

## Sermon Notes on Serving

Following Jesus's example of ministry service to God in the church + in the world

**Pray** Father, please show each of us what you want us to do next and empower us by your Spirit to do it in Jesus's name

### **Read Mark 10 v 36-45**

The ministry (means service, prime minister" means first servant) of Jesus the servant of God to God and man in giving his life a ransom for many is just coming to the boil. He has prophesied in detail his death and resurrection once and for all for many ie inside and outside the people of God ...the church. Two of his closest disciples, James and John come with a request, a prayer. They want to sit on his left and right in his glory . They probably mean in heaven sitting, meaning job done.

But Jesus thinks of his glory, v 38 as his crucifixion (John 13 v 31 and 21 v 19 telling Peter by what manner of death he would glorify God) So Crucifixion between 2 Jewish rebels, one calling him messiah-anointed, but rejecting him, the other repenting and calling him Jesus-Saviour.

Jesus asks whether James and John can follow his example, drink his cup and share his baptism. They don't understand. Jesus's answer to their specific prayer is no, but yes to their ministry and he prophesies that they will share his cup, which is service for our purposes today, and baptism when he was anointed – the power from God to carry it out.

We see that fulfilled in the new testament. James in spirit powered, courageous, preaching ,healing ,early church leadership + martyrdom. John preaching ,gospel composition ,prophecy ,teaching ,pastoring +writing, wisdom, his ministry changing with different times, places and circumstances and emperors to the end of their lives . No mention of retirement. They asked for rest and recognition they were promised work and power. The other 10 were indignant.

Seeking status in the church, wanting to be seen, can lead to others being indignant, to division, judging, jealousy. Hardly making every effort to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace was it. It could be damaging, costly in time, effort, resources, duplication as a glance at European church history or a visit to Israel will show. The other 10 were indignant as some are today, about other people's ministries.

In verse 43, Jesus rebukes them, teaching all of them " whoever wants to be great among you must be the servant of all. "You serve God by serving each other and serving the many for whom he gave his life as a ransom—the world. So how? All of us in different ways or as a people /a church?

Jeremiah 29 v7 (we quote part of this passage often as a personal promise) It is written collectively to the exiles in Babylon after their land and city Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians in a hideous siege (read Lamentations). They have been shipped off into captivity in exile leaving many dead of starvation, war, sickness etc at the hands of the Babylonians . Jeremiah the prophet of God sends a letter in God's name telling them "to seek the peace and prosperity of the city" of Babylon v 7, where he God has carried them, v 1 and to pray for it. For their mortal enemies in captivity!! (like Jonah sent to Nineveh) very challenging as Psalm 137 by the waters of Babylon shows.

He also tells them to listen to him. It occurred because they had not been listening. The victorian concept of the deserving and undeserving poor is parodied by Shaw in Alfred Doolittle -Eliza's father in Pygmalion /My Fair Lady ...the one deserving - you serve and the other - you don't have to!! Christians are to serve God in serving each other and the many outsiders and to seek the peace and prosperity for

them . It's a bit much to have to serve the church and whole world!!

Hebrews 4 quotes Psalm 40 "When Christ came into the world he said "here I am .....I have come to do your will o God," So what in particular does he want you/me to do/be in service or area or life ?

The bible does describe different roles and empowerment, I do not think each of us has to do it all or do it alone. After I became a Christian at 16/18, the conventional wisdom - expressed more in talking than listening was- in order of merit- As a missionary, As a priest, As a teacher (secular ) or join the Army. I said I wanted to be a solicitor, helping people with difficulties. "O well I suppose God needs lawyers too "!! Not a very appetizing example to follow perhaps I should have forgotten it!

The call is not the same for all, it is individual. John 21 again. Leaving aside whether God the creator can be said to need anything or anybody I became a solicitor some years later and later still as many Christians do at some stage I asked God whether he wanted me to go for ordination I got as far as the DDO deciding he thought I had a calling .

I heard the answer on the way to work, I felt compelled to stop in a lay-by at the bottom of Dunkerton Hill and to open my Bible, I was drawn immediately to a verse in Heb 5 "no one takes this honour upon himself he must be called of God." It seemed clear! Later the same day I was offered a partnership at work and took on court -work in defence which i thought was what God wanted me to do later i did only that work which was all about justice, mercy and second chances to find peace. And some clients and families did.

Clergy used to describe themselves in deeds as "John Smith - clerk in holy orders expressing his faith in God as bishop of bath and wells " So for each of us, what is God's call to a particular expression of our faith and ministry -our service in addition to the command to love each other, which should remind us to help with the practical work of the fellowship.

This service for which we may have birth assets -talents, life assets -experience, training, funds and may have or need spiritual assets, gifts, training, support -*Following Jesus example -with the cup (the ministry) will come the baptism (the-anointing )*- Some say ignore all the talents and experience, get rid of it all and come empty for God's spirit to fill. For some it may be doing some praying, enabling, encouraging, funding, training. A Health warning. This may involve change - for me another change on retirement

So what to do with the opportunity to find something for the body, mind and spirit? -probably wrong order - so allotment, college, street pastors, gideons, hospital chaplaincy and a start to city chaplaincy - new ministries, new people.

Quite a bit of prayer and seeking the peace and prosperity of people often outside the church ,hoping to bring the love and even the word of God and be a channel of his peace, love, faith and hope ,showing his love in practical ways.

Now, I cant do as much of that in lockdown or can we ? And they may change afterwards  
The hospital Chaplain rang me - David how old are you? 70 . Right you can't come in. But we have preached and shared in church services as Gideons, by zoom and given away bibles

So prayer, listening, God's call, recognition and anointing by God (sometimes by the church too!! )  
training - not fussing about somebody else's call, but focussing on God's call on our lives.

(John 21 again, Peter on the beach after his renewal and call to be a pastor says ,of John, what about him?  
.Jesus replies "if i want him to remain until i return what is that to you? ---you must follow me )

**First Amen!**

Tim asked me for specific examples of chaplaincy being a channel of the Lord's peace, healing, faith, hope here is one from my hospital chaplaincy volunteering;-

A psychiatrist at the RUH asked me to see a mental health patient in the main hospital admitted under mental health assessment section having tried to kill himself in despair. They were very depressed, very ill, silent, unresponsive, traumatised, very unwell, being treated for injuries, under constant observation in a side ward, so I prayed.....

I found him lying, unmoving, awake, staring away, silent and I introduced myself. Could I read a psalm? A finger lifted, so i read one. Could I pray? A finger lifted, i prayed for him, gave him a Bible, i spoke he didn't. I went back the next day, I read the bible again, i talked whilst observed by the nurse and then I prayed.

Suddenly he interrupted the prayer, sat up violently and very angry with himself, shouted a prayer of confession in the third person describing himself as a terrible sinner but with no hope ( i think he might have believed at one stage, but lost faith )i prayed 2 words "but repentant "  
We talked, i prayed and ended with this blessing;-

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing and may you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

3 days later, I think, I was called again by him to the ward. He was being discharged home in his right mind able to communicate, no longer suicidal, at peace with himself and i think with God. Fair to say the nurses were very surprised he wanted to say thank you .....so did I.  
Praise God who is faithful

**Second Amen!**