

# The Greatest Person = Servant

## Barakel:

1. Fr PM 15 min: Psalm 16.11 or underrower
2. Sat AM 30 min WNS
3. Sat PM 45 min: Throne
4. Sun AM 45 min:
5. Sun PM 45 Min:
6. Mon AM 20 min:

This morning we are given an opportunity by God to be great in His sight.

Open with me to Matthew 20:25-28:

*But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NKJV*

Now turn over to Matthew 23:10-12:

*And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. NKJV*

Jesus says that the way up is down. The way to the top is the bottom. The way to greatness is servanthood. This is His consistent theme. When all of history is over and eternity reigns, what is left? God and His servants. That is Revelation 22!

When we get to the end of everything--what is left? In other words, what will last forever?

Revelation 22 ends with God, Heaven and one more element—**servants serving God**.

Who are those surrounding God's Throne?

*Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and **His servants shall serve Him**. NKJV*

*Revelation 22:6, 9 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to **show His servants** the things which must shortly take place. 9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am **your fellow servant**, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." NKJV*

So the greatest thing in all the world is serving God—it is what we shall be doing forever and should be doing now!

So Jesus calls us to be the greatest possible ones we can be for Him. He defines greatness in relation to servanthood. So the way we are great to God is to be His servant. So let's apply that principle.

So to be:

- The greatest husband: be the greatest servant of God to your wife.
- The greatest dad: be the greatest servant of God to your family.
- The greatest missionary: be the greatest servant of God to your mission field and your mission field coworkers.
- The greatest wife: be the greatest servant of God to your husband.
- The greatest mother: be the greatest servant of God to your children.
- The greatest Christian: be the greatest servant to God.

This book, JWFF is all about how to serve God, how to serve your husband, how to serve your wife, and how to serve your children.

God is looking for servants this morning! Throughout time and history, God has a select group of people He works very closely with. This group is

referred to over and over in the Scriptures. They are called His bond servants. Today is a time we must ask ourselves the question, "Am I a good and faithful bondservant of God?"

We should want a servant's heart. As parents, the greatest goal we have spiritually is to raise children who are useful to God. Usefulness in Christ's kingdom is defined by one very precious quality—servanthood. The words "servants," "service," and "bondservants" are used over 1,000 times in the New Testament, which amounts to about once every seven verses. That is very frequent!

When Paul wanted to convey how he kept going in life and how he wanted folks to assess his motivation, he drew from the Roman world of his day and called himself a slave! Not just any slave. There are seven other New Testament words:

Diakonos	=	ministering servants
Diketes	=	household servants
Therapon	=	confidential servants
Leitourgos	=	public servants
Latureo	=	temple servants
Dikonokos	=	responsible servants
Doulos	=	bond servants

It is clear that God expects us to be Christ's servants, always following His example. It has been estimated by historians that at the time of Paul there were as many as 60 million slaves owned by masters in the Roman Empire. Therefore, slaves and slavery were well-known themes to the New Testament world. That is why Paul's testimony to the church at Corinth was so powerful.

In 1 Corinthians 4:1 they knew what he meant when he declared that he and his companions wanted to be regarded as "servants." Please turn there with me.

*1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. NKJV*

The word “servants” in the original language was *huperetes*, which literally meant “under rowers.” That term communicated a vision of humility and absolute servility.

“Under rowers” hardly means anything to us, but it was a loathsome term to the Corinthians of the first century. Corinth sat astride the isthmus that joined the southern peninsula to mainland Greece.

In Paul’s time Corinth was the wealthiest and most prominent of all Greek cities. One of the most common sights to the people of Corinth was the ship tramway that moved vessels overland to the opposite shore. Like the Panama Canal today, that overland transport system was in constant use and saved days of travel time for all who used it. The most numerous boats were the galley slave ships, each with three banks of oars in three levels, one above another. The slaves who sat chained to the bottom oars were called the “under rowers.”

*Life at the bottom of the ship:* The under rowers’ life at the bottom of the ship was tough, always busy, and permanent. Most died in service; the chains about their ankles were grim reminders of their bondage.

And there were five aspects of their work that Paul and his companions could identify with in calling themselves “servants of Christ”:

- 1. Galley slaves had to row to the captain’s beat.** To keep as many as 150 oars together, the captain beat a rhythmic tempo on a drum and each slave had to row with that beat.
- 2. Galley slaves had to row together.** Often two or three rowers moved 30-foot oars. They quickly learned that one could not lean on the oar, another push, and another pull; they had to work as a team.
- 3. Galley slaves had to trust the captain.** In the gloomy depths of the boat, slaves had no idea where they were, where they were going, or when they would arrive. Their labors were of total faith and obedience. As the captain’s beat grew more and more rapid, it could signal an enemy attack, a storm to be avoided, or a hurried schedule. Slaves could not question the captain; they could only obey.
- 4. Galley slaves were committed for life.** Their trip was always a one-way trip. The damp, hard benches were no relief to weary bones after a day’s labor. The lack of sunshine and fresh air, combined with the leg chains, meant repeated illness during service; every slave was

bound to the ship with deadly certainty. And if the ship went down in a storm or in conflict, slaves had no way of escape.

**5. Galley slaves received no honor; only the captain was visible to the outer world.** Although there were dozens of men who gave their lives and very breath to keep the ship going, they were never seen. They rowed on and on, day in and day out, invisible to and unrewarded by the world. If an under rower was ever seen, it was because he was not doing his job.

So what was Paul's goal in his life? To be Christ's servant. What should be our personal goal? The same. We must become, by habit, "under rowers" for our Captain—Jesus Christ! As we set the example of humility and absolute servility, we should be praying that our children will do likewise. I encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 4:1 again, and then enter the names of your loved ones in your Bible, and pray that verse for them.

With a few strokes of a pen on parchment Paul painted a portrait that was horridly vivid for his readers. And he said it was a portrait of himself and his companions in ministry. Paul wanted to be known and remembered for five things:

1. That he rowed to the Captain's beat and so was **SUBMISSIVE**;
2. That he worked in harmony with those about him and so was **SENSITIVE**;
3. That he didn't care where he labored for the Captain, and so was **TRUSTING**;
4. That he would die at his post, and so was **DEDICATED**;
5. And that he wanted none of the glory to go to himself, but all to the Captain, and so was **HUMBLE**.

Our motivation for serving Christ differs from those ancient galley slaves, of course, even if our situation is similar. Like galley slaves, we need to obey our Master, cooperate with our fellow servants, trust the Lord to take us where we need to go, remain in service for a lifetime, and give Christ all the glory. But while galley slaves did these things out of fear, we can do them in confident trust in a loving Captain whose plans for us are good.

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11)

Like galley slaves, we belong to someone else.

"You are not your own," wrote Paul; "you were bought at a price" (I Cor. 6:19c,20a).

But while they were held by iron chains, we are held in Christ's service by a different kind of chain:

"For Christ's love compels us..." (2 Cor. 5:14).

So, the personal examination that must be done this morning is--are we living our life each day as bond servants of Christ?

So, what can we do to be slaves of Christ this morning? I believe the key is found in starting some new habits. The HABITS OF A SERVANT are vital to each of using beginning or continuing a life of servanthood. Here is the test. Answer these questions in your heart and see if these are your habits of life!

Are you truly **SUBMISSIVE**, rowing to the beat of your Captain?

- Saying with Jesus Matthew 26:39 "Not my will but Thine be done";
- Presenting your self to Him today as a living sacrifice Romans 12:1-2
- HOW? By being in the Word! **By Needing the Word!**

Are you **SENSITIVE** pulling together with your fellow servants in Christ?

- "Look not every man on his own things but on the things of others" Philippians 2:4
- "Others' Booth;
- HOW? By being regularly, faithfully, weekly, committedly in the Assembly with the saints! Hebrews 10:24-25. **By Needing the Saints!**

Are you truly **TRUSTING** Christ so you willingly go wherever He leads?

- Psalm 48:14 For this [is] God, Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide [Even] to death. (NKJV)

- John 15:5 "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (NKJV)
- HOW? By being in a Christ dependence relationship to Jesus! You know what chemical dependence is, the cigarette, bottle, needle or pill. The craving and total focus. That is what Jesus wants in a positive spiritual relationship! **By Needing the Lord!**

Are you truly **DEDICATED** as one committed to Him for life?

- "I have finished the course" Paul said in II Timothy 4:7
- "I do always things that please the Father" Jesus said in John 8:29
- HOW? By being marked as belonging to Him! Citizens of Heaven as Paul said in Philippians 3:20. **By Needing His Well Done good and Faithful servant!**

And are you truly **HUMBLE** making sure to take none of the glory but to pass it all on to Him?

- The Psalmist [115:1] cried "not unto us, not unto us, but to Your name give glory
- God calls Himself a Jealous God no less than 9x in the OT. Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the LORD your God [is] a consuming fire, a jealous God. (NKJV). He also says He is jealous over His people atleast 4x.
- HOW? **By Needing only God to get all the GLORY!**

That what we are to be this morning.

Song

#368 All for Jesus

#371 Have Thine own Way

Now lets look into the Life of the greatest servant of all and examine the heart of a servant. Jesus was the Ultimate Servant. He is our example. His life overflows with servant heartedness.

1. **Cultivating a servants heart means praying for God's ruling over each of my days.** Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as [it is] in heaven. (NKJV) Which shows salvation Matthew 7:21 " Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(NKJV) Which shows relationship Matthew 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (NKJV)

2. **Cultivating a servants heart means staying loyal to the Lord as their master.** This kind of heart is EXCLUSIVE, its Him first or nothing! Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (NKJV) Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (NKJV) James 4:4-5 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? (KJV)
3. **Cultivating a servants heart means seeking to serve others.** Matthew 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
4. **Cultivating a servants heart means a growing attitude of willingness to go to the end of the line.** Mark 9:35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (NKJV) Mark 10:44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. (NKJV)
5. **Cultivating a servants heart means following Christ's example daily.** Luke 9:23 Then He said to [them] all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (NKJV) Luke 14:27 "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (NKJV)
6. **Cultivating a servants heart means seeking to do God's will.** John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. (KJV)
7. **Cultivating a servants heart means not being a people pleaser but a God pleaser.** Galatians 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.
8. **Cultivating a servants heart means seeking to deny my selfish desires.** Philippians 2:7-11 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to [the point of] death, even the death of the cross. (NKJV)

9. **Cultivating a servants heart means staying in touch at all times with your Master.** Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
10. **Cultivating a servants heart means not being argumentative and pushy.** 2 Timothy 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, In a practical sense, patience is the ability to remember good and forget evil. You don't keep a record of wrongs people have committed against you (cf. 1 Cor. 13:5).<sup>1</sup>
11. **Cultivating a servants heart means delighting in doing the will of God.** Hebrews 10:5-7 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me -- To do Your will, O God.'" (NKJV) Psalm 40:6-8 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book [it is] written of me. 8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law [is] within my heart." (NKJV)
12. **Cultivating a servants heart means willing to suffer for God's Glory.** 1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (KJV)

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<sup>1</sup>MacArthur, John, Jr., *The Master's Plan for the Church*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1998.