

The Church is a Body of Servants

“As far as ham sandwiches go, it was perfection. It had a thick slab of ham, a fresh bun, crisp lettuce and plenty of that expensive, light brown, gourmet mustard. The corners of my mouth ached in anticipation as I carried it to the picnic table in our backyard.

And as I picked it up with both hands ready to take a bite, I was stopped by my wife who appeared suddenly at my side and said, ‘Can you hold the baby while I get my sandwich?’

So I took my son and I balanced him between my left elbow and shoulder and was reaching again for the ham sandwich of perfection when I noticed a streak of mustard on my fingers. And since I had no napkin and since I love mustard, I licked it off.

The only problem was, it was not mustard. That’s right! No man ever put a baby down faster than I did that day! In fact, it was the first and only time I have sprinted around with my tongue protruding from my face.

And so I took a washcloth in each hand I did the sort of rapid fire routine that shoeshine boys do, only I did it on my tongue.

And that’s when my wife chimed in, ‘Well, now you know why they call that mustard Poupon.’”

Now how many of you are going to get a ham sandwich to eat while you’re reading this? And in case you’re wondering, no, I’m not the Father in that story! **But here’s my point.** How many of you would say that that man’s encounter with his child left a bad taste in his mouth? But folks, believe it or not, did you know he’s not the only one having a bad taste in his mouth from children? Believe it or not, this same scenario is happening all

over our country every single day! **How?** By the **children of God** walking around in life like we've got **practical amnesia!** Talk about a leaving a bad taste in your mouth!

Oh, we say we know who we are as the Church, but half the time, with our lips and with our lives, we act like we've forgotten who we are. And it's not only detrimental in our walk with Christ. It keeps others from believing in Christ. Therefore, to avoid this **atrocious** of Christian's living like they got practical amnesia by not knowing who they are, we're going to continue our study from the Word of God on the people of God entitled, **"Will the REAL Church Please Stand Up?"**

And we've already seen the **first thing** we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we've got practical amnesia is that the Church is the **Body of Christ**. The **second thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Brides**. The **third thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of One**. The **fourth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Hope**. The **fifth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Joy**. The **sixth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Love**. The **seventh thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Peace**. The **eighth thing** we need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Strangers**. And last time we saw the **ninth thing** we

need to know is that the Church is a **Body of Disciples**. And there we saw that even though the Bible says we were supposed to be disciples or **disciplined learners** of Christ, the American Church is discipling themselves all right. It's just that it's with anything and everything but Christ. **Why?** Because we study **trivial things instead of the truth**, we study **flippantly instead of consistently**, and we even study for **personal gain instead of godly gain**. And because of that, we're not only ceasing to be a Body of Disciples, we're actually turning into a Body of **distracted people disinterested in Christ**. And I don't think that's the kind of Church Jesus came to die for, how about you?

But people, believe it or not, did you know that's not the only thing we need to know about the Church if we're going to stop acting like we got practical amnesia? The **tenth** we need to know is **The Church is a Body of Servants**. But hey, don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Matthew 20:20-28 "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. What is it you want? he asked. She said, Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.

You don't know what you are asking, Jesus said to them. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink? We can, they answered. Jesus said to them, You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you.

Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. The disciples didn't have a clue as to what made for a great or successful Christian, did they? In fact, their cluelessness was causing trouble amongst them, wasn't it? **Therefore, what did Jesus do?** He had to correct them and tell them that a so-called a super duper Christian was **not** one who had a high position and lots of people serving them. What did Jesus say? He said a super duper Christian was one who served lots of people just like Him, right?

And here's my point. Surely, we all know this, right? I mean, surely every Christian who's ever lived knows that the Church is to be a **Body of Servants**, where people look at us and say, “Wow! Look at those people! They've got to be followers of Christ! They're constantly serving others, doing whatever it takes, sacrificing their lives just to help people in the name of Christ! **Surely we know that, right?** Well, you'd think so, but we've got some problems. **Why?** Because if you look at most Churches it doesn't look like we're doing all we can to serve others in the Name of Christ. Are you

kidding! It looks like we're doing all we can to ensure others **serve us** no matter the price!

So why in the world do we do this? Why do we Christians **refuse to serve others in the Name of Christ** when the Bible says we need to **become servants like Christ**? Hey, great question. I'm glad you asked. It's pretty simple. The **first reason** why we're no longer servants like Christ is because **We Think Serving is Done to Us**.

John 13:12-17 "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.

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. 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."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. If we really want to show we're followers of Christ and that He is our Master, what are we going to be doing? **We're going to be doing the same thing the Master did**, right? We're going to be stooping down and serving others even if it means washing their big ol' gnarly feet, right? And the benefit for that was what? What did Jesus say? If we do that, we're going to have a what? A blessed life, right? And how many of you would like to have a blessed life?

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know if we're ever going to have a blessed life let alone show the world we're really followers of Christ, we've got to get busy serving others, right? People are you kidding? Let's be honest! We don't think we need to live a life serving others. We think we need to live a life with others serving us! **Why?** Because we're not following Christ! We're following our culture!

People, whether you realize it or not, we live in a society today that scoffs at the idea of living a life of a servant. They don't say that's a blessed life. They call a rotten life, a failure! They say a successful life is one who has enough money to do nothing with their life and have others serve your every whim. But what did we read? Jesus says we're to sacrifice our lives in service to others just like Him! **Why?** Because it **first of all** protects us from becoming what I call **Christian Brats!** For instance, how many of you have every gone to the store and you run across a little kid driving their Mom nuts saying, "I want this, I want that, give me this, give me that," and if they don't get what they want they kick or scream or throw a tantrum on the floor. And when you see a kid like that, what do you want to do? You want to go over and lay hands on that child in a profound way, right? **Why?** Because they are acting like a selfish brat who thinks the whole world

revolves around them, right? Therefore, if God's children walk around in life screaming "I want this, I want that, give me this, do that for me and if you don't serve me and meet my needs I'm going to throw a tantrum and leave," **what would you call them? A brat in need of a spanking**, right? And how many of you know that God will spank His children?

Oh but that's not all. The **second reason** Jesus says we need to be servants is because it protects us from not only being bratty Christians, but **hypocritical Christians**. For instance, can you imagine if you called the **fire department** and asked them to come help put out a fire and they shouted back, "Go get your garden hose and do it yourself! Don't you have water at your own house?" Or maybe you go to a restaurant and you ask the **waitress** to serve you some food and she yells, "Who do you think I am! Go back there and tell the cook yourself! What do you think I am your slave?" Or maybe you just got robbed and you flagged a **policeman** down and he said, "So what? What are you bothering me for? Can't you see I'm busy." Or can you imagine if a **politician** under a system of government that's of the people, by the people, and for the people, refused to listen to the people and do what they put him in office to do? No wait, they already do that! **But anyway, my point is this**. In all of those cases, we expect those people to what? To sacrifice and serve the needs of others because that's what they're

being paid to do, right? Therefore, if seeing a public servant refusing to serve the public ticks us off, how much more is God ticked off when His children are doing the same thing?

People, when are we going to learn that **the Christian life is not asking what God can do for you! It's asking what you can do for God!**

We are to serve others just like Jesus did! **Therefore**, if a Christian refuses to serve others and follow in the footsteps of Christ, could it be that they're not really a follower of Christ? Kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it?

Oh, but that's not all. The **second reason** why we're no longer servants like Christ is because **We Think Serving is an Option for Us.**

Matthew 25:15-18,26,28,30 "To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.

But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. His master replied, You wicked, lazy servant! Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. There are two kinds of servants, aren't there? There's the good ones and the not so good ones, right? And how do you know what a **good one** looks like? Simple. They take what God has invested in them and turn around and invest it in

His kingdom, right? And how do you know what a **bad one** looks like? Just as simple. They do just the opposite. They refuse to do anything, right? And how many of you would say God is pleased with the bad ones? Yeah, usually the words wicked and lazy and weeping and gnashing of the teeth give it away!

And people, **the point is this**. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know that if we're going to live a life that is pleasing to God let alone demonstrate we're not phoney baloney Christians, we're going to serve God no matter what, right? People are you kidding? Let's be honest! We don't think serving is a command for us. We think it's an option! We don't serve consistently. We serve whenever it's convenient!

But you might be thinking, "Now wait a minute man. I know I'm a little irregular in my service to God and I don't jump at the chance to do something for His kingdom all the time, let alone consistently, but God knows my heart. He knows I'm still a faithful servant of His." Oh really? Well, maybe we need to remind ourselves of the **definition of faithful**. Therefore, let's take a test. Let's see what makes something faithful.

1. If your car started one out of three times, would you consider it faithful?
2. If the paperboy skipped Mondays and Thursdays, would they be missed?

3. If you didn't show up at work two or three times a month, would your boss call you faithful?
4. If your refrigerator quit a day now and then, would you excuse it and say, "Oh, well, it works most of the time"?
5. If your water heater greets you with cold water one or two mornings a week while you were in the shower, would it be faithful?
6. If you miss a couple of mortgage payments in a year's time, would your bank say, "Oh, well, ten out of twelve isn't bad"?
7. Therefore, if you miss worship services and attend meeting only often enough to show your interested but never enough to get involved, are you faithful?

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say being faithful requires a little bit of regularity, how about you? And if that kind of behavior won't fool a bank of man, do you really think we're fooling the Son of God? **Therefore**, if Christians live lives thinking service is an option instead of a command, could it be **optional** as to whether or not they really belong to Christ? Kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it?

Oh, but that's not all. The **third reason** why we're no longer servants like Christ is because **We Think Serving is Made for Us**.

Acts 20:34-35 "You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. We Christians must not only work to meet our needs but the needs of the who? **The needs of the weak**, right? **Why?** Because what did Jesus say? It is more blessed to give than to what? Than to receive, right?

And so here's my point. Surely the American Church knows this, right? I mean, surely we know that if we're ever going to receive the blessings of God then we've got to give away our lives in service to the weak, right? People are you kidding? Let's be honest! We don't use God's gifts in service to others. We use God's gifts in service to us! We don't apply our skills and talents for the weak and downhearted. We apply them to get a big house and Ferrari!

And people, in my opinion, this is precisely where the majority of the American Church is. **Herein lies our biggest problem!** You see, even when we realize that serving is not to be **done to us**, nor is it **an option for us**, we can still blow it! **How?** By taking our God-given gifts for the service of others and use them to serve only us! And to show you how easy this happens to Christians, I'm going to share with you two stories of two Christians and I want you to rate in your mind, using a scale from one to ten, how well their we're using their God-given gifts for the service of others.

"I had a young student, and one time I took him with me to Haiti. I took him up to a medical center in the northern part of the country. I showed him a

hospital where seven hundred people had lined up that morning for medical care. There was only one doctor and two nurses.

They only could take care of a hundred people. The other six hundred were turned away and when my student saw that he said, 'Doc, I'm going to go back and I'm going to complete my education and become a doctor and come back here to serve these people. That's my dream. That's the vision that God gave me.'

Well, I met him in New York last year and he's a doctor but he's not taking care of people in Haiti. Do you know what he's doing? Cosmetic surgery one women. Please, sometimes that's necessary but for the most part, what he is doing is a sheer absurdity.

But you see, there's a lot of money to made in doing cosmetic surgery for women. Much more than saving lives in Haiti! And so a dream was vanquished. A vision was obliterated."

Okay, I know it's going to be a tough decision, but think of that scale from one to ten and in your mind make a note as to what score you would give that guy on our Christian servant scale. Got it? Okay, now let's try servant number two.

"I had another student. His name is Brian Stevenson. He graduated from Eastern top of the class. He went to Harvard law school and graduated again from the top of his class. A young, handsome, brilliant, articulate African American man.

Have you any idea what a top graduate of Harvard law school is able to earn with a firm? A quarter of a million dollars? Easily. Do you know what he is doing? He's living in a one room flat in Montgomery Alabama. And every morning he gets up and goes down to the jailhouse and defends the men and women on death row for free!

Why? Because he said it has nothing to do with the death penalty. It has to do with this. We have two kinds of law in this country. One kind of law for the rich and the powerful and another kind of law for the poor and the

oppressed. He said that we don't put criminals to death in America. We put poor people to death in America.

Why? Because the poor have no one to speak for them. And then he paused and said, 'Except in Montgomery Alabama. Because in Montgomery Alabama, Doc, I speak for the poor. And Doc, I'm good!'

Oh, Brian, you don't know how good you are! A young man who would not sell out to the system. A young man who had a dream and a vision that God had called him to do something significant with his life!"

Now folks, I know this might be a big surprise, but which one of those guys would you say scored higher on the servant scale? It's kind of obvious, isn't it? Now let me ask you one more question. Ask yourself, right now, with the way you've been living your Christian life, where would you be on that scale? Are you serving Christ or are you serving yourself?

But you might be thinking, "Hey wait a minute. You're being a little too harsh here. I mean, yeah okay, so I think serving is done to me instead of others and I think serving in general is an option not a command and yeah I haven't been using my God given gifts for others but so what! It only affects me!" Well that's where you're wrong. You see, sometimes refusing to become a servant **really is a matter of life and death**, like this lady learned.

"One day a Mother received a phone call from her son who had been away for a long time serving in the Vietnam War. And after the pleasant gestures were over the son asked his Mom, 'Mom I can come home in a couple of weeks but I was wondering if I could bring a friend with me?'

And the Mother replied, 'Well, sure you can bring a friend.'

But the son continued, ‘Well, you see, there’s something you need to know Mom. You see, my friend was hurt pretty bad during the war and he’s going to need a little bit of care. He has only one eye, one arm, and one leg.’

And his Mom hesitated a bit but replied, ‘Well, I guess it would be okay for a couple of weeks or so.’ But her son pressed one more time, ‘But Mom, it wouldn’t be for a few weeks. It would be forever. You see, Mom, he has no family. He has nobody to take care of him.’

Well at this the Mother explained that this would seriously disrupt their life and it wouldn’t be very convenient with their lifestyle and all, and besides what would people think.

So the son paused for a moment but then simply replied, “Okay Mom. But whatever happens, just know that I love you very very much.”

And it just so happened that two weeks later, the Mother got another phone call. Only this one informed her that her son had jumped out of a hospital window and killed himself. And so this mother, confused and bewildered, in a matter of days, found herself having to say goodbye to her son at a funeral service instead of welcoming him back home.

And as hard as that was, nothing could have prepared her for what she was about to encounter. You see, as she approached the casket to say goodbye, she saw that her son had only one eye, one arm, and one leg.

And as she cried out in utter despair, she realized that it was her son who was the friend in need of someone to love and serve him, but now it was too late!”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I have a sneaking suspicion that that Mother kind of regretted not being willing to be a servant to others, how about you? **And so here’s the point.** How many millions of people **will die and will go to hell** because the American Church is **likewise unwilling** to be servants of Christ?

And people, that's why if we can't stop **playing Church** instead of being the Church then maybe it's time to **get out of the Church? Why?** Because being a Christian is not a game. What we say and do literally affects the eternal destiny of people around us. Therefore, it's high time we get rid of our **practical amnesia**. We've got to remember who we are! We're not a bunch of selfish self-centered servants of man. Are you kidding! We are a bunch of submitted servers of God, just like Christ. We're His Body. A **Body of Servants!**

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
