

1. Jesus came to serve - not be served

1. in the first reading (Matthew 12) Jesus is getting some unwanted attention from some angry, powerful people. v14. *So He leaves that location*, seeking to perform His healing miracles in obscurity, rather than in the spotlight for the time being.
He didn't come to be a celebrity, or some famous healing personality - and He had a divine schedule that He was working on. ("My hour has not yet come) so because of that He leaves the spotlight & quietly continues to heal people.
Rather than let this be surprising to us, Matthew reminds us that this is according to plan
"This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope." (Matthew 12:17-21, ESV)
2. So much good stuff in that passage -
 1. The Father's love for and pleasure with the Son
 1. My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
 2. The Son's mission to the Gentiles
 1. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles...in his name the Gentiles will hope.
 3. The Son's lack of shouting and posturing
 1. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
 4. The Son's tenderness with the weak and weary
 1. ; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench
 5. The Son's inevitable triumph
 1. until he brings justice to victory;
3. But rather than focus on any of those 5 wonderful truths about Jesus; lets look instead at the title that He is called in the OT "My Servant"
The plan of God was to send a Messiah into the world that would come as a Servant.
Yes, the OT promises that He would come as a King, but it also tells us that He would be coming as a servant.
A servant king : can you *imagine* such a thing? It almost seems contradictory. Because nearly every example of a ruler up until that point (local, national, kingdom, empire) has been a powerful man who uses others to gain more power. Someone who takes from others to further consolidate his rule.
imagine a servant who rules, and a ruler who serves!
4. our second reading, (matthew 20:25) reminds us that every gentile ruler in authority that the disciples had ever known was said to "lord it over them" - I'm better than you, I'm more valuable than you, I am above you and don't you forget it.
But Jesus tells them that in His kingdom things are going to be different.
It *shall not* be so among you! v26
A radical re-prioritising needs to take place.
The true leader is the one who is willing to be the servant or the slave: working for the betterment of others.
Its been said that one way to measure a leader is to see how many people he or she has serving them; but the better way is to see how many people he or she is serving.
5. Some would-be leaders are instantly disqualified because they think that is beneath them to serve others, or to do menial tasks.
"these hands are for leading movements and nations - they are unfit to push a broom or change a tire or change a nappy"
in Rich Chaffin's book "Faithful Service" he tells about His years working at a large church as the janitor. As the church rose in prominence and influence many eager men would schedule appointments so that they could learn what it is like to be "in the ministry" A time would be set up and they would be introduced to Rich in his janitor's closet and Rich would

ask them if they really were interested in serving the Lord, and learning what the ministry is all about.

He would then give them a broom, a shovel and a barrel, and bring them to a part of the facility where leaves and rubbish accumulated up against the wall. "Welcome to the ministry. Use this broom and shovel to clean up the gutter. When you are done, come and find me and i'll give you some more ministry."

It was about a 60 minute job and halfway through Rich would come and check on them: "Each time I would find a broom, a shovel and a trash barrel but the minister was nowhere to be found!"

Aren't you glad that Jesus wasn't too precious about His hands? That He didn't think that there was anything that His royal hands couldn't do in service to His people?

Jesus was willing to take His hands and put them to work in the service of others, John 13 tells us of how He used His hands to wash the feet of the disciples. Taking the menial job of rinsing them off, going between the toes, washing off the mud and dust and sweat and animal faeces that had accumulated on them throughout their day of walking around a crowded dirty Jerusalem? one by one, 12 sets of feet, 24 heels, 240 toes.

"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." (John 13:12-15, ESV)

He cleans them, but then recruits them - this is the standard / model for leadership from now on. Follow My example.

But then He goes on to do something that goes far beyond an example for them - He doesn't do something that they should go and do the same thing, He goes and does something that they could never do -(13:36) - He dies in their place.

Aren't you glad that Jesus wasn't too precious about His hands? That He didn't think that there was anything that His royal hands couldn't do in service to His people?

He gave His hands and feet, His back, His head, His side.

He gave His very self on the cross.

2. He calls us to follow Him in others focused service

1. once again *"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." (John 13:12-15, ESV)*

"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:1-4, ESV)

2.

3. As we serve others we grow more and more like Him

I became a christian during my later teenage years and was attending a youth group on Wednesday nights at CC Fallbrook. Since the leader was old (like at least in his 30s!) he wisely sought to involve teenagers in leadership and decision making to make sure that the ministry was reaching the people it was intended to reach.

One day after a sermon he read a list of names off of a list and he asked us to come into his office - i was nervous at first, because usually when i was invited to come into someone's office it meant that I was in trouble, but the other names on the list made me feel safe, because it was all the good kids, Josh, Danny, Justin, Rachel.

So we came in and he told us that he wanted to form us into a youth leaders committee to help him run the youth group, and serve God's people. He laid out some of his plans and goals and hopes

for the future and how we could help. He asked us to join him in prayer, and to get to church early and be there to pray with people and to help him know the needs of his congregation. As everyone else in the room was nodding; I was inwardly having a crisis. I didn't sign up for this, I don't want to do it; and it wasn't because I was lazy, I was just terrified of the responsibility. I felt like I wasn't responsible enough to shoulder this duty yet I wasn't brave enough to tell him I didn't want to do it. I honestly thought about just leaving and never coming back. Ever since I became a christian church was a place where I attended and listened, I ate their pizza, and sang along to their music, and now that arrangement was being challenged. I was asked to start giving back. To start feeling a bit of responsibility when I walked in the door.

When I came into the church building it meant that I needed to stop thinking that "they should fix that" or "someone should go talk to that first time visitor" I am somebody, I am they!

First time being asked to pray with people after service; I was terrified, would I need to have some magical counsel or wisdom?
As far as I knew, nothing supernatural took place, but as I began to change my outlook. Rather than feel like I was losing something by being asked to help, I was gaining something.

As chairs were set out, and people sat on them later on, I felt I had something to do with it. As pizzas were ordered, as messes were cleaned up, I knew that I was contributing something to the work of the kingdom of God.

But more than feeling useful; I know that this was a vital process of my discipleship. I was becoming more like Jesus. As I served people, sometimes behind the scenes, sometimes in front, I was joining in what Jesus was doing. I was loving His people, I was helping His people. I was taking Jesus' yoke upon me and learning of Him. I was a co-labourer. I cared about the things He cared about. And it has grounded me for decades to come.

No matter what I end up doing for the rest of my life, I know that I will always have a passion and concern for the people of God, partly because as a teenager I was "shouldered with the burden" of showing up early and praying for and with people, of being "tasked" with looking after the youth group,

What did I "learn of Jesus"
I learned that He cared for people
I learned that He loved people
I learned that He was patient with people

speaking with other volunteers in our own church, asking them the same question I heard many things: I learned how He provides in surprising ways - I learned that He answers prayers - I learned that He cares for people

He asks us to serve Him, and as we do that, we have opportunities to be taught by Him learn of Him.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28–30, ESV)

John 4: Give me a drink - then He gives her a drink of living water
"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.' They said to him, 'Where will you have us prepare it?'" He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover." (Luke 22:7–13, ESV)