



WEEKLY SERMON

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Sunday March 19, 2023
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Message: The Family of God - #11

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Text: Matthew 20:20-28

“When I Survey the Wonderous Cross”

In Philippians 2:8 we read, “...He (Christ) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered more than just physical death for us.

On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered BETRAYAL – “Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.” Matthew 26:48

On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered FALSE ACCUSATION – “And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. (13) Then said Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? (14) And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.” Matthew 27:12-14 When Jesus was falsely accused of blasphemy in I Peter 2:23 we read, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:...”

On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered MOCKING – “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, (40) And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (41) Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, (42) He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. (43) He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. (44) The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.”

On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered TESTING – “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46

On the Road to Calvary Jesus suffered DEATH – “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” Matthew 27:50

As you think about Jesus suffering on the Road to Calvary consider meditating upon Isaac Watts' moving hymn, **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**. Here is the story of its' development.

When Isaac Watts was a young 22-year-old man in his hometown Southampton, England, he wrote several hymns for his hometown church. He became a minister at the age of 25. Around this time, his brother Enoch wrote a letter to him urging him to publish his hymns. He wrote, "there is great need of a pen, vigorous and lively as yours, to quicken and revive the dying devotion of the age."

Before Watts' time most hymns were merely recitations of the Psalms and other poetry in the Bible. As still happens in many churches today, many church leaders felt more comfortable just sticking with the old, familiar ways of worship even if it meant that worship became dry and lifeless.

On the other hand, Watts' hymns like Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed, O God Our Help in Ages Past, We're Marching to Zion, and Joy to the World were revolutionary in their day because they were filled with Biblical truths, and they could be sung with the fervor and emotion that should accompany true worship.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross was included in the first book of hymns that Watts published in 1707, with the original title "Crucifixion to the World, by the Cross of Christ". It also included the 4th verse, which we don't see very often today. The book was an instant and resounding success and to this day, many call this hymn one of the finest in the history of the church in England.

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

In **HIS** Amazing Grace all because of the Wonderous Cross,
Pastor David Miklas

"How to SERVE One Another in the Family of God"

A budding artist once painted a picture of the Last Supper. He took it to a famous writer for his opinion. Carefully and understandably the master of words studied the canvas. Then pointing to the central figure, he declared, "You do not love Him." "Why, that is the Lord Jesus Christ," exclaimed the artist. "I know," insisted the writer, "but you do not love Him. If you loved Him more, you would paint Him better."

Few of us are budding artists in this sense, but the Bible teaches that we are all to be servants, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and of one another. With this in mind, we can easily reword the writer's statement to read, "If you loved Him more, you would serve Him better." And the next step, particularly in view of our subject, is to reword the statement yet again: "If we loved one another more, we would serve one another better."

This was the Apostle Paul's admonition to us in Galatians 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Would you again take note of that last phrase, "...but by love serve one another." The word "serve" in the Greek language is "doulos." This word relates to a "bond-slave," a person who gave himself up completely to another's will. Paul is saying out of love we are to give ourselves over to serving the needs of others.

With this in mind, let us return to the last evening our Lord spent with His disciples in the Upper Room found in John 13:4-17 where we read,

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. (5) 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. (6) Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. (8) Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. (9) Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. (10) Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. (11) For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. (12) 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? (13) Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. (14) If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. (17) If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Christ had already demonstrated His love toward His disciples over the last three years. However, they did not really comprehend that love. If the disciples had understood His love, they would not have argued with one another, "As to which of them was considered to be the greatest."

Jesus knew their **weakness**.

Jesus knew their **selfish motive**.

Jesus knew their **lack of love for one another**.

Now He was about to demonstrate His love in a way that would demonstrate "THE MASTER IS NOT THE GREATEST BUT RATHER THE SERVANT IS THE GREATEST." Jesus, who "took upon himself the form of a servant," (Philippians 2:7) was about to demonstrate the servant spirit. Again notice verse 5, "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."

This was no minor incident. It was the job of a servant, in an eastern household, to welcome guests in this way. Since they walked through the dusty streets in footwear that would hardly compare with our modern shoes, their feet were usually dirty. Remember the streets were not only used by people but by animals of all sorts and sizes. Consequently, guests who entered a home had their feet washed by one of the household servants.

Since this was a private meal in a borrowed facility, there was no household servant. No doubt, Christ had waited for one of the disciples to volunteer to carry out this role.

**The basin of water was there.
The towel to wipe their feet was there.**

But there was one major problem, the absence of a servant. Herein became Christ's opportunity, **TO BECOME THAT SERVANT.**

Again notice verse 15, "**For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**" Christ had set before the disciples an **EXAMPLE OF HOW TO LOVE AS CHRIST LOVED.**

Against this backdrop, a few moments later Christ said in verses 34-35, "**A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (35) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**"

This was a shocking experience for these disciples.

It threatened their **PRIDEFUL** arguments.
It violated their **CULTURAL** tradition.
It hit at the very heart of their **SELF-CENTERED** attitudes.
It struck at their desire to **DOMINATE** and **CONTROL** one another.

Like the sons of Zebedee, James and John were ready to "**FIGHT FOR A THRONE BUT NOT FOR A TOWEL**". Is not this so true in the world in which we live? We are willing to fight for the **THRONE** in this dog-eat-dog world as we climb to the top:

**Whether it is in the church,
Whether it is on the job, or
Whether it is in a social climate.**

But what about the **TOWEL**?

Who is going to pick up the **TOWEL**?
Who is willing to become the **SERVANT**?

When Jesus took that **TOWEL** and the **BASIN of WATER** and washed and dried the disciples' feet, He was providing a graphic illustration of a **SERVANT'S SPIRIT**.

Check it out. Some 900 times the word **SERVANT** is used in the Bible. It was even said of the Lord in Mark 10:45, "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.**" No mumbo jumbo. Just a straight-from-the-shoulder admission, **Jesus came to serve and to give.**

One of the great paradox's of the Bible is, "**IT'S NOT THE MASTER WHO IS THE GREATEST, BUT THE SERVANT WHO IS THE GREATEST.**"

In Matthew 20:26-27 we read, "**But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your SERVANT.**"

In Matthew 23:10-12 we read, "**Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.**"

(11) But he that is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT. (12) And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

The Bible teaches us,

In James 4:6, 10, "...Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the PROUD, but giveth grace unto the humble." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

In I Peter 5:5-6, "...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

The Bible teaches us,

Those whom we EXALT, the Lord HUMBLER. And those whom we HUMBLE, the Lord EXALTS.

Those whom we think are NOTHING; the Lord thinks they are SOMETHING.

Those who think they are SOMETHING, the Lord thinks they are NOTHING.

The difference between being PROUD and HUMBLE is found in the words of John the Baptist in John 3:30. Speaking of Jesus he said, "He (Jesus) must INCREASE, but I must decrease." Upon reading this verse this statement was made, "The closer I get to God, the more He fills my vision, the greater he seems to me, the less I seem to be."

It makes sense, then to say that God desires the same for us. After bringing us into His family through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, God sets His sights on building into us the same quality that made Jesus distinct from all others in His day. He is engaged in building into us the same serving and giving qualities that characterized His Son.

Nothing is more refreshing than a servant's heart and a giving spirit, especially when we see them displayed in a person many would tag a celebrity. A number of years ago, Colonel James Irwin, a former astronaut who was part of the crew that had made the successful lunar landing and walk on the moon, gave a speech.

"He spoke of the thrill connected with leaving this planet and seeing it shrink in size. He mentioned watching the earth rise one day ... and thinking how privileged he was to be a member of that unique crew. And then he began to realize en route back home that many would consider him a "superstar" for sure an international celebrity.

Humbled by the awesome goodness of God, he said, "As I was returning to earth, I realized that I was a SERVANT not a celebrity. So I am here as God's SERVANT on planet earth to share what I have experienced that others MIGHT KNOW THE GLORY OF GOD."

That attitude is refreshing, God allowed this man to break loose from the small cage we call "earth," during which time He revealed to him a basic motto all of us would do well to learn: "a servant, not a celebrity." So often in our world, we have it backwards.

We think greatness deserves to be served. Rather, God says that greatness is found in the one who DOES THE SERVING.

We think greatness comes from owning much, but God thinks that greatness is found in the one who gives the most.

We think greatness comes from giving orders, but God thinks that greatness is found in the one who obeys the orders.

Our Lord **took a towel, and a wash basin and washed** twelve pairs of dirty, filthy, and possibly manure-encrusted feet. In so doing, He gave us an example of a **SERVANT ATTITUDE**. In the everyday grind of life, our Lord showed us how "to really love as Christ loved." Until we baptize ourselves in service to others, we will never really understand what it means to love as Christ loved. Nor will we understand what greatness is all about.

Often I have heard it said, "I am too big to do the small jobs." Maybe you are. But then I say, you

may also be too big for God to use you.

I have heard others say, "I **don't mind being a servant of God, but I'm not interested in serving people.**"

One day a lady came to her pastor and said, "Preacher, I just want to be used of God." Well, needless to say, the pastor, as any pastor would, rejoiced in her offer. For six months she was very faithful, and then she just quit. Shortly thereafter, she came to the pastor with tears streaming down her cheeks. She said, "Preacher, I just want you to know, I'm sick of being used." The pastor responded and said, "Ma'am, aren't you the same lady who, just a few months ago, wanted to be used of God?" She said, "Yes. But I wanted God to use me, not all these people."

Leonard Bernstein, the famous orchestra conductor was asked, "What is the most difficult instrument to play?" He responded with a quick wit, "SECOND fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find one who plays SECOND violin with as much enthusiasm or SECOND French horn or SECOND flute, now that's the problem. Yet, if no one plays second, we have no harmony."

If you are going to look for great men, then first find those who stand in the shadows to serve. Great men and women are servants first. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

For example, see Joshua as he leads the nation of Israel around the city of Jericho, and they watched as those city walls fell. For seven years, see him as he leads the children of Israel in conquering the promise land from the hands of the seven Canaanite nations. **May I remind you that long before Joshua was the leader of Israel, he was a servant to Moses.**

For example, see the Apostle Paul, that great missionary statesman, as he carried the Gospel throughout the Roman world to establish churches. Then, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote fourteen of the New Testament books. But, before he was the great Apostle Paul, **may I remind you that he was first a servant to Barnabas. It was Barnabas and Paul before it was Paul and Barnabas.**

May I encourage you to seek a job as a servant? If you find yourself **too GOOD or too BIG** to take on the small insignificant jobs that seem to be beneath you, you not only have a spirit of **PRIDE**, but you're not worthy to have the bigger positions. Check your Bible.

When Jude wrote his Epistle, He called himself a **SERVANT**.

When Paul wrote the book of Romans, He called himself a **SERVANT**.

When Peter wrote II Peter, He called himself a **SERVANT**.

When James wrote his Epistle of James, He called himself a **SERVANT**.

Jude, Paul, Peter and James were not the only people in the Bible called servants. Looking up this phrase in the Bible, "**MY SERVANT**," you will discover there were **nine** people whom God called "**MY SERVANT**."

God called Job "My Servant" in Job 1:8.

God called Caleb "My Servant" in Numbers 14:24.

God called Moses "My Servant" in Joshua 1:9.

God called David "My Servant" in II Samuel 7:5.

God called Isaiah "My Servant" in Isaiah 20:3.

God called Jacob "My Servant" in Isaiah 41:8.

God called Nebuchadnezzar "My Servant" in Jeremiah 25:9.

God called Zerubbabel "My Servant" in Haggai 2:23.

God called Jesus "My Servant" in Matthew 12:18.

God even called Lord Jesus Christ – God - "**MY SERVANT**." Remember "... he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Do not wait for another to do it.

If you find a piece of trash on the floor; seek to pick it up.

If you find a dirty spot, seek to clean it.

If you find a hungry stomach, try to feed it.
If you find a cold body, seek to cloth it.
If you find a lonely soul, give it fellowship.
If you find someone away from God; seek to win them back.
If you find someone who is discouraged, seek to encourage them.

Would you please let this sink into your thinking? The great proof of being a servant is **ANONYMITY**. Listen to these words:

You know Lord, how I serve You
With great emotional fervor in the limelight.
But how would I react,
I wonder, if you pointed to a basin of water
And asked me to wash the callused feet
Of a bent and wrinkled old saint of God
Day after Day, Month after Month
In a room where NOBODY SAW
AND NOBODY KNEW?

Let these last words sink in, "**NOBODY SAW AND NOBODY KNEW.**" The art of being a servant is **ANONYMITY**.

God cannot trust a man with a **SCEPTER** unless He can trust him with a **BROOM**.
God cannot trust a man with a **ROYAL ROBE** unless He can trust Him with an overcoat.
God will not trust one with a **CROWN** who will not take off his **HAT** and bow before Him.

God is looking for SERVANTS. God blesses SERVANTS. Again in Matthew 23:11 we read, "**But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.**"

Let's pause and do a little checking up on our lives. Ask yourself, "**To what extent am I serving others in love for the cause of Christ?**" Let us ask this question several different ways.

First: To what extent are others in the Family of God serving me without my serving them? Some Christians receive and receive, but never give anything in return. Do not misunderstand. I am not speaking exclusively about money. Certainly that is a factor, but there are some who say, "**I will give anything! Just don't ask for my money!**" However, there are many other factors involved in serving. There are Christians:

Who have received of the Gospel freely, but never share it with anyone else.
Who learn the Word of God regularly, but never teach it to others.
Who let other Christians minister to their own children, but never minister to the children of other Christians.
Who receive compliments, but never compliment others.
Who wait for people to reach out to them in time of need, but never reach out to others in their time of need.
Who receive gifts of love from others, but never share gifts of love in return.
Who receive notes of appreciation, but never write a note themselves.

Oh, may you realize the greatest job in the world is serving others. For again our Lord said in Matthew 23:11 "**But he that is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT.**"

Second: To what extent do others in my immediate family serve me without my serving in return?

There are husbands and wives who receive and receive from their spouses, but give very little in return. In fact, they very seldom say, "Thank you.**"**
There are children who take their parents for granted, receiving, but never giving.
There are parents who take their children for granted, never rewarding them for their responsiveness and cooperation.

The point of this exchange is: sometimes we serve another, not in love, but out of duty and as a sense of responsibility and obligation. When that happens, “**servicing**” becomes a negative experience rather than a positive one as God intended. Remember our text verse Galatians 5:13, “**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**”

God has given my wife and I over forty-three years of privileged ministry. For forty of these years, I have been recognized as a Senior or Assistant Pastor. I thank my God as Paul did in I Timothy 1:12, “**who enabled me, putting me into the ministry.**” I have never gotten used to it. To me it is the greatest position in the world. Yet, on the other hand, it is the most humbling position in the world to be an under shepherd of the Lord Jesus Christ. I desire no credit for any of it, as all glory goes to our God.

My greatest desire is to see God’s people so moved by the Holy Spirit, to be built up in the Faith, and growing in grace, so that the next generation of children following will also set their **HOPE IN GOD**. Of all the titles afforded me, I just choose to be a **servant** for the sake of the gospel.

In the coming days as you wait for His imminent return, may you be challenged to rise above the usual, to rise above the normal, to rise above the average, and to reach out and be a **SERVANT**.

Do not be just a husband or dad, be a servant husband and dad.

Do not be just a wife and mother, be a servant wife and mother.

Do not be just a Sunday School teacher, be a servant Sunday School teacher.

Do not be just a choir member, be a servant choir member.

Do not be just a children’s worker, be a servant to those children.

Do not be just a youth ministry worker, be a servant to youth who need your teaching and example.

Do not be just a worker in the ministry doing what is required, be a servant worker giving yourself for others.

Do not be just a _____ but humble yourself as you rise above the ordinary to do the greatest work there is by being a SERVANT to others.

Shortly after World War II came to a close, Europe began picking up the pieces. Much of the Old Country had been ravaged by war and was in ruins. Perhaps the saddest sight of all was of little orphaned children starving in the streets of those war-torn cities.

Early one chilly morning an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks in London. As he turned the corner in his jeep, he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared in silence watching every move. The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out, and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing.

The soldier’s heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside him. “**Son would you like some of those doughnuts?**” The boy was startled by his question, “**Oh, yeah, I would.**” The American stepped inside and bought a dozen, put them in a bag, and walked back to where the lad was standing. He smiled, held out the bag, and said simply, “**Here you are.**” As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat, he looked back and heard the child ask quietly, “**Mister, are you God?**”

Deep down inside most Christians I know, is a deep-seated desire to release, instead of keep. There is a desire to **GIVE** instead of **GRAB**. It's worth whatever it takes to reach out for the “**THE BASIN OF WATER AND THE TOWEL.**” That's when we begin to love as Christ

loved. The challenge for you is to become a giver and watch God open the hearts of others to Himself. We are never more God-like than when we give in service.

One day your life's work on earth will be completed, and you will stand before God. If you have reached for the **"THE BASIN OF WATER AND THE TOWEL"** during your lifetime, you will hear his words echo across heaven, **"WELL DONE THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT."**

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon, **"How to Serve One Another in the Family of God,"** then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, **"...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."**

Romans 10:13, **"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: **"I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation."**

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know? Please send an e-mail to, pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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