

## Why Serving = Success

### Where we fit in the story:

Mark 9:30-38

- Followers **follow** a **leader**.
- You know you are a follower if you **end up** where the leader **ends up**.

### What we have lost in the story:

Genesis 3 & 4, Ezekiel 28:1-19

Because of page 3:

- ✓ We have become the **center** of our **universe**.
- ✓ “Servant” has become a **dirty word**.
- ✓ Serving has to be **learned and strategic**.

### Why we need this story:

Ephesians 2:8-10, Philippians 2:1-18

- Each of us are uniquely created to do **great works**.
- Serving is where we discover:  
**Purpose** **Calling** **Jesus**
- Jesus doesn't abolish **ambition** or **riches**, he just **redefines** them.
- We are never more **Christ-like** than when we are **serving**, but we are never more **anti-Christ** than when we are expecting to **be served**.

## Food for Thought for the week of July 28, 2019

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

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1. We often don't mind being a servant as long as we aren't treated like one! In Luke 17:7-10, Jesus gives some insight into how a true servant is treated. Read the verses and jot down your observations.

### **Luke 17:7-10** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>7</sup>“Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? <sup>8</sup>Won't he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? <sup>9</sup>Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? <sup>10</sup>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.’”

What is your initial response to this description?

2. A great example of someone putting others first can be found in the Old Testament story of a woman named Ruth. Read Ruth 1:1-22 and jot down some of the costs that Ruth had to pay to stay and help Naomi.

### **Ruth 1** *New International Version (NIV)*

#### *Naomi Loses Her Husband and Sons*

<sup>1</sup> In the days when the judges ruled,<sup>[a]</sup> there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. <sup>2</sup> The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

<sup>3</sup> Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

#### *Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem*

<sup>6</sup> When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. <sup>7</sup> With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

<sup>8</sup> Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. <sup>9</sup> May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.”

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud <sup>10</sup> and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.”

<sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—<sup>13</sup> would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!”

<sup>14</sup> At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

<sup>15</sup> “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”

<sup>16</sup> But Ruth replied, “Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” <sup>18</sup> When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

<sup>19</sup> So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

<sup>20</sup> “Don't call me Naomi,<sup>[b]</sup>” she told them. “Call me Mara,<sup>[c]</sup> because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

<sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

What are some possible reasons a person would be willing to do what Ruth did?

3. Opportunities to serve and impact others in small but significant ways occur randomly around all of us every day. It's been said that our impact on others is usually not one single act, but many acts of service piled together. As you read the story of the Good Samaritan and his random opportunity to serve in Luke 10:25-37, make a list of all the ways he served the man who was robbed.

**Luke 10:25-37 New International Version (NIV)**

*The Parable of the Good Samaritan*

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'<sup>[a]</sup>; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup>"

<sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii<sup>[c]</sup> and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

In the list you wrote above, what comes easiest to you? Which one is the most challenging?

4. After a message like we heard this weekend, the challenge is how to make serving more a part of our daily life. What are some ways you can incorporate more serving into your normal life?