

**But Lord,
What if they don't deserve it?!! (Slide 1)**

Reading: Matthew 16:24-27

(Slide 2) In our reading we hear this phrase spoken by our Master:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me"

What does Jesus mean by this statement? Could it be He is saying; *"If you wish to follow me, you need to imitate Me, be like Me, do what I do!"*

Amen and Amen!!

We should have such a closeness with Christ, that what we do should reflect what Jesus would do! In servitude we should serve as He served! Selflessly, denying our own selves and satisfying the Spiritual needs and often, physical needs of others.

Philippians 2:3-7 (Slide 3)

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

(Slide 4) ***5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.***

We have discussed what it means to be a Bond Servant in previous lessons. Bond means slave. It infers a level of devotion not found outside of Christ. Oh yes, there are relationships outside of Christ where people are devoted to one another.

Luke 6:32-36 (Slide 5)

32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those (Slide 6) from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; (Slide 7) and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Bond Servant carries with it a deeper manifestation of love and commitment apart from our personal relationships and even relationships within the church.

What Paul says to the Galatian brethren indicates the depth of that devotion.

Galatians 6:10 (Slide 8)

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Paul says in Philippians:

(Slide 9) ***taking the form of a bond-servant***

The word “*form*” means a *special characteristic*. As a servant of Christ, it is what sets us apart from the rest of the world.

In addition, “*form*” means a *feature of a person, the nature or very essence of a person*. That nature is one in which a person develops an attitude of service. That is if we wish to “*come after Jesus*.”

The disciple of Christ must develop a relationship with Him to actually walk with Him. There are many scriptures that talk about walking with God or walking with Christ.

1 Peter 2:21 (Slide 10)

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps

Colossians 2:6

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him

1 John 2:6 (Slide 11)

the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

John 10:27

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

We could recite many other passages similar to these.

How in depth should our desire be to imitate our Lord? To walk with Him?!

Brother *Phil Sanders* related this story and gave a disclaimer that it may or may not be true but it fits well the narrative of what our relationship with Christ should be.

He was talking about *Socretes* and his students. In that time those who would wish to learn from the philosopher would *walk alongside him* and learn and discuss a variety of subjects. It was like a slow moving classroom as they moved together and he taught them.

Suddenly, one of his students was so enamored by him that his admiration got the better of him and he said; *"I want to be just like you!"* Socrates responded; "you want to be like me?" So he walked him out into a body of water and held him under the water until he began to thrash around. He immediately let him up with the young man gasping for air.

Socrates said to the young man: *"You want to be like me then you must desire that as much as you need the air to breathe!"*

I don't want to be like Socretes but I want to be like Christ. That's the depth of which we should desire to be like Christ. We walk alongside Him and learn and we become imitators of Him!

Jesus said he came to serve and not be served. So then we should serve. Our very nature should be that of service without bias. Just as a person by nature is kind and honest, the Christian character, naturally should be one of service.

But Lord! What if they don't deserve it?!!

Matthew 5:43-45 (Slide 12)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; (Slide 13) for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

A few verses ahead of this one the Lord says;

Matthew 5:40-42 (Slide 14)

40 If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you

Do they deserve your shirt or coat? No, but if our nature is that of Christ we give it to them. Do our enemies deserve our love? No, but we love them because we love Jesus and He loves us and He told us to do so.

Jesus says to ***love your enemies***. This is the one who asked the Father to forgive those who hung Him on the cross. The soldiers who pierced His hands and feet.

Love your enemies! Who are our enemies? Our enemies are the same as God's enemies.

James 4:4 (Slide 15)

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Our enemies then are the ungodly. There are many scriptures that indicate just who the ungodly are. Those of Sodom and Gomorrah, adulterers, sexually impure, slanderers, murderers, liars, and many other descriptives.

When we think of the ungodly, this is typically what comes to mind. But there are many good, honest, trustworthy, friendly, courteous people who are ungodly. They are the ones we encounter for the most part.

Ungodly includes those who are vile but ungodly also means anyone who is without God. I know many good and decent people who are without God. God is not even on their "radar" so to speak. Jesus states that you are either for Him or against Him!! They give no thought of God. These are the ones we typically have the opportunity to serve and we are to serve and in so doing we may lead them to Christ.

In the 12th Chapter of Numbers, Moses' brother and sister become Jealous of him because God speaks directly to him. God hears this conversation and tells Moses, Aaron and Miriam to come close to Him. He is angry with Aaron and Miriam and strikes Miriam with Leprosy.

Aaron pleaded with Moses to speak to God on her behalf and heal her. Turns out that speaking directly with God "face to face" so to speak was a good thing after all.

The Bible says this about Moses: ***(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.) Numbers 12:3***

Instead of becoming angry with them, Moses forgave them and served them. He spoke on Miriam's behalf even though they didn't deserve it.

This story reflects the service of Christians toward all men. Serving and forgiving! We can't really serve if we can't forgive!!

Next week, Lord willing, we will see why it's important to serve those who don't deserve it when we discuss what Jesus has done for us and deal with the subject,

"We don't deserve it!!"

Invitation

Today, if you are outside of Christ and have not become a child of God through Baptism, we implore you to hear the call and surrender yourself to Him in becoming a new creature after rising from that watery grave.

If you are a Christian but have wandered from home, we encourage you to come back. We will pray for you and with you and help restore your walk with God and His Son.

Please let us know how we can help you this day!

Reading:

Matthew 16:24-27

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.