

## “Shift:Accelerating on the Discipleship Highway - A Life of Serving”

Scripture: Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-17

Graphics: car, highway, shifter

Big Truth: Discipleship is not a passive event or anything we complete in our lifetime. Following Jesus is a process that takes intentional engagement and sacrifice to live fully into the call of Jesus to, “follow me.” There are milestones along the way to help orient us and show us what areas we can engage: Worship, Community, Openness, Obeying, Serving, and Sharing.

Focus phrase: A life of serving is getting low and moving from served to servant.

### 1. Introduction

- A. Hey! We’re in our fifth week of looking at the 6 milestones for intentional discipleship. My prayer is that this progress of changing our DNA continues to be a time of growth and challenge for you and for us, as a church.
- B. The first two milestones of a Life of Worship and Life of Community are in the category of Being Part of the Body of Christ.
- C. The second category was Becoming Like Jesus, and our milestones were a Life of Openness and, last week, a Life of Obeying.
- D. Our last category is **Joining Jesus in Ministry**...and includes the milestones of a Life of Serving and a Life of Sharing. Serving is about being intentional about the mission to others. Sharing is all about being intentional about being generous in all we do and give.
- E. Today’s category is really about being a **joiner**. Now, sometimes when we hear people say that someone is a ‘joiner’, it means one of two things.
  - i. It either means that the person can’t think for themselves and is just doing what everyone else is doing.
  - ii. Or, it means that a person just goes around joining people in doing things because they want to be liked or noticed.
- F. Yet, joining can be a good thing. When I went away to college, I was painfully shy. Still am. I didn’t like crowds or asking for help or joining anything. But in the first few weeks, I found that doing things on my own in engineering school was not easy. The formulas didn’t make sense. The concepts were confusing. The work itself was long and challenging.
- G. So, I decided to risk it ALL and join a small group of guys that studied in the library every night (hey...I was, am, and will always be a nerd). When I joined these guys in what we were doing together, the work became easier to understand, we were able to help each other, and we all did better than we would on our own.

- H. Joining somebody in doing something is a lot easier than inventing something, going it on your own, or trying to figure out what needs to be done alone. And, you get help doing the thing you were doing anyway!
- I. When it comes to how, when, where, and who to serve in ministry, it's a lot easier for us to look at what Jesus did, and what others are doing, bring our context to that, and then get out there and serve together with Jesus. And two ways we DO that are growing in a Life of Sharing and in a Life of Serving.
- J. We'll start with SERVING. If you're taking notes this morning, write this down: **Growing in a life of serving means getting low and moving from served to servant.** Jesus' model of serving is very different than the world's model of serving.
- K. Let's PRAY and open our bibles this morning! PRAY!!
- L. Mark chapter 10, verse 35...let's see Jesus' mandate for serving.

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ Mark 10:35-45

- i. Can you even imagine the way this scene begins?
- ii. James and John, looking over their shoulders at Jesus, who's having a good conversation with a couple folks...maybe Jesus was doing some light teaching...maybe checking Facebook or something.
- iii. And these two are whispering in the corner, trying to muster up the courage to move toward Jesus to ask him this question that they've been wondering for a while...ever since they got the call up to the bigs - to be two of Jesus' Twelve. Their dad was so proud, if not a little bummed, the day they dropped his fishing nets and followed Jesus. You can read that in Mark 1.
- iv. So, J and J came forward and said, "Jesus...we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."
- v. And you're thinking, "Well...THAT'S bold!" But how bold is it, really? They'd heard Jesus say things like, "...I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." OR..., "whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."
- vi. So, the Z brothers thoughts, "Hey, let's test this thing out..."
- vii. And, it's probably just my twisted sense of humor, but I can picture Jesus raising his eyebrows, looking around to make sure he heard them right, and saying, "Really? Do you now? This outta be good." (Cheerfully) "How can I help you today, Jimmy and Johnny?" Now, it probably didn't happen like that at all, but we get the sense that these two were gunning for something...they had a goal in mind.

- viii. I imagine that Jesus already had a sense of it, because when they asked to sit at Jesus' righthand and lefthand in his glory (meaning after Jesus did whatever Jesus was going to do to set the world and Israel right - which they didn't really understand but thought they did), they wanted to be right there.
- ix. Now, you can't fault them, right? This was a testimony to their desire to be with Jesus...to help Jesus.
- x. What they missed, by about about 3,520 cubits (about a mile) is the fact that Jesus wasn't going to be lifted up anywhere OTHER than the cross. And the GLORY that they were seeking with Jesus would ONLY come through suffering and death and sacrifice of himself!
- xi. "Oh, you think you can drink the cup I'm going to drink?" Church, remember Gethsemane, when Jesus was trying to NOT drink the cup of wrath and suffering that God needed and wanted to pour out? THAT cup... the one that Jesus drank to spare us from God's wrath for our sin, taking the FULL WEIGHT of our sin on HIMSELF!
- xii. "Oh, do you think you can be baptized with MY baptism?" Remember that the baptism of Jesus was all Holy Spirit, dove and light, "this is my Son" ... BUT, it was also the beginning of the ministry that would HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE CROSS! And baptism itself is a DYING and REBIRTH.
- xiii. Jesus told the two brothers that they would suffer...they would share the cup...they would share the baptism." That they would JOIN Jesus in His ministry. James, in fact, would be martyred in 44AD by being run through with a sword by Herod Agrippa (you can read that in Acts 12). John died of extreme old age, but was persecuted throughout his entire life as a disciple because of his unwavering loyalty to Jesus.
- xiv. Jesus finished this side conversation with the Z brothers by simply saying, "And, besides, it's not for me to say who gets to sit with me...that's above my pay grade."
- xv. Well, as you can imagine, the other disciples who got wind of this were INCENSED!
- xvi. So, Jesus called them all together before they started unfriending them, and simply said, "In the life outside the church, with the Gentiles, people lift up leaders and then those leaders lord it over them...and the most prominent rulers become tyrants."
- xvii. Jesus' implication here was that those Gentile rulers were revered, feared, even worshipped...and they were, no doubt, served.
- xviii. James and John may not have SAID that they wanted THAT kind of position of power and leadership, but that would be the end result if Jesus said, "OK...you can sit with me in glory."

xix. Instead, Jesus said, “It’s not LIKE that among you...among US. Among the Jesus people. Whoever wants to become great MUST be a servant. Whoever wishes to be first, MUST become like a slave to ALL.”

xx. In Matthew 20:16, Jesus said, “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

xxi. In essence, Jesus was saying, “Whoever wishes to be with me - to follow me - must learn to serve all people, no matter what STATUS they are.

xxii. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, AND give his life a ransom (a payment) for many.”

xxiii. That is the **MANDATE** to live a Life of Serving...and to grow in that Life of Serving.

xxiv. A Life of Serving means getting low in order to move from being served to serving to being a servant leader.

- B. In John 13, we have the famous story of Jesus sitting with the disciples one night before his arrest, and during the supper, Jesus got up, took off his outer clothes, knelt before the disciples, and **WASHED THEIR FEET!** The mandate is to serve all people. The **VISION** is to get low and serve like Jesus served.
- i. This is the ultimate act of getting low in order to serve.
  - ii. Foot-washing was something a servant did. Maybe the disciple washed the teacher’s feet. **NEVER THE TEACHER!** People would come in from the dusty streets filled with mud, dirt, and ‘other’ things. The lowly, humble servant would remove the guest’s sandals and wash their feet. It was an act of hospitality and love...of servanthood.
  - iii. Here was Jesus doing the **SAME** thing to the Twelve. Peter, of course, refuses saying, “Lord, you will never wash **MY** feet?!” No way!
  - iv. But Jesus replied, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.”
  - v. Let that sink in for just a second, because we rush over that point. Jesus’ life was to be a model for us. Jesus’ call was for us to do the things he did. He washed the feet of those he came to love, teach, and serve.
  - vi. Unless we allow Jesus to do what Jesus’ is called to do for us - suffer, die, be raised again - we can’t do what he wants **US** to do for others. If we don’t believe that Jesus is who he says he is - even down to the fact that he gave **EVERYTHING** for us - then we can’t fully join him in his work.
  - vii. We’re called to moved from being people who are served by Jesus and others and the church, to being sold-out servants of others and the church. This is serving with Jesus. **THIS** is what is means to grow in a Life of Serving.

viii. The mandate is to serve all...the vision to get low and serve like Jesus did.

### 3. Application

- A. Joining Jesus in ministry as you CLUTCH-SHIFT- and ACCELERATE in a Life of Serving certainly is different for each follower of Jesus.
- B. There isn't one WAY to serve others...but by serving others in whatever WAY you're called and gifted, you're indeed serving the Lord for his glory. THAT'S the glory that James and John were getting at. Now that we have the whole story, the things we do, like Jesus did, are done to reveal Jesus to the world.
- C. Before we get to the gears into which you're called to SHIFT, we have to ask ourselves the question, "What does it take to serve all people like Jesus did?" As followers of Jesus, do we just KNOW how to serve, who to serve, and when and where to serve?
- D. Nope...but when you know your WHY and you lean into the spiritual gifts given to every believer by the Holy Spirit, then you move from a person that is served, to a disciple that serves.
  - i. We've talked about knowing your WHY - knowing the rock-solid reason why you're a follower of Jesus. It's the vision of why you come to church, participate in worship, raise your family in the church, and why you serve. Our WHY - our vision - continues to be that we want to see every family and person in our community have the opportunity to believe in and know Jesus Christ. When we focus on our why, we find our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
  - ii. But a vision and mission are only part of the story. You also have to know your spiritual gifts and learn how to use them for God's glory and to build the church. We had the Confirmation Class identify their spiritual gifts, and I'll tell you, I am excited for what these young women and men are doing for the Lord. Ask them what they discovered...and then help them use those gifts for God's glory. Not everyone has the spiritual gift of serving, but we are all called to serve as we are gifted.
  - iii. When you know your why, and know your spiritual gifts and talents, then you'll have the confidence to move from being served by others to serving all like Jesus did, to even being a servant leader.
- E. Let's see what the four gears are for a Life of Serving. None of the categories is wrong...it's just where you find yourself in order to SHIFT-ACCELERATE-REPEAT. Remember, this is the 'joining Jesus in ministry' category...joining Jesus in a life of serving like He did.
- F. The first gear is the EXPLORING stage.

- i. This first step is an eye-opening time, when you're often amazed at the way some people in church and around you selflessly serve others. You find yourself wanting to make a difference as well.
- ii. I think all of us want to make a difference. But this is making a difference for Jesus and his mission.
- iii. If you're at this stage, observe well. Learn about the opportunities to serve others. Start discovering your spiritual gifts. This week, I saw this as we had two funeral lunches served by people with amazing servant's hearts.
- iv. To find out if you're at this first stage, ask yourself:
  - a. Do I feel like lots of other people are serving in ways that I'd like be serving but don't know how?
  - b. Am I inspired by others who know their gifts and are energized to use them?
- v. If so, this is where you are in your life of serving and are ready to shift to the FOLLOWING STAGE.

G. In the FOLLOWING stage:

- i. You've settled the fact that Jesus is INDEED inviting you to join him in serving others like he did. Now, you're wondering how you can do this?
- ii. This is the stage that requires some curiosity and courage to start figuring out what it is that God is calling you to do.
- iii. You're at this FOLLOWING stage if you're asking yourself:
  - a. How do I go about serving like I see some others doing so seemingly effortlessly?
  - b. What do I do well, feel gifted to do, and how does that match the church?

H. Phase 3 is the BECOMING phase.

- i. This is where things get real! And FUN!
- ii. You're beginning to experiment with serving in different areas as you discover how to use your spiritual gifts, talents, and passions. There are just certain things that are being offered to you as opportunities and you're looking forward to trying them.
- iii. You might be asking yourself:
  - a. Am I prepared to step into a ministry to use the gifts God has given me?
  - b. Where does my passion lie and is there a ministry in which to serve, or start one?

- iv. This is the stage many of us find ourselves. We sometimes have a hard time moving from this because finding the time to keep working on our spiritual gifts becomes harder. Jesus never expected you to be HIM. He does, though, invite you to join Him in ministry, working through you to use the gifts he gave you.
- I. When you do that, you move into the CENTERED gear, and your life of serving is centered in Christ.
  - i. You join Jesus in mission to others, using your God-given gifts, talents, and passions.
  - ii. In this stage, God seems to give you lots of opportunities and passion for the ministries and people you're serving. It's not a task or chore, but part of who you are.
  - iii. You find joy in the serving...and maybe even leading other servants.
- J. The milestone of Serving grows out of all the other milestones. We worship so we can orient our lives to God. We build community so we have a place to serve. We open ourselves to God in order to know where and how to serve. And we obey by doing what Jesus asks.
- K. Every one of our milestones is related to the others...and cannot be fully expressed without the others.
- L. Be thinking about ways to serve - volunteer in the church and community, practice putting others first, reorient your schedule to respond when someone asks, listen to, be open to, and obey the Holy Spirit, and engage in simple and random acts of kindness each day...

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. Joining Jesus in ministry is really where being a disciples of Jesus takes on the kind of meaning that inspires and spreads the love of Jesus to the world.
- B. It's what the generations that are coming into the church are looking for and how they envision the ministry of Jesus - serving the least, the last, and the lost.
- C. It's envisioning a church that makes a difference for Jesus in this community, in our schools, in our nation, and around the world.
- D. We, together, envision a new day together, built on the incredible hope of salvation lived out by meeting the needs of people on the margins. Serving in the way Jesus invites us means confronting injustice and opening our homes to each other.
- E. Get low...serve like Jesus.
- F. Let's pray...