

Great Expectations

Inheritance: Unprecedented Opportunity

The Purpose of This Series: God wants us working together in His Kingdom, not just live independently simultaneously. These four messages are to assist us in aligning the believer with God's purpose for our lives in His service as well as the mission of our church. Everyone has a purpose and DNA in Christ. To often we are out to reach a “destiny” when God has a “design” that He has for us in relationship with others.

The Purpose of This Message: What excites me as a leader is to watch people discover that God can use their small and mostly hidden acts of love and kindness to change lives, serve in church and lead local community ministries. I love knowing that there are many people that leave our church on any given weekend and, on a daily basis, wholeheartedly serve people in our community all week long. Serving people is a living testimony. Jesus is never seen better in your life than when you pick up the towel and wash someone else's feet.

Intro:

Is there anyone still alive? Last week I had mentioned that let's assume that we were going to live for two more weeks, that God loved us and that He wanted us to know who He was and what He was up to. We've got one more week to believe the same thing. But this week I want us to expand the concept that God not only loves you and He wants you to know what He's up to, but that He wants you to be a part of that plan! This next week could be one of the greatest weeks of your life!

“¹This is the route the Israelites followed as they marched out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. ² At the Lord's direction, Moses kept a written record of their progress. These are the stages of their march, identified by the different places where they stopped along the way.”

Numbers 33:1-2 (NLT)

While reading through the Bible in the New Living Translation I came across an interesting interpretation that I think is very valid for us today. We find in Numbers 33 that the wrap up of the book is about to take place, beginning here and ending in Numbers 36. What is unique about these two scriptures is that they actually identify us in the process of life in Christ.

When we come to know Jesus Christ, we begin a journey just like the children of Israel...out of the bondage of our Egypt. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we are led away from unhealthy habits, dieing to desires that eventually would bring death and we are given a compassion and commission to love God and people.

Moses obeyed God in that he kept a written record of the children of Israel's **PROGRESS**. And then he defines progress:

“...These are the stages of their march, identified by the different places where they stopped along the way.”

Numbers 33:2b (NLT)

The stages of your journey are identified by the different places where you stopped along the way!

So the question is, **“Where have you “stopped” in your journey?”** Where are you at along the way of your walk with Jesus Christ that is yielding GREAT EXPECTATIONS? One of the realities of our journey is that if you don't know what the journey should consist of, then you don't know that you are missing it! Wouldn't that be terrible to know that God has you on a journey, He wants to take you to “different places,” but you don't realize that you are stalled out because you haven't “identified” where He has you as a place where you have “stopped along the way?”

Today I am going to talk about one of those places where believer's “stop along the way.” And because of that, they get “identified” by that place and lose the GREAT EXPECTATION that I believe you are supposed to experience in this life. We cannot afford to stop and never move beyond the journey we are on. We have got to move on for the cause of Jesus Christ. We have got to understand the place we are in and where we are going.

Don't Let Them Get Away!

Dino Rizzo, pastor of “Healing Place Church” in Baton Rouge, Louisiana tells the story of the day he went home to tell his father about the girl of his dreams and had somehow got her to agree to marry him. With picture in hand, Dino hands it to his dad and in a brief look at the picture, he looks up to his son, back to the picture, back to his son and after some silent, he knew this must be an act of God! He bowed up his chest and said,

“Son, we have got to get a ring on her finger right away. We can't let this one get away!”

His dad walked into another room and came back with an envelope filled with money. He had put the money aside several months before. He told Rizzo, “Let's buy the biggest diamond we can find and put it on her gorgeous finger.” And they did.

More than twenty years later, every time Dino sees the diamond on his wife's hand he can still hear his dad's voice saying, **“We can't let this one get away!”**

In the same way Dino's dad was unwilling to let the potential of his beautiful daughter-in-law “get away,” our heavenly Father is unwilling that anyone would “get away” as well. God feels this way about everyone who has not come to the understanding of who our Father is. God looks at our community and He is drawn to them, He loves them, He is passionate about them. I believe God is saying,

“Let's do whatever it takes, at all cost, we can't let them get away!”

The cry of God's heart all through the Bible is, “don't let them get away!” It doesn't matter who or where they are. It could be some remote village or right down the street. They could be confined in a bed in a nursing home or it could be some without a home. It could be someone without a father, someone trading their bodies for affection, next door or around the world. God's intense love for people is seen in His display of grace by sending His son to die for us...”Whoever believes in Jesus WILL be saved!”

Jude left us a very important message to apply in our lives,

“Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”

Jude 22-23

These two scriptures simply gives us **three actions** of how we might live in this world that will lead us to **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**. Here are the three actions:

1. **How To Act Toward Disassociated**
2. **How To Act Toward Potential Believer's**
3. **How To Act As A Believer**

1. **How To Act Toward Disassociated**

Notice that Jude uses the word “doubt” (*diakrinō* 1252) here, but the connotation is far stronger than one first reads. Jude is talking about those who were at one time part of the believer's of the particular fellowship that he was writing and they fell into apostasy. Apostasy (/ə'pɒstəsi/) is the formal religious **disaffiliation** or **abandonment** or **renunciation** of one's religion, especially if the motive is deemed unworthy.

Apostasy is the renunciation and criticism of, or opposition to, one's former religion. This happens in different ways, people get offended, they get distracted or they get deceived. The teaching that they once knew, they disaffiliate with, or they abandon. To them we are to show **MERCY**. Those with misleading and terrible doctrine, we are not allowed to hate them - or to be unconcerned for their salvation.

To have MERCY on someone is to help the afflicted or those seeking aid, to bring help to the wretched. That is what our OUTREACH CENTER has become. All of the work that is done over there has been an act of MERCY. So has our GARDEN. It is a labor of love, but more than that, it is a labor of MERCY, to love and assist those who may not be connected to a fellowship, for those who may have walked away from their faith for some reason or another, for those who have become angry or distorted in their understanding of Biblical Christianity. The way we act toward them is to show mercy,

2. **How To Act Toward Potential Believer's**

To SAVE (*sōzō* 4982), to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction But this is encouraging us to be proactive in the particular danger or destruction, to save them from the “FIRE” (*pyr* 4442). There are many “FIERY” trials Paul tells us in II Peter 4:12, but this goes beyond those who are having difficulty in their life, it is speaking directly to those who at one time were opposed to what God claims as true and are teetering on the eternal brink of God or no God. Here Jude tells us to snatch them, save them from the fire, an eternal position.

3. **How To Act As A Believer**

Now we are told how we are to personally live, mercy mixed with fear, extend mercy toward them but never lose the “fear” of their eternity (1)! That our hearts at one point extend absolute love and mercy but on the other side never lose the reality that without Jesus Christ there is an eternity! And that thought should motivate us that anything that does not reflect Christ in our life is an enemy to God's love to the world (2). What limits our testimony is what we allow or excuse to stain us. Our words or actions are a reflection of our “fear.”

Commercial: I'm sure you've seen the **Tide Talking Stain** commercial from Super Bowl 2008. According to YouTube's AdBlitz, it was the number 1 commercial of the year. They said that the first and foremost reason why it caught the attention of the

listener is because the majority of the commercial sounds like an *annoying foreign language*. The viewer's attention is grabbed because he is unable to make sense of the pseudo-language. Not only does it grab the viewer's attention, but it forces him or her to focus even harder while trying to make sense of the gibberish. Clothing stained by sin sends a double message! (AdSavvy.org- Tide Talking Stain Ad - Tide To Go - Super Bowl Commercial)

How Important Are People To God?

God sent His only son! Jude explains the importance of other people as shown in our efforts to snatch them from the fire, to save them and resisting "stain" potential engagements in my flesh.

APPLE: Just as an apple has seeds within it the potential of producing new trees which will produce thousands of other apples, the same is true about our lives. God sees the potential in our lives. GREAT EXPECTATION is that our lives mean more to God than you and I can actually imagine. There are others who can be reached through us, and in addition, there are others in our "others!"

This message is not about building a larger church or how to improve your career, it is rather, **how can the first thought in our hearts every morning be,**

"How can I show mercy to those who are resistant toward the message of Jesus Christ?"

"How can I find someone who is on the eternal ledge of their life who is wavering, who has the potential to fall this way or that way?"

"What area of my life have I not put to death, that I love rather than hate that are staining my clothes?"

In ESSENCE- How Can I Serve?

We may never know until we get to heaven how our service and our simple acts of kindness have affected the course of a life, a community, or even a nation. **If we do nothing, the result will be- nothing!** I recently read an article with this quote in it,

"The purpose of man is in action not thought." ~ Thomas Carlyle

When we become involved in the pursuit of service as displayed by Christ, the same care and healing He brought to the world, that is still being changed by it CAN be found in us. People will find hope and healing that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Being a part of this eternal service is bigger than ourselves, bigger than anything on this earth. It is a Kingdom work, a heavenly work, an eternal work!

When you become a pastor, there are a multitude of suggestions of what we should do as a church. All but a few are actually Biblical, but few are motivational. Most are events, but few suggestions lie at the core of all the actions, the motivation for all the acts of service. One of the reasons why there are four banners hanging on the walls of our church is because I wanted to know what we should value. I asked God this question: "If we would be righteously blamed for not doing what we should be doing, what would it be?" Instead of focusing on multiple ministries, God spoke to me core values that should underlie every and any ministry. The four in response were, "Serving, Sharing, Shaping and Sending."

Serving- "Freely giving in the love of God."

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."
Romans 12:10-11

Here at Cornerstone, we feel that **Serving is best characterized by three things:**

- A. Unselfish acts.**
- B. Imparting value to others.**
- C. Going above and beyond others' expectations.**

The GREAT EXPECTATIONS that we have for ourselves are simple:

1. We intend to show **mercy** to those who doubt God or distort the idea of God.
2. We will loudly and actively pursue those who are **near the fire** with intention of saving them.
3. We will challenge ourselves to question what we are in love with and learn to hate what **stains our testimony** of mercy and salvation.

We will refuse a short lived appetite in the flesh for the sake of finding a forgotten, poor hurting individual to show them a God who is passionately in love with them. We stand together saying,

- **"We are here to do whatever, whenever, so that others will not get away! We will serve others and show them the hope that can come only from Jesus!"**

The Idea of Serving

On December 16, 1773, three hundred Sons of Liberty marched onto several tea ships docked in Boston Harbor. As a protest against unfair taxation, they methodically dumped over forty-five tons of British tea into the water. As thousands of colonists cheered them on, no one probably knew the significance of their protest.

The Boston Tea Party is a perfect example of what it takes for a revolution to begin:

"A clear mission that everyone believes in, people who will not stand for oppression, and leaders who are willing to lay down their lives to initiate change."

"Revolutionary Martyrs"

Revolution is not usual in our world but it can have many different connotations. Recently I read an article by Mary-Anne Toy, of The Sydney Morning, (smh.com.au) a correspondent in Beijing, February 22, 2008

There is a growing sign of changing times in China who has drop the term "revolutionary" from the title "**Revolutionary Martyrs.**" Until now, the highest available honor for those who die for heroic causes of communism were given that name. "Revolutionary Martyr" used to be **exclusively for military personnel**, initially for those who died bringing about the communist revolution that resulted in Mao Zedong declaring the People's Republic of China in 1949. Having reached that goal, eligibility for that title was widened to include **public servants** and **members of the public.**

The last three “Revolutionary Martyrs” were three electricians who died early in 2008 while trying to restore power during China's worst snowstorms in half a century. The families of those deemed at Revolutionary Martyrs would be entitled to a **one-off payment of 15 times** the national **average annual salary**, about 240,000 yuan or **\$36,530**.

Su Rongyu, the director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Cultural Heritage Centre was not so enthused as he told the South China Morning Post, "**In China, communism is no longer worthy enough to die for.**"

Su Rongyu was blasting the idea of dropping the term “Revolution.” The communist cause was born in revolution and could only continue in revolution, outside that, it was no longer worthy to die for! Once a revolution “civilizes,” its whole motivating force becomes subjected to a thing of the past; what it once was, and what it used to be. When defining ourselves is more important than defining what we are here to do, we will develop means and reasons to institute a “republic” idea than an initial force to be reckoned with! We will elect officers to take care of the organization rather than appoint Generals and officers to lead the cause. **Christianity is a revolutionary cause and will die, or worse, “is no longer worthy enough to die for” when it becomes a Christian organization!**

The revolution that I am talking about today has a clear mission, it is not one fueled by anger, violence, and revolt but one of compassion, love and service. This revolution has a clear mission to answer the cries of the poor, the hurting, and the forgotten. It is made up of those who are willing to lay down their lives to reach people here in our area, in our state, nation and in the world.

You and I have been recruited by a Revolutionary King. His total goal is to overthrow a government that is ruling the minds and hearts of men and women who are in a self-serving pursuit that only brings separation and pain. The Revolutionary King calls us to bring healing to a hurting world by loving people to Christ.

The Sons of Liberty jump-started the American Revolution without knowing it. They saw an injustice and a need and they responded to it. They didn't start with a name for their revolution and there weren't thousands of people cheering them on when they undertook the task. Their actions led to the formation of a new country.

It doesn't take an army to create a revolution, it only takes someone working with someone else who has a passion to create change and meet a need! If we can serve one person at a time, that's all, just one, I believe something can happen and there is no idea where God will take us.

Anarchy Verses Revolution

I served as a youth pastor for right at eight years in a city south of Dallas, Texas. There, my passion for the lost drove me night and day. I would passionately pray for those to come to know Christ, to grow deeper and more alive. One morning as I stood on the outside, second floor stair railing of one of our ministry buildings which over looked the local high school I prayed to God, “God, give me that high school!” Over and over I wept as I prayed. In one simple statement God responded back to me, “What would you do with it?” Interesting, what would I do with it? God has a bigger plan than me to touch a thousand or so high school students with a message.

Many people just want to “overthrow” whatever there is, there is no idea of replacement process. I personally believe that some of the “Change” that this administration promised America is not capable of delivering, not healthy “revolution” but it is more outright “anarchy.”

Anarchy occurs all over the world where one group of people overtake the other to consume all they have and then like Genghis Khan, they move to the next village to pillage and murder. Anarchy is not the Christian revolutionary way. There is a whole different concept that Jesus brought to the table. We are not to be a clean “gang.” We are not to force by intimidation. Jesus had a whole new concept in mind.

Who Is The Greatest?

The Word of God has made it clear that the disciples had a hard time believing what Jesus was telling them. They deep within them they believed that self-centeredness was really what you went for, you just pretended to act humble, loving, serving. You take care of yourself, be reasonable, give a little here and there but don't get too wrapped up in this, Jesus is just a little over the edge and anyone who takes Him at His Word is over the edge too.

One day Jesus and His disciples came into a house in Capernaum, (Mark 9:33-37), and He asked the disciples what they were fighting about along the road. No one said anything because they were arguing who was the greatest.

- Who was the most gifted?
- Who was more popular with the people?
- Who was more likely to succeed?
- Who was going to have the largest ministry?
- Who would get more speaking engagements?
- Who would get the book deals?
- Who has more power?

Trick Or Treat?

We just finish the time where kids get so much sugar in their system they have sugar overload for sure. (Halloween) But one of the things I remember about Halloween is this simple little statement,

“Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat.”

Though that's an old statement, it actually applies to the message I'm bringing here. There is a story in John 13 where Jesus and His disciples were gathered for dinner. But something was wrong, “The Foot Washer Didn't Show Up.”

It was customary in those days, because people walked in sandals everywhere they went, down dusty roads, they would recline at low tables with their feet not far from the faces of other guests in the room. As custom would have it, a servant would meet everyone coming in the door and wash and dry everyone's feet. But something went wrong at this dinner, the foot washer didn't show up.

If you and I could have been a fly on the wall that day, it might have a profound impact on us today. The first disciple enters the room, looks around, doesn't see a foot-washer and takes his place at the table. He sits there contemplating, “Should I wash my own feet or do I wait for someone else to do that for me?”

Now it was understood that the one who washed everyone's feet would take off their outer garment so the dirt and grime wouldn't soil their clothes. The first disciple decides that the job is not his.

- Not me
- It's not my job
- I'm not a slave
- I'm not just a foot-washer

So he looks around the room, trying to figure out where Jesus will sit at the table. He picks the most likely spot and moves next to that position and then enters the next disciple. He comes in and notices that there is no foot-washer as well. He sees his friend already seated at the table. A quick thought runs through his head, "If he is not going to offer to wash my feet then I'm not going to wash his either." And he finds his place next to the spot next to Jesus.

All the disciples come into the house, one by one they avoid a very well known custom, everybody knows it but no one is going to acknowledge it. They all walk in, pass the water basin and find the best place around the table. They are reclined at the table with dirty feet stuck in the face of the other disciple and then Jesus walks in.

Three years, sermon after sermon, illustration after illustration, confrontation after confrontation. Jesus looks around the room, silent. To Him it is obvious, no one sees their pride and are missing the bigger picture. He stands hoping someone will at least wash the feet of the master, but no one does.

If this were a movie, at this point I think the music would be turning from the 70's party favorites to a mixture of the Jaws theme and Nickel Creeks country bluegrass. (I don't know why?) At this point the mood in room would change, not with manipulation, anger, pouting or judgement, but simply with a teaching compounded with love.

Jesus walks to the water basin and starts to take off his outer garment. He carefully picks up the towel and slips it through his belt, exactly the way a common servant would do it. Then He pours water into the basin as the disciples look in disbelief.

Some are feeling a rush of embarrassment as Jesus picks up their feet, one by one and washes them. One by one they don't seem so popular. They are not the "Mighty Disciples" that everyone was raving about just outside the door. They find themselves quite ordinary men, who have needs and insecurities and weaknesses like anybody else. They realize that by the grace of God, they could be the blind beggar or one of the many in the crowd trying to push through just to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. They are just..."ordinary."

One by one, each man comes to his senses and begins to ask himself questions,

- What's the matter with me?
- How did I miss this?
- I can't believe my whole world revolves around me!
- It's bad enough to not wash my brother's feet, but to ignore Jesus' feet is inexcusable.
- How did I get so off, so distant from my true calling?

Jesus comes to the table and it is Peter who first resists Jesus' intention to serve him. But Jesus persists. When Jesus finishes He folds the towel and puts it back. He slips on His

robe, walks back to the table and reclines. This is what Jesus then says,

"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am."

John 13:12-13

"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."

John 13:14-15

"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.**"

John 13:16-17

Paul's Life Message

In the latter part of the Apostle Paul's life he summed up this example that Jesus left with His disciples and for us to follow,

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:3-4

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Philippians 2:5-7

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

Philippians 2:8

"Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received -- only what you have given: a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage." ~ St. Francis of Assisi

Many people believe that serving is more about duty and drudgery than fun and fulfillment. Too many willing-hearted servants have been limited because it was thought that a *hired-on* person could do a better job than a *fired-up* person. Let me ask you a question:

"Why would we spend money on jobs at the church that could be done by many people who would love to do it?"

The power of the church is found in the submitted power of each believer activating their gifts and talents to assist in bringing all people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The GREAT EXPECTATION of life is found in serving. In one odd way, the lack of funding in a church can be a huge gift to the church because it forces them to rely on the gifts and talents of those within the body to serve with a servants heart.

Jesus Teams

Jesus deliberately made decisions to invite others to help him spread the news of the Kingdom of God. He chose ordinary people, Peter, James and John were just three of the disciples who He called on. There was no doubt, Jesus, with all the power of God resting on Him didn't really need any assistance. But Jesus refused to be a solo act. Why? Because He insisted that all of his followers do a two to three year missionary stint in ministry.

Paul's Teams

Paul felt so strongly about being a servant of God that in 1 Corinthians 9, he reminded people that he himself was one. He supported himself by making tents on the side so that he could serve as a pastor and leader without becoming a financial drain on the church. The Kingdom of God cannot advance through the efforts of paid church staff alone. I believe that the local church is the hope of the world. I believe people in a community who are oblivious to the love of God can be fascinated and inquisitive about God when faithful people of God once again are stirred up in God's love in action.

Without the love of servants of God, good deeds will be sparse and hope little. Countless wounds will not be tended to, mouths will not be fed, grieving people will not be comforted, broken marriages will not be mended, lonely people will not be embraced, children will not be nurtured. Cups of cold water will never be offered in Jesus' name. Many who seek hope in God will never be encouraged toward Christ. You, my friend, have time to make a difference in your part of the world.

Finding Your Place

Every person who is connected to the greater fellowship, the church, has to make a choice. He can park in the usual place, sit in the usual seat, watch the service, talk to a few people and then go home. That is the safe thing to do. Or, he can throw himself into the adventure of a life time. Jump right in the middle of what God is doing.

Most of the time you don't find your niche overnight. Many times it comes through serving in less-than-ideal situations before you really find out what it is that you are really good at. Sometimes you have to experiment with opportunities in serving God. See, we are called to move from being self-absorbed to servanthood.

So many people hesitate to be involved because they are afraid of failing. I know that feeling as well. But when we let God lead us to where He wants us to serve, we find an incredible sense of satisfaction and joy.

We all want to get to the top, but Jesus said, the way to the top in His Kingdom is to become a faithful servant to God and one another. Our decision to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ will radically change our lives like it did the lives of the first disciples.

Peter

Every day for years he walked along the shores, cast nets off the side of his boat, dropped the nets, hoisted up the nets with various amounts of fish. Then he would count them, took them to market, traded them for a few coins, bought food and went home. Not the major, dramatic life that he would later have.

Then he met Jesus and became the right-hand man to one of the most powerful, gifted, charismatic leaders of the day...of all times. Jesus miraculously fed huge crowds, healed the

sick, and raised people from the dead. Who could imagine where it might all lead? But Peter had a fix on Jesus and he was not letting go.

But things started getting messy. Jesus had a way about Himself that challenged the self-serving religious and political leaders of that day. Jesus' difference brought on big trouble on His disciples who followed Him. You might say that Jesus was out of the box and He intended His followers to follow Him there.

All through the New Testament, you will find that it was hard for the disciples to accept Jesus' radical call to serve God and others. Things started immediately getting real uncomfortable.

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Mark 8:34

Again Jesus drives home the idea that this life we are living is not all about us,

"Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.'"

Mark 9:35

I think if we had the opportunity, we could see distorted faces, some discomfort, adjustments and little disapproving grunts. Jesus was pounding away at a flesh that they had only known. He was molding them into the people, He not only wanted them to be, but the people the world needed them to be. Jesus knew that without a servants heart the world could not be reached, lives would not change and His mission would fail.

Peter finally pops the big question that the disciples probably wanted to ask as well,

"Then Peter said to him, 'We've given up everything to follow you. What will we get out of it?'"

Matthew 19:27

There is no doubt that Peter was sincere in following after Christ, but he had already been stretched to lose his business, do some crazy things and walk in dangerous areas, when is summer break? When do we get our bonus? When do I get the corner office? Hey, remind me again why I'm following you? Or for some, remind me again why I need to follow you?

*"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much **in this present age** (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) **and in the age to come, eternal life.**"*

Mark 10:29-30

Jesus promised Peter that following Him would be worth it. It wouldn't be an easy road, they might find difficult times along the way. They may have to sacrifice and be challenged beyond their past experience, but this is for sure, they would receive incredible rewards, both in this life and the next. Look what Jesus says, He actually promised that his followers would receive back a hundred times whatever they gave up!

Jesus Our Lord And Teacher

Jesus took on the very nature of a servant. Paul challenges us to a new perspective. He

calls us to break through the emotional hype and the facade that we learn to carry and get real, like Jesus. He asks us to allow the Holy Spirit to prick and guide our hearts at home, at work, at church, and in our community. He is saying to us today, “You can not affect what you cannot serve!”

Paul emphasizes this thought process in his own life when he opens the letter to the Romans,

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God...”

Romans 1:1

Paul was saying, “Hey guys, there's only three things you need to know about me, my name is Paul, I'm a servant and I live that out through the opportunity of an apostle.” See, the opportunity that God gives us is pretty simple, **be yourself, do it with the right attitude and find your slot.**

Jesus told the crowd and His disciples,

“If anyone would come after me, 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.”

Mark 8:34-35

Jesus challenged them that day just like He is challenging you and I today. Will we serve Him by serving others? Will we take this model of Jesus and question it, rationalize it and tweak it to fit our liking or will we submit to the reckless abandonment that is required for such a call? Would you dare to take advantage of every opportunity to serve, even if it seems like something insignificant?

- Would you choose the back seat rather than the front?
- Would you take out the garbage even though it's not your job?
- Would you volunteer to set up chairs after a meeting or pick up the trash?
- Would you help an elderly person this week?
- Would you open your eyes to see what is around you, just one more thing you could do that doesn't give you an advantage but gives someone else a better day?

Then ask yourself: Am I Winning Or Am I Losing?

Or you could try it the other way, put yourself first. Get in the center of all the conversations, still someone else's time as they try to get you to do your job, whine and complain about your teacher, your boss, your job, this town. Get so infatuated with yourself that you absolutely act as if the whole world revolves around you. Breathe the air out of the room, suffocate everyone around you with your complaints, your attitude and your demands. Only see what someone is “not” doing for you and judge them. Look at the faults and failures of others as another reason why you are better and why you need to take care of yourself only. Mock the hurting and disabled. Laugh at those less fortunate. Make jokes about the embarrassment of others.

But this is for sure,

“Following Jesus into revolutionary servanthood is the sure pathway to great expectations in life!”

What we've found is that whenever you find something that meets a need and makes people excited about coming to church, it is probably worth doing.

Sooner or later, everybody has to decide where to position themselves in life's great challenge. Where will you land? Will you be self-centered or follow the model of Jesus, the model of servanthood? If you are not pleased with your decision, join me with a serving towel and be used of God!