

Jesus the Servant and Leader

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon emphasizes Jesus as the ultimate servant and leader, calling believers to embody servanthood in their lives.

Duration: 44:10

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 20:26-28, John 13:5, Acts 3:6, Ephesians 1:4

Topics: "Servant Leadership", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

This sermon delves into Isaiah chapter 42, highlighting the portrayal of Jesus as the servant of the Lord, emphasizing his gentle and compassionate nature. It explores the significance of beholding Jesus as the ultimate example of servanthood and allowing Him to serve us first before we serve others. The practical application includes focusing on Jesus, receiving His ministry, and embracing His service before extending that same love and service to others.

Transcript

The text I want to speak to you from here this afternoon is Isaiah chapter 42, so open your Bibles there, please. Now, I'm going to imagine that this text is familiar to many of you because it comes from, of course, Isaiah, which is sometimes called the fifth gospel because it speaks so plainly and so powerfully to us about Jesus. But it's also probably familiar to it because it's specifically quoted in the New Testament in reference to the ministry of Jesus.

So let's take a look at it together here, Isaiah chapter 42, starting now at verse 1. Behold, my servant whom I uphold, my elect one in whom my soul delights. I've put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

He will not cry out nor raise his voice nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench. He will bring forth justice for truth.

He will not fail nor be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands shall wait for his law. I love how this passage begins right there in verse 1, the first few words. The prophet actually speaking on behalf of the Lord, so we could say that the Lord God himself calls out, not just to Israel, but to everybody, behold my servant.

The Lord calls out to all people, the people of Israel and to the people of the coastlands, and he tells them to behold, to do what? That is to study, to put your focus, to put your gaze upon, to put it upon his servant. Now God has many servants, and he's had many servants throughout the generations. If you go all the way back to the early part of the Old Testament, I should say, you'll find this man described as a servant of God, and another person, and another person described in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as servants of God.

But yet we can understand that this is speaking very plainly and very powerfully to us about Jesus. We know that from the context. The context itself demonstrates that it's a clear reference to Jesus, but not only that, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42, verses 1 through 5, and plainly says that it's a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus.

You can find that in Matthew chapter 12, if you want to look it up at another time. So in this, the Lord commands all people to put their focus on his servant upon Jesus. Now you know that Jesus described himself as a servant in many passages, right? There's the famous passage in Matthew 20, and then again in Matthew 23, and then on in a couple places in Mark and Luke repeatedly, and over and over again, Jesus presents himself to us, his people, as a servant.

I love how Peter, in his sermon, in Acts chapter 3, when he's preaching on the Temple Mount, when the man was healed on the Temple Mount, the man at the beautiful gate, he describes Jesus with a very special phrase. He talks about his servant, Jesus. And you know who the his there? It's the Lord God.

But Peter wanted to highlight to the people, here he is, the servant of God. Matter of fact, in Acts chapter 4, when the people of God prayed, following the miraculous release from custody of Peter and John, they prayed again to the Lord, and they spoke of, speaking to God, your holy servant, Jesus. But I want you to understand this.

Jesus isn't just a servant, he's the servant. And everyone should do exactly what this text says. They should behold, they should put before their mind's eye, this amazing servant, Jesus himself.

Now, what should we do when we behold Jesus, the Lord's servant? Well, I mean, I don't mean to sound pedantic about this, but the first thing you should just do is notice that he's a servant. There he is, right there. As Jesus said in Matthew chapter 20, starting at verse 26, Whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant.

And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. There's a lot instructive there for us, right? I mean, it's most instructive for just what it tells us about the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus is talking primarily about himself here. But of course, we take this, we understand that Jesus speaks to us as well, because he says, whoever desires, whoever desires among you, if you want to be great, if you want to be a spiritual leader, this is a wonderful beginning point. Whoever desires, by the way, I like how he says, whoever desires, doesn't that mean that being a servant's a choice? You may be waiting for the day when God forces you to be a servant, or to have a servant-type attitude in whatever role he's given you, to serve him.

No, I don't think so. Whosoever desires, and then Jesus said, to be great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.

Those two words, servant and slave, show just how deep this ministry of being a servant's supposed to go. And then when Jesus set the bar so high, by saying that he did not come to be served, but to serve, doesn't that show the essential heart of a servant? That's what it's all about. A servant isn't there to be served, a servant is there to serve others.

And then Jesus showed something that was uniquely his, and his alone. I mean, there's aspects of this that we can find an example for us to follow, but there's aspects of this that are unique to Jesus alone, where he says that he gave his life a ransom for many. That shows how far Jesus went in serving us.

But this is what I want you to grab a hold of. Jesus, the servant, is far more, and just for the sake of emphasis, I'll say it again, far more than an example to us of servanthood. Now, I know we can regard him that way, and that's true.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't regard Jesus as an example of servanthood. No, we should, but please understand, he's far more than an example of servanthood to us. He is our servant.

He serves us. Not only in what he did in the past, right? But have you ever thought that Jesus continually serves you every day? He serves you now, through his constant love, through his care, through his guidance. How about this? What does the Hebrews tell us that Jesus ever lives to do? He ever lives to make intercession for the saints.

Can I cheer your heart right now? Jesus prayed for you today. He served you by praying for you. Maybe nobody else prays for you.

Maybe you're a friendless, unfortunate person. Nobody else prays for you. Jesus prays for you.

He ever lives to make intercession for the saints. He serves his people more effectively than ever since he's ascended to heaven. It's not like this idea of being a servant was sort of a robe, or maybe we should say in the context of Washington, an apron, right? That Jesus put on when he departed heaven and came down to earth.

And then as soon as he was done with his earthly work and ascended to heaven, he takes off that apron and says, Oh, I'm done with that servant business. No, the risen, glorified, ascended Jesus, he's still serving his people. He's still serving you.

Now I just want to walk through this text from Isaiah 42 just a little bit. We're not going to go into all the depth that we could, but just a little bit piece by piece. And I want to sort of interplay off of those two ideas.

The one idea being Jesus is an example to us of our service. I mean, look, I hope that you're here because there is some way in which you are intentionally serving God, and you'd like to do that better. Well, good, that's good.

And I think that looking to Jesus and his example is helpful. But I don't want to lose the point that the much greater thing in here, greater than Jesus being our example, is Jesus himself being our servant. I mean, go back to right there at the very beginning.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold. Now that was certainly true for Jesus, but it's also true in the way that the Lord deals with all of his servants. God promises to uphold his servants.

I just imagine, and I hope I'm not being fanciful in my imagination when I think about this, but I just imagine Jesus quoting this promise back to the Father in a time of distress during his ministry. Can't you just imagine that? Jesus, and again, I don't want to be irreverent by pretending something was there that wasn't, and so I'm just supposing that perhaps this was the case. But would it not have been fitting for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to go before his Father and say, Father, you promised in Isaiah 42.1 that you would uphold your servant, so please uphold me now.

Please fulfill your promise. Now that's true that that was a promise made to Jesus, but is this not a promise that God makes to all of his servants? I think about it this way. If you are somebody's slave, you have obligations to your master, right? Of course you do.

But is it not true that the master has some obligations to the slave? The master's supposed to take care of them. The master's supposed to take care of their basic needs. Uh-oh, certainly not in any fancy or extravagant way, but it's just supposed to take basic care of them.

There are obligations from the master to the servant, and I don't think it's irreverent for us to come to God in a distressing time when we need to be upheld by him and say, Lord, would you please uphold your servant? Here I am, God. Would you please do it? I can imagine the Son of God himself pleading on such ground, and I think that we can as well. Notice the next phrase there in the Isaiah passage.

He calls him, my elect one in whom my soul delights. I have no interest right now into getting into a big idea, digression upon election, but would we not easily say and happily say that Jesus himself is the ultimate elect one? If there's anybody elect, from the beginning of the foundation of the world until now, it's Jesus himself. And you could say this, that our election is most importantly part of being chosen in Jesus.

As Paul wrote later on in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4, he says he chose us in him before the foundation of the world. Look, if I'm elect anywhere, I'm not elect in David Guzik, but I am elect in Jesus Christ. It's beautiful to realize he is the elect one.

I find my election fulfilled in him. But this is the phrase I like there. Look at it again in the Isaiah 42 text.

My elect one in whom my soul delights. I love those combinations of words there because it reminds me that the election of God, the choosing of God, is not a cold, calculating, technical thing. It's deeply connected with his love and approval.

When God chooses someone, his soul delights in that one. If you're chosen in Jesus before the foundation of the world, then God says, my soul delights in you. Isn't that refreshing for you here this afternoon? To think about that, that God's soul delights in you.

Some of you come, especially you're very dedicated servants of the Lord, but it hangs over you like a black cloud how little you serve him, and from what mixed motives you serve him, and how imperfectly you serve him. And it's before you all the time. And you're tending to think that God's soul is barely tolerating you.

That God's soul has you on probation. Can I tell you the good news? Is that his soul delights in you. When God looks down from heaven upon you, there's a smile upon his face.

It's not because you're so wonderful. It's because he's so wonderful. And you elect in Christ, it's the elect one in whom my soul delights.

And understanding this helps us to receive God's favor. Instead of trying to give God a reason to delight his soul in us. Many of us spend much of our life, and listen, those of you who are serving God, some of you are the worst.

The worst. You spend your whole life trying to give God a reason to love you. A reason to delight in you.

Instead of realizing this is his free gift given to us in Jesus, received by faith, because he's chosen, he's elected to delight his soul in us. We're elect in him. And look at the next phrase.

It's equally glorious. I put my soul upon him. Excuse me, my soul.

My spirit upon him. Now, Jesus was filled with the spirit. And he did his ministry in the power and the flow of the Holy Spirit.

Isn't that a wonderful idea? Isn't that wonderful to think that when Jesus walked this earth, he was not one bit less God than he was when he dwelt in the ivory palaces of heaven before his incarnation. Not one bit less God as he walked this earth. Because here's sort of a theological principle.

If you're taking notes, you might want to take notes on this one, right? If you're God, you can't stop being God. If you could stop being God, you were never God to begin with, okay? So Jesus couldn't forfeit any of his deity, but he could voluntarily let loose of the privileges and the prerogatives of it. And I know I'll use a silly illustration, but think of all the prerogatives, all the privileges of Jesus's deity.

There they are, like in a big water tank up on a hill. And Jesus says, oh no, all of that belongs to me. It's all there.

It's not diminished in the slightest sense. But I'm not going to draw from any of those privileges or prerogatives that I have in my own deity. I will choose instead to rely on, if you want to say, the water tank of the Holy Spirit.

I will receive that in and of myself. It seems that Jesus drew on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit instead of his own divine resources in ministry. He lived his life as a sinless, spirit-filled man.

To the great effect, if you notice the next phrase there in Isaiah, it says he'll bring forth justice to Gentiles. The ministry of the servant, the Messiah, it would never be restricted just to the Jewish people. He would also have a ministry to the Gentiles, bringing justice and righteousness to them.

Now we all know that it started as a ministry to the lost sheep of Israel. Yet Jesus did his ministry with the full knowledge that it would also extend to the Gentiles. Remember the words that he said, or should I say the words that he heard at the very beginning of his ministry? Remember John the Baptist? I think about this often.

I don't know why I think about this so often in regard to Jesus' ministry. There he is walking out to the Jordan. John the Baptist is doing this amazing work.

You call it a revival work there. So many hearts and lives are being turned in repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. And then Jesus comes to see that work and to visit his cousin John out doing that work at Jordan.

And what does John the Baptist say as soon as he lays eyes on Jesus coming to him? He says, behold. Sounds like he'd been reading Isaiah, right? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of only Israel. Is that what John said? No, no.

First of all, I'm just amazed that he said the Lamb of God who takes away the sins. Friends, you know I'm not trying to patronize you and act like you don't know the Scriptures because I know that you do. But you know how lambs took away sin.

Lambs didn't take away sins by living. Lambs took away sins by dying, by being slaughtered. It's as if John the Baptist pointed at Jesus across the Judean wilderness and he said, you're going to die.

You're going to be sacrificed, slaughtered. And what is it? It was not just for the sins of Israel, but behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Not the Jewish people only.

And again, we freely admit that Jesus had his focus on the lost sheep of Israel, but it was always with the intention that it would go out to the uttermost parts of the earth. And there's many such indications in the Gospels that the ultimate plan was to bring forth justice to the Gentiles. By the way, if you have time, I'll just throw this out.

If you want to do a wonderful little research, a little study, a little time of communion, God's word for yourself, just spend some time taking a look at Jesus' missionary trip. Jesus was into short-term missions. I don't know if you know that.

But he went and ministered out of Israel to a widow from Tyre and Sidon. And do a little research on that. Jesus' short-term mission trip and what that shows you about his heart to reach the world.

Now, in any regard, let's take a look at the next phrase here. It says, he will not cry out nor raise his voice. Now, before it's been telling us about the things that the servant would accomplish, right? What did we read? We read that his soul would, the soul of God in heaven would delight himself in it.

He would have the spirit of God. He'd be upheld by God. He'd bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

But now we're told a little bit more about the character of this great servant. And here's the line. He will not cry out nor raise his voice.

And please, this does not mean that Jesus never spoke loudly. But it refers to his gentle, lowly heart and actions. Jesus did not make his way by shouting and by loud, overwhelming talk.

He made his way because the spirit of God was upon him. I like what one Old Testament commentator says about a text here from Isaiah, a guy named Matthew. He says that the three verbs here probably are commutative.

They all add together. They stress his quiet, unaggressive demeanor. First, it's shout or shriek.

Then it's out to cry out. That is, raise his voice. And then finally, raise his voice means to make his voice here.

He says the idea is there he's not out to startle. He's not out to dominate or shout others down. And he's not out there to advertise himself.

Let's face it. The world's way of leadership, the world's way of advancement is all about self-promotion and all about doing things mainly for the purpose of enhancing our own prestige. That is not the way of Jesus at all.

I think right now, in the 21st century, we have an enormous challenge as Christians and as Christian leaders. We need to have a refreshed and a renewed and a modern understanding of this principle, of the nature of the servant, that he will not cry out nor raise his voice, that he won't be proud and self-promoting. We need to know how that connects with 20th century technology.

Because now, with modern social media, there are all the more tools available just by promotion on websites and through Twitter feeds and through Facebook and blogs and all other kinds of social media combined. The opportunities for self-promotion and self-advancement and the, hey, look at me, they're more out there than ever. Now this is what I think is so difficult for Christians in this, is to my understanding, and I don't think for a moment that I have this all figured out, it's all a little new to me to sort of make my way through, but to my understanding, there's a wonderfully legitimate use for those kind of things.

There's a legitimate use for them to exalt Jesus and to put a servant in the place of prominence so that the message can have proper prominence. I see some guys that I think do it very well. Can I say that I see some guys who seem to do it very, very bad? That all it seems to shout is exactly the opposite of what the servant of Isaiah 42 would shout.

What they seem to shout is, look at me, look at me, look at me. Now that wasn't the heart of Jesus at all. And I don't know, maybe some of you guys have thought more clearly or more deeply about this than I have, but I think it's something that the church, the Christian community, especially Christian leaders are gonna have to grapple with.

How do we use this wonderful technology and all the opportunities it provides, but use it in a way that exalts Jesus and points men towards him instead of doing the opposite? You see, I'm not talking about a false view of modesty. A false view of modesty says that you have a low opinion of yourself. And I think a true understanding of modesty is simply that you think about God and you think about others before you think of yourself.

Modesty, in an appropriate sense, is full of trust in God, that God can raise you up and will raise you up at the right time and in the right place. I like the old King James translation of Psalm 75, verses six and seven. Some of you are gonna remember this one in the old King James translation.

Are you ready for this? For promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south, but God is the judge. He putteth down one and setteth up another. And there's a sense somewhere early in my Christian life that got drilled in my head that the promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south, but God is the judge.

There needs to be a reckoning of those timeless biblical principles with this new social media and opportunity, frankly, that we have. Again, as I could say, I would say that some guys do it well, some guys don't. If you think for a moment, and here I'm gonna draw a little bit on something precious from Alan Redpath.

He says, just think for a moment about the modesty of God. Is not God always at work? Doesn't God do his work all the time, and yet he does it in such a way, he guides the sun, he moves the stars, he runs the mechanics of the universe, he controls everything in this world, and he refreshes and blesses the earth constantly, but God works so quietly that many people are led to believe that there is no God at all. That's the remarkable modesty of God.

And so we need to be careful that we show the same modesty and somehow in this new era of technology that we figure out how to do it. Now I want you to notice the next phrase in the Isaiah passage, because to me, this one is of special tenderness to us. He says, a bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench.

Now this is another reference to the gentle character of Jesus, that he's full of empathy and compassion. You know, a reed is a fairly fragile plant, and if a reed is bruised, a reed is virtually worthless. What do you do with a reed that's bruised? You throw it away and you go to the place where there's a thousand other reeds growing, right? But the servant will take that bruised reed, bruised, bruised reed.

You know, whenever I do something like that, I am so grateful that I didn't say something obscene, you know, and I go back through my mind, yes, okay, good, that was a good, bad one. All right, let's see if I can, He says, a, help me with an L, bruised reed. Oh, thank you, Lord.

A bruised reed will be handled so tenderly by the Messiah that he'll handle it so gently that he won't break it. And flax, it's a little unclear if the context here is referring to the wick that an oil lamp burns with, or whether it's the tinder that's used to start a fire. It doesn't really matter.

The illustration is the same either way. But if flax, if it's used to burn, but it doesn't flame, it only smokes, he won't quench it into extinguishing. Instead, the servant will gently blow on that smoking flax and bring it into flame again.

Look, often we feel that God deals roughly with our weaknesses and our failures. Maybe you had formative people in your life, a parent, a teacher, a coach, a leader, a boss, who dealt very roughly with your failures and weaknesses. And maybe you think that God is the same way, but actually just the opposite is true.

God deals with our weaknesses and our failures very tenderly, and he helps them along until the bruised reed is strong and the smoking flax is in full flame. And I don't know, maybe some of you are saying, well, I don't think God has dealt so gently with me. Look at this and this and this that has happened.

I would really be interested in investigating your case a little more closely. I would wonder, and I don't want to presume, but I would just wonder if there was not a long time of gentle dealing with God up to a certain point that maybe you just closed your ears to. I know it's been like that in my life from time to time, until one day that the correction of God just has to express itself in your life.

But in my life, such periods have been preceded by a long time of warning and gentle correction that I didn't want to listen to. You know, when you think about it, a bruised reed and smoking flax, they're not much use as they are, only with what can be made of them. And the servant can make something good and useful out of unlikely things.

If you think about the disciple, or should I say the apostle Peter, he's a perfect example of a bruised reed made strong, right? Of a smoldering wick fanned into full flame for Jesus. And so they're really wonderful

here that Jesus sees the value in a bruised reed, even when nobody else can. He can give a beautiful music to come through such a reed.

He puts his strength through that smoking flax. Again, it's used for a wick on an oil lamp. It's good for nothing without his tender care, but with it, well then it is beautifully used.

Some people are like that smoking flax, that they can only burn brightly for the Lord when they're supplied with that continual refreshment from the Holy Spirit. And so Jesus wants us, he wants us to receive that beautiful ministry of the servant. Let me make it very plain for you.

Yes, you need to be like that one who will find the bruised reed and deal tenderly with it, that will find that smoldering wick and fan it into flame. You need to be that one. But you know what you need to do first? You need to let Jesus serve you.

You need to let him minister to you that same thing. Now after we have received the ministry of the servant, then Jesus wants us to have his heart towards the lowly, the broken, and the hurting. It's easy to pass them by, just like the priest and the Levite did in that parable of the Good Samaritan as they were on their way to the city of Jericho.

Now you notice this. It says that he'll do that, and then the next line there in Isaiah 42, he'll bring forth justice for truth, he will not fail nor be discouraged. I love that.

The servant is gentle, but he's not weak. He'll bring forth justice for truth. There aren't two ways about it.

It will happen, and failure or discouragement will not stop the servant. I don't know about you, but I look at that and I get wonderfully refreshed in my heart when I think about the fact that Jesus never gets discouraged. Because I think I've thrown plenty at his way to discourage him.

But Jesus never gets discouraged. He will not fail nor be discouraged. When you think of the job that Jesus has to do, with the obstacles that he has to overcome, and the tools that he chooses to work with, you and I, right? It's amazing that he never becomes discouraged.

It's because he has all power and all authority. The ministry of Jesus is optimistic. He was never filled with doubt or pessimism.

His attitude was constantly filled with hope and assurance. And I think that when our ministry is Christ-like, it'll have an optimism about it. I've seen it.

Sometimes guys planting churches in the States. Sometimes guys planting churches abroad. And they have such a sour, pessimistic attitude.

Their idea when they go into a community is that all the other churches are corrupt and rotten, and they alone stand for God. And they go in there thinking, and their main preaching is about how rotten everybody else is. I just wish that they would just lift up Jesus for a while and have an optimistic view about what Jesus can do.

Now, what's interesting in this text? If you take a look at fail, right? Did you see in that line? He will not fail nor be discouraged. Fail is the same word as smoking in the phrase, smoking flax he will not quench. Discouraged? Discouraged is the same word as bruised in the phrase of bruised reed, he will not break.

This means that he's going to do it. He will not be bruised. He will not fail.

He will carry it through to the end. Don't you love that phrase there, towards the end? Till he has established justice in the earth and the coastland shall wait for his law. The work of the servant is going to extend to the whole earth and all the peoples, even those in the distant coastlands, shall serve him.

Now, I think about this, and today we kind of read this and we yawn a little bit. We know that Christianity has extended over almost every portion of the globe, right? We say, yes, praise God. Can you imagine how weird it was for Isaiah to say this? Isaiah to say it.

You know, hundreds of years before the time of Jesus himself, when really he was speaking to half a kingdom, and a weak kingdom, and a kingdom hanging by a precarious thread. You know, it's kind of like the guy that has a little, you know, mom and pop hamburger stand and saying, you know, one day we're going to be bigger than McDonald's. You say, what are you talking about? Are you crazy? And Isaiah was just a little bit crazy, but he really believed God.

By the way, that Hebrew word that's translated coastlands there, sometimes it's translated islands, or in other passages it's also translated territory. The idea is probably just the idea of distant lands. God is calling all nations, even the distant lands.

There's a broadness to the work of the Messiah. There's a broadness to the efforts of the servant. It doesn't happen just in a small place, but it'll be effective everywhere.

Now, I look at this just sort of piece by piece, line by line, walking us through this wonderful passage. I mean, that's what I just love to do with the Bible, is look at it, line by line, piece by piece, and think about it. Turn it over in my mind.

But I know where you're at, and I know the people who you teach and who you minister to. They're always clamoring for application, right? Pastor, give me some application. Would you make it practical for me? And I say, I'd be happy to do that.

Let's make this very practical. What is there practically for us in this text to do? Okay, are you ready for this? First of all, just look at it right there in verse 1 again. Why don't you behold the servant of the Lord? Isn't that the practical step to do? Look at Jesus.

Put your attention, put your focus upon Him. This is by far the most important. Look to Jesus.

Set your attention upon Him. Think about Him. Look away from other things.

Friends, it's just a wonderful thing to have your mind filled with a consideration of who Jesus is and how great He is and how wonderful He is and how much He loves you and cares for you. But secondly, you want more practical application? I'll give you this one, the second one. And I believe this is very important too.

Let the servant serve you. Look unto Jesus. That's what it just told you to do.

Behold My servant. But then let the servant serve you. Received by faith the work that He promised to do.

Now this is easier for some of us than it is for others of us, but every one of us can do it. Every one of us, if we feel we don't have the faith, then ask God for the gift of faith. Jesus wants to do this in you.

I feel a little bit sorry for somebody here, and maybe it's more than one of you. As I've been speaking and as we've been taking a look at this Isaiah text, your mind has been spinning how you can tell this to somebody else. Like, hey, there's something here.

I want to tell my Bible study group or my church. Your mind's been spinning with that. Now if that's you, I sympathize, because my mind often runs along the same channels, okay? But listen, we're in a sorry place.

If we don't stop and say, what can I do to let Jesus serve me right now? You are the one who needs to behold Jesus. You are the one who needs to hear His gentle voice. You are the one who is like the bruised reed.

You are the one who is like the smoking flax. You are part of the coastlands waiting to hear His law. Remember what Peter said to the lame man in Acts chapter 3. I taught on this not too long ago, and it just really impressed me afresh, anew.

Peter said this. He said, silver and gold I don't have for you, Mr. Lame Man. But he said this.

What I do have, I give to you. You can't give it to anybody else unless you have it for yourself. We can't be the servant to others until we allow Jesus to serve us.

Now, as Pastor Ken mentioned, we spent seven years working with a Bible college in Germany. Those were wonderful years of ministry. And one of the great things is being over there, you learn some German.

You learn some other culture. You learn some other words. And I like the word they use for a worship service in German.

You know, they have Sunday worship service. This is what they call it. They call it Gottesdienst.

Now, my German friends say that that word Gottesdienst, it's made up of two words, right? Gottes, meaning God's. Dienst, meaning service. Literally translated, although to be honest, nobody over there really thinks of it this way, but literally translated, it means this.

It means God's service, in the sense that God is the one doing the service. And don't you love that? It says, and again, nobody over there thinks of it that way, but literally that's what it means. It means let's come together for the time that God will serve us.

And I think about that, that's what Sunday should be. That's what any of our times of ministry should be. God, you are here to serve your people.

You are here to touch and heal and bless and restore their lives. When we gather together for weekly worship, it is God's time to serve the congregation. Now ideally, they are serving him all week long.

Now they gather together to let him serve them. Now of course they serve God, and we serve God on Sunday service. We worship him, we give heed to his word, we honor him with the fellowship of the saints, but there's an important sense in which God serves his people, and that's often neglected.

Remember, remember Peter's reluctance to let Jesus serve him. Do you remember that? What's Jesus doing? He's washing the disciples' feet there, right there, sort of the opening part of that beautiful Lord's Supper and that amazing dialogue or monologue, I should almost say, that he has with his disciples there,

right, in John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Amazing passage in the word of God, and it begins with that remarkable thing of Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

Well, he washes all 11 of the disciples. He comes around to Peter, and what does Peter say? Peter says, no, Lord, you're not washing my feet. No, Lord, you won't serve me.

I think in some way we say that to God sometimes. Oh, God, don't serve me. I just want to serve others.

God bless you for wanting to serve others, and I pray that you serve him more effectively, and I believe that your time together with us at this conference will equip you and enable you to serve him more effectively. That's a good thing. It's not a bad thing, but please understand, it all begins with letting him serve you.

Do you remember what Jesus said to Peter when Peter tried to refuse the foot washing? He said, if I do not wash you, you have no part with me. Those of you who refuse to just take a minute and say, okay, Jesus, how do you want to serve me? Those are strong words. Think of it this way.

In pagan religions, it was commonly held that the gods created humans to work for them. That's a pagan conception of God. The God of the Bible actually wants to serve his creatures.

That's what Jesus exemplified all throughout his ministry on earth. Can I just tell you, friends, he didn't end it when he ascended to heaven. He does it more gloriously than ever.

Of course, I could make a third point of application. I could say, first, behold the servant, second, let the servant serve you, and I could give a third and legitimate point of application. Embrace the ministry of the servant and serve others as he has served you, that you should be a servant, that you should be gentle, not shouting and self-promoting, that you should receive his spirit, that you should be tender and encouraging to those who need it the most, that you should never fail nor be discouraged until God completes his great work.

Yes, that's all true. But it begins just with saying, Lord, I want to receive the way that you want to serve me. What follows right now is we're just going to come before God and seek him together in a time of worship.

As you connect with God in the context of worship, isn't it a fair thing for you just to open up your heart and say, Lord, how do you want to serve me? How do I need to be served by you? It's a humbling thing to let God serve you. Sometimes for me, my pride is manifested by not wanting to let others serve me. Don't let that be true of us in Jesus.

Lord, we want to behold your servant. There he is, Lord. Serving us in being born.

Serving us in the years of his ministry. Serving us with his obedience to your law. Serving us through his teaching.

Most pointed, Lord, serving us by suffering and dying for us. By doing that work for us which we could never do for ourselves. Making us right with you through the work on the cross.

As we behold your servant. Lord, we humble ourselves enough just to say, Lord, won't you serve us? I admit, God, it feels strange for me even to praise such words. But Jesus, we believe.

We believe what your word says. That you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Lord, we expect that as you do this in us and for us, we will be better servants of others.

But Lord, we never want that to be the core. We never want that to be the essence. Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and serving us.

In your name we pray. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/MicPKhoadWE.mp4>

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