our Teacher in the here and now. To teach us how to be human and how to walk with God. How to live in the Kingdom. How to live our lives a different way. And so, we've been saying all series that if we want to do the things that Jesus did, we have to do the things that Jesus did. If we want to live the life that Jesus lived, we have to first live the life that Jesus lived. So, we've been looking at His practices, His habits, His disciplines. And then, arranging and rearranging our life, ordering and reordering our life around Jesus and the way He lived his life, which is the heartbeat of a disciple.

In fact, I love that Jesus says, to those who believed in Him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples." To believe is to obey and to obey is to be His disciple. The entire heartbeat of this series has been coming to Jesus with the intent to obey. With this intent to say, I want to be your disciple. I want you to teach me how to live my life. I want to, in a sense, believe that you're my teacher and that you know how to live my life better than I know how to live my life. And I'm tired of being weary and burdened in this world. I want things to be easy and light. So, Jesus, I've come to you to learn how to live a different way. To be a disciple is to obey and we obey because we truly believe. And so, what I've told you is that as we've entered into season four. We broke the series up into four different seasons, just like your favorite show on TV. As we've entered into season four, my great concern for us is that these last four practices that we're talking about have familiarity to them.

And so, the moment I say them, a lot of us will quickly decide one of two things. We'll either think we've mastered them or we'll have already decided we don't need them in our lives. And so, I'm just asking you to be open to that which God might want to say in your life. See, all the practices we've talked about till now required you and God. These ones now require you, God, and others. And that's why they're hard. That's why we've already decided we don't need them because they cost something from us. If anyone would come after me, Jesus says, "He must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it." What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? This almost feels out of order, doesn't it? You would almost think that Jesus would say, "If anyone wants to follow me, then along the way, he will have to learn how to deny himself and take up his cross."

But that's not the order he says it. He says, you're going to have to deny yourself and take up your cross if you actually want to follow me. I'm going to have to deny myself. My pride, my rights, my opinions, my preferences, my sin, my flesh, and I'm going to take up my cross. I'm

going to have to die to myself if I actually want to follow Jesus and go where he is going and live like He is living. Because whoever wants to save his life will lose it. Did you ever notice that the harder we try to save our life, the more we lose it? The more we try to control and hoard and hide and force and manipulate and hold on to it like sand, it feels like it slips through our fingers? But if we will lose our life, He says we will save it. If we will simply submit it and surrender it to Him and His ways, we will save it. We will find it. And if we will simply just let go of world, He will give us a healthy soul. He will give us not just life when we die, He will give us life in this life.

And so, so often as we talk about these things, we get so lost in what it costs to follow Jesus. And yes, there is a cost to follow Jesus. Deny yourself and take up your cross. But have you ever stopped and asked yourself the question, "What does it cost you to not follow Jesus?" To follow Jesus will cost you sin and time and pride and flesh, but to not follow Jesus will cost you joy and peace and life and freedom and love. Which cost are you willing to pay? So, Holy Spirit, as we enter into this season four journey together, would you just come and speak to us? Would your word have a deep effect on our lives? Would it transform us from the inside out? Would you give us courage and faith to learn how to live a different way? May we believe and obey and become like you, in Jesus's name.

You see, after three years of walking with the disciples, it was time for Jesus to go to the cross. And so, as He was getting ready to go to the cross, He led the disciples to the upper room where they were going to have the Last Supper. It was going to be Jesus's last time with the disciples. He was going to give them His last words, the final impartation. It was going to be a sacred moment, a holy moment, a profound moment. And because the upper room was a secret place that no one else knew about, when Jesus and the disciples get there, there was no servant to wash their feet as they entered into the upper room. You see, in Jesus's day, all the roads were made of dirt. And so, as everyone walked along the roads, their feet would get dirty. They would get muddy. They would get sticky with all the things that they walked through. So, there was often a servant at the door there to take off people's sandals and wash their feet so they could go in. But because this was a secret place, there was no servant.

And as the disciples got there and realized there was no servant at the door to wash their feet, they immediately understood that someone was supposed to do something about this. It was so normative to their custom and to their culture that they immediately realized that something was missing. Something was wrong, but none of them had any interest in washing each other's feet. So, they walked right in the door as if everything was normal. They walked right in, began engaging with each other. Just kind of ignoring, pretending, waiting, assuming that someone else was bound to take care of this problem. And the paradox is scripture tells us as they were sitting there, they actually began arguing with each other over which one of them was the greatest. They were arguing of which one of us is the greatest disciple of Jesus. Who's done the most miracles and who's raised the most people from the dead? Who is the best communicator? Who's Jesus's favorite? And as they're arguing over which one of them is the greatest, Jesus quietly gets up, takes off his cloak, wraps a towel around it. Grabs a basin and a water pitcher and fills it up and gets down on his knees and washes the feet of His disciples.

Jesus takes off their sandals and He washes the muck, and the dirt, and the grime, and the filth. He washes in between their toes and around their ankles. And He washes the muck off of their calloused, hard feet. He washes Peter's prideful feet. He washes John's angry feet. He washes Thomas's doubting feet. He washes Matthew's greedy feet. He washes Judas's betraying feet. And when He had finished washing all of their feet, He went and cleaned himself up, put His cloak back on, came and sat down. And you could have heard a pin drop.

And He says, "Do you understand what I've just done for you? Now that I, your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also must wash the feet of one another. I have set you an example for how you should live. No servant is greater than his master. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." And in that moment, we are reminded that Jesus practiced service. That his entire life was a life spent practicing service. And if we want to do the things that Jesus did, like have humility and security and freedom, then we have to first do the things that Jesus did, like practice service. I mean, can you even imagine this? And this is Jesus, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.

The Creator, the Redeemer, the Sustainer of all. The Alpha and the Omega. The Great I Am. The Good Shepherd. The one in whom life exists, getting down and washing the muck off His disciples' feet. And the truth is we actually can understand it because Jesus has washed not only our feet, He's actually washed our souls. He not only has washed your feet. He has washed the muck off of your souls so you have been cleansed once and for all in the name of Jesus. In fact, in John 13, where this story is told to us. It says, "He now showed them the full extent of His love" right before He washes their feet. It says, "He shows them the full extent of His love." So, here's what service is. The practice of service is love expressed. Service is love expressed. See, love is not an emotion or a feeling. Love is goodwill. Is that my will, my desire, my choice, my usage of my kingdom is for your good.

And I'm going to use everything that I have for your good. And so, goodwill is not an emotion or a feeling. It has words and actions with it that actually express love into the atmosphere. The practice of service is giving your life away with no strings attached. It's literally giving my life to you with no strings attached. No expectation of anything in return. I'm giving you my life. My time, talent, my treasure, my resources, my energies, my words, my actions with no strings attached. With no sense of the need to be thanked, to be appreciated, to be valued, to be seen, to have that service be received. Service is laying down my life to lift someone else up. Literally laying down my life for the good of others and the Glory of God. And the practice of service is not just meeting needs, it's blessing a life.

We have reduced service to meeting needs that we see when we feel like meeting them. But the practice of service, yes, it meets needs, but it also blesses people's lives. It lifts them up. It helps them become who they were created to be. It lays down your life so they can elevate into the life that God has for them. And I would say that service in a lot of ways is just simply using wisdom and compassion to release God's Kingdom into the world around you. And if you can think about it like this, service is both a practice and a gift. It's a practice that we practice, but it's also a gift that we receive. Because when we practice service, God is doing something in us. And as He does something in us, He does something through us. And that is the gift that we receive. We get to be a part of His Kingdom on this earth. That service, God is doing

something in you as He's doing something through you. And it goes on to say that Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power. That He had come from God and was returning to God.

See, Jesus could serve because He knew where He came from, why He was here and where He was going. He knew where He came from, from the Father. He knew why He was here on mission with the Father. And He knew where He was going to be with the Father. So, He could practice service because He knew that. And every time you and I practice service, it reminds us of where we came from, why we're here and where we're going. Every time I give my life away with no strings attached, I'm reminded where I came from, from the Father. I'm reminded why I'm here to be on mission with the Father. And I'm reminded where I'm going. I'm going to be with the Father. But every time I practice selfishness, it's like I forget where I came from, why I'm here and where I'm going. And the more I practice selfishness, the less I know where I came from, where I'm going. And so, then all I got left is why I'm here. And then, why I'm here now has to become about me, myself, and I. Some of us, because we've arranged our lives around ourselves have no concept of where we came from, where we're going, or why we're here.

And then, after He washes their feet, He says, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth. No servant is greater than his master. Nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." It doesn't really need commentary, does it? It's incredibly sobering, incredibly humbling. That's incredibly convicting. Lord and Teacher, He's our Teacher, the one teaching us how to be human, how to be alive. And He says, "Because I've washed your feet, you're supposed to wash each other's feet." We serve because He first served us.

We do what He has done for us and we're not greater than Him. And we're blessed if we learn to live our lives in this way. The only question then is, are you blessed? Are you blessed? You see, Jesus didn't just serve. He was a Servant. In fact, in Philippians chapter 2, it's this beautiful hymn of the supremacy of Christ. And it's a passage that 700 leaders in our church have committed to memorize. Philippians 2:1-16, by the end of October, as a way of practicing a different way, scripture and meditation and allowing God to do a deep work inside of them. And there's this beauty of talking about the supremacy of Jesus. And it just says, "In your relationships with one another have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage." Rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.

And being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Jesus chose the nature of a servant. Not in spite of the fact that he was God, but because he was God. See, the nature of God is the nature of a servant. The nature of our God is that of a servant. At the core, at the foundation, at the very heartbeat of who He is, is a servant. Jesus didn't choose to be a servant in spite of the fact that he was God. No, no. It's because He was God that He chose the nature of a servant, because that is the very nature of God. And He made Himself nothing. We spend our whole lives trying to make ourselves something. And Jesus in one moment made Himself nothing and became everything.

And humbled Himself and became obedient even to death on a cross. And what I love is that if the nature of God is the nature of a servant and we were made in the image and likeness of God, then the nature of humanity is that of a? It's our nature. So, every time you refuse to be a servant and you choose to be selfish and make it about you, just understand you're going against your nature. You're going against the current of creation, the grain of grace, the very way God has made you. That's why it doesn't work well when we spend our whole lives trying to make ourselves something. It doesn't work. But if we will give our life away, we will find it in Jesus's name. And it's interesting that Jesus didn't think equality with God is something to be grasped or taken advantage of. How often do we think we are not only equal with God, but that we're above God? And that He's there to serve me. And it says in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset of Jesus.

Do you know how different your relationships and mine would be if every day we woke up and said, "How can I serve the people I interact with?" That's how Jesus woke up every day. Every day, my nature is here to be a servant. I've already given up my pride, my opinions, my rights, my preferences, my time. I'm here to lift other people's lives up and give my life away with no strings attached. How different would your life be? How different would your relationships be? Or how about when Jesus says – He calls the disciples together and says, "Those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them," but not so with you. You live a different way. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. If you can understand what Jesus is saying here, he's basically saying, "Hey, I've arranged My entire life not to be served, but to serve."

That's why I've come. My entire life has been arranged. My choices, my calendar, my time, my money, my daily activities, my life, my march. My entire life has been arranged and organized not to be served, but to give my life away and serve others. That they might be ransomed, liberated, set free, and lifted up. Whoever wants to be great must become your servant. Can I ask you a question? In your plans for greatness, does it include the practice of servanthood? And then, the question you have to ask yourself and I have to ask myself, and you only have to do it right now for 30 minutes. I have to do it all week. Is my life arranged around being served or serving? Is your life arranged around serving or around being served?

Your time, your calendar, your money, your daily activities. See, if we're honest, most of us, if we're honest, our lives have been arranged around being served. We want to be in control. We want our needs met. We want other people to do for us. We want other people to express their love for us. We want other people to give their lives to us with no strings attached. We want other people to lay down their life to bless our life. We want God to do something in them as He does something through them into our life. But my life is probably arranged around being served, not serving. And this is why we get so angry when we don't get what we want. This is why we become so upset when our fast-food order is wrong because you expect to be served. This is why we're angry when we get to the pickup grocery thing and it's not ready because you expect to be served.

It is why we get upset at our families or our spouse or our children or our parents when they don't do what we thought they were going to do. This is why we get upset when we come to an environment of any kind. And we think it should be prepared meticulously for me exactly as I want it. And when it's not that way, I get upset. I get irritated. I don't like it when I don't get what I want. Why? Because my life has been arranged around being served. And I don't have the margin, the space, the interest or the mindset to serve others. That's why you get so upset when it doesn't go your way. Does that make sense to you? And for those of you that are sitting here, you're like, "No, I serve people all the time." Okay. I would just say that most of us, when we serve, it's actually self-serving. I think we serve people, but I think we serve to get something from them. I think we serve because I think if I serve you, then you're going to give me back what I want. So, I did the dishes and I hope my spouse sees it and now does something for me.

Or I mowed the yard and now I hope that my family sees it and does something for me. Or I did this at work and I hope my boss sees it and gives me a promotion. Or I signed up for student council, not because I like student council, but because I hope that in serving that I'm going to get something back. Let's call it a resume builder, students, right? It's not the heart of serving, I'm hoping to get something back. I serve on a team because I hope the coach sees it and gives me more playing time. Are you with me? Did you ever just notice how much attention we draw to where we've served? Did you see what I've done? Did you see the dishes I've done and that the yard is mowed? And I fixed that and made that and bought this and went here and went to that thing for you. And I did this and I did the laundry and I did this at work and I stayed late and I came early. Why do we have a need to drop back to ourselves? Because it's self-serving. It's not the practice of giving our life away with no strings attached.

See, a great question to ask yourself is, what's your motivation of serving? Think of the places that you serve in your life. Why do you serve? Why? I serve because I think if we're really honest, this is the main one, because I want to be served. It's manipulative. It has a motive to it. It's selfish. It's, I serve because I want you to see it and do something back for me. And then, I go a little deeper and then I have served because I feel obligated to. It's duty. It's religion. It's performance. I don't want to do it, but I feel like I don't have a choice. I have to do it. We move a little farther. I serve because I was asked to. I have no interest really in doing it on my own, but someone asked me to do it so I'm willing to do it for them. Or we go a little farther because I get something out of it. This is the person that says, "I like serving because I want to give back," or "I want to be a part of something bigger than myself," or "I feel good when I do it," but it's still about me. But then, you get below this line and you say, "I serve because I'm a disciple." And Jesus is my Lord and my teacher.

And He washed my feet and He's teaching me how to wash the feet of the world around me. And if I'm really going to follow Him, I can't not serve because that's who He is. But then, the deepest level is I serve because I want more of Jesus. Because Jesus says, "Whatever you've done for the least of these, you've done for me." So, do you understand there as a facet of Jesus, you will never discover in this life outside of servanthood. "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for Me." He says, we will find Him when we're willing to give our life away in a unique way that's different than our worship services or in community or in silence and solitude. So, my question for you is the places you serve, what's your motive? See, above

this line, I would call it self-serving. Below this line, I would call it Kingdom serving. Above this line, I would call it volunteering. Below this line, I would call it the practice of service. And a lot of our life is volunteering, self-serving.

We say things like this, "I serve for my kid's sports team." The only reason you're doing that is because you're getting something out of it. The question is, do you keep serving on that team even after your kid graduated from it? That would be giving your life away with no strings attached. Does that make sense? I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. I'm saying you just have to acknowledge what it actually is. Did you ever notice how in scripture Jesus often serves in the hiddenness? He doesn't draw attention to it. He does the opposite. He heals the leper and says, "Don't tell anyone." He heals the blind man and he says, "Don't go tell anyone." What? He shows up in the dark at night in secret places and serves people. Why? Because he had no need to draw attention to Himself because He was secure and He was humble and He was free. So, He didn't need anything from anyone else. He was free to give His life away, whether they accepted it or rejected it. It was totally up to them. And He was totally great one way or the other. I think we spend so much time trying to be appreciated for the little bit of serving that we do.

In fact, Jesus tells us this fascinating parable, this little parable. And a couple of years ago, I shared this at our staff Christmas party. Every year we have a staff Christmas party, we bring all the spouses and the children together. And I usually give a little word. And a couple of years ago, this was the thing that I chose to talk about at our staff Christmas party. Jesus says, "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, come along now and sit down and eat?" Would he not rather say, prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that, you may eat and drink. Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So, you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty." Merry Christmas. That was probably our staff's spouses least favorite Christmas party we have ever had.

But here was the thing, that year I could see entitlement creeping up. I could see this sense of this need of being appreciated, being validated. Being seen that my sacrifices, that my efforts need to be noticed and acknowledged by others. But Jesus says, "You're a servant." A servant has already given his life away. A servant doesn't need to be noticed. In fact, being a servant is actually your duty. It's your privilege. It's your responsibility. We're the people of God. We tend the fields. We look after the sheep and we wait on tables and we expect nothing in return. Why? Because that's what our Lord and Teacher did. When we bring it back to Savior, it's forgiveness of sins. Life after I die. Teacher is this is how you actually live in this life. And if my Lord and Teacher worked the fields, tended the sheep, waited on tables without expectation of anything in return, then I should not need to be thanked, appreciated, noticed, or blessed by other people for the acts of service I release into their life.

This is the difference between someone who serves and a servant. A servant is not offended when they're not thanked. But someone who serves is. Oh, hang on. I need to drink. Did you notice I brought the monitor out today? I mean, if Marian needed to get up here and say, "Hey, I just want to stop the service just to let everyone know I worked really hard to bring this

out and I got it right. It's on the marks." Why then do we need to tell people we did the dishes? Did the laundry, cooked the meal, picked up the garbage, fixed the thing, stayed late, came early. Can you imagine Jesus doing that? Hey guys. In fact, there's this fascinating passage in the old Testament that if you read it, you would probably just rip right through. You wouldn't even notice it, but it's incredibly profound.

It says, "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he has to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year, he shall go free without paying anything." But if the servant declares, I love my master, I love my wife, and I love my children and do not want to go free, then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then, he will be a servant for life. You say, yep, if I was reading through the Bible, I would just go right through that. Wouldn't make much sense. What it's saying here is when somebody is a Hebrew servant for six years, they're a servant. They're a slave. They don't have freedom. Their life choices have brought them to this place where they're enslaved in a sense. They're a servant. But on the seventh year in God's goodness and grace, the person is set free. The only challenge is, is if they're set free, they don't necessarily get to take their wife and their children with them. Because their wife and their children are on a different rotation of being servants.

So, they can leave, but they'd have to leave empty handed. But if the servant looks at his situation and his reality and says, "You know what? I actually love my master. I love my wife. I love my children. Actually, I want to stay here with them." What happens is they take them before the judges witnesses and they take them to a door or a doorpost and they pierce his ear with an awl, a permanent scar to show forever and always that he is a willing servant for life. So, no one is ever confused. So, no one ever misreads it. So, no one ever misunderstands it. The scar in his ear, the hole in his ear will show everyone, including himself, for the rest of his life, that he has chosen to be a willing servant for life because he loves his master, his wife, and his children. Okay? This is not a passage about Hebrew servants. This is a passage about Jesus. The New Testament is Jesus revealed. The Old Testament is Jesus concealed. Jesus came as a Hebrew servant, a Jewish man, the Son of Man, and He completed His work.

Before He goes to the cross, He says, "Father, I have finished the work, which you have given me to do." He was free. He could have left. He didn't have to go to the cross. Even when they arrest him, He says, "Do you not think I could call 12 legions right now to come and rescue me?" He was free to go. But He loved His master, His wife and His children. He loved the Father, the Bride of Christ and the beloved sons and daughters of God. Enough to say, "Take me before the judges." And He was judged on the cross. Even though He was innocent, He was found guilty. The righteous for the unrighteous once and for all to bring you to God. And they took him to the door, the cross, the door. The gateway into heaven, the door into the Kingdom. The door into a different way, the door and to be included in Christ. And He was pierced hands, feet, and side. Permanent scars once and for all that the resurrected Christ wears as a declaration to say, "I am a willing servant for life because I love my master, my wife and my children."

That's Jesus. That's your Jesus. He loved the Father and He loved this church. And He loved you as His children that much. And when it says, "He was taken before the judges," do you know what that word actually means? In the original language, it's the word Elohim. Elohim,



lowercase G gods. He was literally taken before the powers and principalities that rule and govern the spiritual world to make a declaration once and for all to say, "I love the Father. I love my bride and I love my children. And I am a willing servant for life." And in that moment, he defeated all of the Elohim, the powers and principalities once and for all through giving his life away with no strings attached. The question is, has your flesh been pierced so you could walk through the door into a different way future as a willing servant for life?

The difference between someone who serves and a servant is servants are not offended when they're asked to serve. In fact, in Psalms, prophetically talking about that passage and what Jesus was going to do. This is really a prophetic thing of Jesus's sacrifice and offerings you did not desire, but my ears, you have pierced. Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require, but Jesus said, "Here I am. I have come. It is written about Me in the scroll. I desire to do Your will." Oh my God, your law is written within my heart. Question is, have you positioned your life in such a way where you can say, "Here I am, I have come. I desire to do Your will, to express Your love, for You to do something in me as You're doing something through me." To give my life away with no strings attached. Is His law written in your heart, which just simply means you naturally and effortlessly do the things God would long for you to do like serve.

And you don't even have to think about it. It's just naturally what you do because you've spent so much time doing the things that Jesus did. You can't help, but do the things that Jesus did. Okay. So, here's the question. Ready? Where do you practice being a disciple? Where do you practice service? Now, if I asked you, because you want to be a professional football player, if I asked you, where do you want to be a professional football player? You're going to tell me, "Well, I'm on this team and we have practices at these times and these days, and these are the drills that we run." It would be very clear. It would not be subjective. If I asked you because you want to be a professional musician and I said, "Well, hey, where do you practice being a professional musician?" You'd tell me, "I'm in this band and we rehearse at this time and we rehearse in this location. And these are the songs that we were working on." It wouldn't be subjective. It would be very clear. If you were trying to run a marathon and I just asked you, "Hey, tell me where you're practicing training for that marathon."

You would tell me, "Well, I run with these people and we run on these days and this is the plan that we're working on to build up my strength and my stamina." Okay. So, when I ask you, "Where do you practice service?" Do you have an answer? Do you have a time, a place, a location? Like, "No. No, I just serve people throughout my day." Imagine me telling you, "I'm going to be a professional football player as I feel like it. I'm growing into that." Where do you practice? Where do you practice? If you struggle with pride, control, narcissism, judgment, selfishness, the greatest thing you could do is make a choice to be on a weekly serve team. Join a kid's team, a student team, a worship team, production team, admin team, ops team, guest experience team. Join a team. You say, "I don't want to join a team." I know, that's the problem.

Because if you struggle with control and pride and selfishness and narcissism and judgment, you think you're better than it and beyond it. So, what do I need to do? I actually need to join a team where I come under a leader that I think I'm better than. And I need to be asked to do something that I don't feel like doing. And I need to show up at days and times when I don't

really want to be there. And I need to come on time because that's what's been asked of me. And I need to do it in the way that it's been asked of me, even though I think I'm so smart and I know 12 ways to do it better. And that might be true. But the point of that is not to make it better. The point of that is God to do something in you as He does something through you. This is discipline where we've used the whole – right? Discipline, doing what I can do now so I can do what I can't do now later. Discipline, doing what I don't want to do now so I can do what I do want to do later.

I don't know anybody, even the best of people who are servants at heart that wake up every day and say, "I just can't wait to practice service today." But they do what they don't want to do now so they can become the kind of person that can do what they want to do later. So, here's my question for you. Where in your life are you ever not the one in control? Where are you in life ever the one who doesn't make all the choices? Where are you in life where it doesn't all arrange and revolve around you? The more successful you are, the more gifted you are, the more people you lead, the more influence you have, the more conscious you have to be aware of this principle. And the more you have to find places that you have committed to showing up and actually practicing, because how else are you going to become like Jesus? Here's the question. Where do you take off your cloak and put on the servant's towel? Where do you take off your cloak of finances and influence and pride and idolatry. And it's my time and my life and all these.

Where do you take off that cloak and put on the servant's towel regularly as a practice to become a kind of person that you sit here and say you want to be? It's time and pride again. Just like community, time and pride. I don't have the time for it and I don't think I need to do it. What are you doing that's so much more important than becoming like Jesus? And why do you think you're better than Jesus who washed Judas's betraying feet? You're like, "I'm better than that." I mean, really? Sometimes I just want to say, "Really? Is that where we are?" Here would be a good question for you. Ask the people in your life that know you, just say that, "Do you think I'm humble, secure, and free?" And give me your honest answer. Do you think I'm a humble, secure, and free person?

Do you think I'm a servant? Because that's the kind of life a servant gets to live. They're humble. They're so secure. They don't need anything from anybody. And they're free. We think a servant means you're in bondage. No, servant means I'm actually free because I walk with God. I know where I came from. I know where I'm going. And I know why I'm here. The person that doesn't serve is the person in bondage because they don't know where they came from. They don't know where they're going and they have no idea why they're here. In fact, this is why it says, "God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. When I serve, I position myself in humility and humility opens me up to the grace of God." This is how these practices work. Are you with me on this? It's sobering, isn't it? And just for some of you that are like, "Wow," it's taken us 10 months for me to be able to say these kinds of things to you the way that I'm saying them because it needed 10 months of context. Because the 10 months of context are not, be religious and be a church person and do all this junk.

No, the 10 months of context is, do you have a vision to be a person of love? Do you have a vision to do the things that Jesus did so you can do the things that Jesus did? If not, I get it.

Don't do any of this because you don't have a vision for it. But as you get a vision for who you want to be, it changes your life. In fact, two more things. You are the Body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. To each one, the manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good. You're the Body of Christ. The moment you put your faith in Jesus, you get grafted, adopted, transplanted as a part of the Body of Christ. Now, if you can catch this with me, you're the body. Jesus is the head. Yes? Okay. 2000 years ago, Jesus, because He loved His master, His wife and His children was judged at the doorpost and his ear was pierced declaring, I am a willing servant for life. So, 2000 years later, Jesus's head still declares, I am a willing servant for life, which means His body has given up the choice of, do I want to, or do I not want to be a willing servant for life because the head's already made the choice?

If you're a Christian, if you're a disciple of Jesus, you don't actually even get the choice anymore of whether or not you want to be a servant. You say, "What?" You're the body. He's the head. The Head made the choice 2000 years ago. You can say, "I don't want to be a part of the body." You can say, "I refuse to live like that." But just so we're clear, the choice has already been made of what the Body of Christ is going to do. And it's to wash the feet of the world around them. How different would that be if you saw yourself as a part of the body and every day that you don't want to serve, you just picture the head of Jesus already pierced, saying the choice has already been made. This is not something to negotiate or argue because I have chosen to be in your body, included in Christ. It's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives within me.

I've been crucified with Christ. His life is now my life. Are you catching me? Wouldn't that change it? He already made the choice. We don't get to make it. We can say, "I don't want you." Or we can say, "I want to be in it, but I'm still going to live like I want." That's fine. But the identity has already been secured of a servant. And to each one, to you, a manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good. God's given you gifts, passions, talents, abilities to make your life amazing. That's what it says, right? He's given you all your gifts and abilities so you can make a lot of money and have a lot of free time. That's totally what the heartbeat of the scripture is, right? I mean, Jesus totally washed your feet so you could just run and be free and never think about anyone or anything ever again. I'm trying to bring some sarcasm to you so you know. No. Why did He give you those things? For our good. He's given you His gifts and His talents and passions so that you can be His hands and His feet in the people and the lives and the places that He has placed you.

In fact, one more big verse. It was He who gave – Jesus gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists. Some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people, you, for works of service. So, that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature. Attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the – that is Christ. From Him, the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work. Catch it. You're God's people. You're supposed to do the works of service and you're supposed to do your part, your work. So, my question for you is, in the Body of Christ, where are you doing works of service? And are you doing your part to build us up? If you say you're a disciple, a

follower of Jesus, a Christian, this is your church. We should be able to just ask each other. According to scripture, we should just – without the defence of who are you? No, no.

Hey, where are you doing the works of service to build us up? And where are you doing your part so we can grow and be built to become a body that's worthy of the head? I guess it's a great question. I don't like the question. I know. But where are you expressing love in this place? Where are you living? You know where you came from and where you're going and why you're here. Where are you washing our feet because Jesus washed your feet? Where are you serving us because Jesus served you? You say, "I do it out there in my family, in my work." You've lost the right for that choice because this is talking about the Body of Christ. Literally, the people sitting next to you. It says that the church leader's job, pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists. My job is to prepare you for the works of service. Do you know that word prepare means to mend and repair tears in your soul? What I'm trying to do is mend and repair the tears in your soul so you can do the works of service so we can become the body we're called to be.

And if you can catch this, that word also means to arrange and order. Boom. If you've been here for 10 months, that should blow your mind. My job is to help you arrange and order your life so you can do the works of service so we can become who we're supposed to be. Wow. Do you come to church to have your life rearranged and reordered? You would like me a lot more if that was your premise. Because you have a responsibility to build up this body? Do you know the biggest delta between where we are and where we want to go is just not having enough servants? Everything we need to serve this body and reach the city is in the house, sitting in the chairs right now. Every gift, every passion, every talent, every ability, the gifts of healing.

Every prophetic word, every word of knowledge. All the finances, all the passion, all the worship leading, all the investment into the next generation. I mean, it's literally sitting in your seat and in the seat right next to you. The only question is, have you decided to be a willing servant for life? One of the hardest things for us as a leadership team in this era of time right now is we have more vision than we have servants who are willing to walk it out. We have so much vision. And some of you are asking questions like, "When are we going to do Argyle? When are we going to do university? When are we going to do adult VCLA and take Serve The City to the next level?" There're so many things we feel like God has called and asked us to do. We don't have enough servants who are willing to work the field, tend the flock and wait on tables. Because of time and pride. See, this is the practice. The game is out there. We think serving in church is the pinnacle of servanthood. I ushered someone today.

I held a baby. Thank you. This is where you practice. This is where you practice dying to yourself and your flesh being pierced and giving up your pride and your rights and being asked to do things you don't want to do. But because you're learning to be a servant, you're not offended by it. And because you're learning to be a servant, you're not upset that you weren't thanked over it. This is not the pinnacle. This is the practice field so I can go out and do it. If you can catch it, Jesus washed the disciples' feet before he went to the cross and washed the world. The order matters. You can't be a hope carrier out there if you're not first a disciple in here. This is what I've been trying to tell you for years now. This is a training center. This is a training center. And if you come to be prepared to be the kind of person you were created to

be to build a body that is worthy of its head it changes your whole premise of how you walk in and out of these doors. If you're here to say, "Just feed me though and make me happy," I get it. You're probably starting to not like me. I fully acknowledge that, but I can in good conscience back up and not do what I'm going to stand before the Lord and have to give an account for.

Because you say, "Can we just tone it down?" I want to say tone what down? Living a life of purpose and freedom and security and humility? I don't know. All right. Let me close with this story. I started with a story. Let me end with a story. Help everybody come back up. One day Jesus is teaching the crowd and they're hungry. Servants notice what's going on in other people's lives. And they have compassion and empathy. So, He noticed they were hungry and weary and tired. So, He tells the disciples, "Hey, let's give them something to eat." They panic. We ain't got that. We got five loaves, two fish. So, what do you have? Five loaves, two fish. Jesus never asks you what you don't have. He only asks you what you do have and what you're willing to do with it.

They take the five loaves, the two fish. They give it to Jesus. Okay. And He prays for it and He breaks it because things can't be used in the kingdom until they're surrendered and broken. And He gives it back to the disciples. He hasn't multiplied it. He gave it back, five loaves, two fish, right back to the disciples. And they're supposed to go out now and serve the groups, the 5,000 people. And they start with these little crumbs because they're thinking Jesus has lost his mind. Ain't no way, this is feeding everybody. But as they get through the first group, there's more in their hand than when they started. And they get through the second group and there's more in their hand than when they started. And all of a sudden they go from giving croutons to giving full steak dinner kind of loaves of bread and fish to the people. Everyone gets it and it says they all ate and were satisfied. They all ate. They all ate. The crowd, the disciples and Jesus. They're included in all. They all ate and were satisfied. And when it was over, the crowd left and they went home having had a good meal and were satisfied.

But because the disciples also served, they were transformed. And they left completely different. The question is, are you the kind of person that eats and is satisfied? Or are you the kind of person that serves and is transformed? That's the difference in the story. Everyone had the same meal. The servants had a radically different experience. God did something in them as He did something through them and their life was forever changed. This is why sometimes we can come to church for 20 years and never change because all we do is eat and are satisfied. We never move to serving so we don't experience transformation. So, we eat really good meals, but they never change us. They never shape us. They never mold us. They never help us become something beyond who we are. And if we would just simply practice service.

And if you're sitting here, you're like, "I got no interest in any of it." Totally. Here's my thing. Then, you've lost sight of the fact that Jesus has washed your feet. This is the Jesus-focused dynamic. We serve because He served us. We wash feet because He washed our feet. So, if I don't want to wash feet and I don't want to serve, the problem isn't my motivation. The problem is, I need to get Jesus focused again and be reminded that He washed the muck off my feet. And that He served my life and changed me in every way, shape and form. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Your flesh has to

be pierced if you want to walk in the spirit. That's what this verse is teaching us. Take up your cross. Your flesh has to be pierced if you want to walk in the spirit. If you will let go of your life, He will give it back to you. And we are never really more like Jesus than when we're practicing service.

So, here's your practice plan. You can do it. Even don't. There's grace. We've said these are up to you. Wake up every morning this week and ask the Holy Spirit before you even get out of bed to give you opportunities to serve throughout the day and then do them. Every morning, just Holy Spirit, give me opportunities to serve today and then do them. And here's my guess, is you will come to face-to-face reality with how arranged and ordered your life is around you being served. What a gift from God to discover that reality so I can then do something about it. The practice of service is God doing something in me as He does something through me. If we want to be a church and a people that go to the next level of being the Body of Christ, worthy of His head then service must go up in our culture, in our environments, in our lives, and in our homes because our body is a compilation of us as individuals.

We will never be more servant-hooded as a group than we are as individuals. But when we bring our service as individuals into the Body, we can become the kind of body that Jesus had of literally washing the world, saving the world, and being a movement of hope for the city and beyond. So, Holy Spirit, everything in our flesh craves to be served. And yet You, our Lord, our Teacher, came to show us that life is not found in being served, but in serving.

God, I believe my friends today, so many of us are hungry for security and freedom. All we long to know where we came from and where we're going and why we're here. Thank you that the gift and the practice of service helps us step into that reality. Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you are the counselor, the comforter, but you're also the convictor. And you help us when our lives are off track to realign. You help us move from the way of the world to the way of the kingdom. Jesus, may I and my life be overwhelmed because you washed my sinful feet. May I never forget what you did for me. And may that be the Genesis of how I live with you.

Giving my life away with no strings attached to the people around me. Help us become a people who practice service because we want to be a disciple of Jesus. In Your name we pray. Amen.