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So, I had a bit of a wake-up call early on, in my time in Um, That my former denomination. In seminary, we had Uh, we had of course, studied the scriptures and Studied the deaconate. Uh, thought everybody knew that. The lord had only called men to the office of overseeing.

The deaconal ministry of the church, Quite obvious in acts. Quite obvious. And Um, pastoral epistles. But my former denomination, although we had Confessional standards and form of government. Turned out that not everyone, followed those things. And, One of the things that I ran into was, Uh, people who Thought that women should be in the office of ever seeing the deaconal ministry of the church.

Which is really stunning. Because you can't hold a position. Well, It is very difficult to hold a position like the ARP has Where it's all right for some but it's not. All right, for others. Uh, this lady is a, is A deacon before god ordained to office if she's in this congregation.

But if she goes up, Uh, the street to a different congregation in the same. Uh, sent it. That. She is not recognized as even being eligible for the office. And even worse, if if The Lord really does. Um, If the lord really does indicate in his word that Uh, women are to be installed to the office.

And then you don't. Then you are resisting, the will of god and giving offense to him. And abusing his bride. Uh, so this this idea that We can just Uh, we can have it different ways in different congregations. Um, That was. A little bit, surprising to me. But another thing that was surprising was the way they Did their exegeses since the way they looked?

Uh, Support their position from the bible. And, It felt a little bit like something. That. Uh, that I was familiar with and and loved to do but it was Completely different, and that is, Uh, they went Passage to passage looking for places where the root of the word. From which the The name of the office deacon comes.

Looking for anywhere that it has to do with women. And if they found one, then that was evidence of a woman. Deacon And we should have them. Um, Now, that is not. That is not a healthy way. To do your exegesis. If we went and looked for, Every instance of that word and decided, That that was specifically treating the office of deacon we would end up with a very Strange and confused.

Uh, spaghetti mess. Of what the office of deacon is. But one of the things that does help us, When we look for the instances of the use of that word, Is how often it is used of christ. How often it is used of his character. How often it is used of his selflessness.

Because, All christians are to be conformed to the character of christ. And all christians are. Called to a humble and lowly. Servant attitude and service life. Of others. And that is the the aspect of the believer's life. That the officers of the deaconate oversee and facilitate And so, as As we are in this.

Uh, god's deaconal people and god's. The actual people are the ones who are joined to god the sun through faith. By the indwelling and attending ministry of god, the spirit who gives that

faith, conforms us to christ to whom he joins us. And and is perfecting our faith. So it's actually quite instructive as we're kind of doing that first considering The coming of christ.

His His diagonal character. This week, his jacket on ministry. Uh, next board today. Lord willing. And then his teaching on the deaconet will probably take a couple of lord's day. Uh, lord's days. And then we'll come to the second big section. Which is. Uh, the The ministry of the spirit, informing the deaconate.

And especially looking at acts which we did. Of course, when we were Uh, in that section of acts breaching through the book. And then considering The, the ongoing application of that in the churches. So this morning, we come to Uh christ as deacon. Uh, or christ as servant for christ as minister And those are the Uh, the two words that are most commonly used to translate, This word.

Servant or minister and the lord jesus. Identifies himself. As a servant over against, Uh, the way that the world thinks over against the way that his disciples were still thinking, even on the e, that Right up until his Crucifixion. And he doesn't just identify himself as a servant. But as an example to us, Uh, So, in matthew, 20 Uh, you remember.

Uh, james and john. And, It's, it's a little bit like Solomon with Bathsheba, you could tell how How Solomon needed to grow up a little bit because he has to have Bathsheba go to bat for him. With david. You remember in that whole situation, but james and john are still.

They have their mom go ask. And they want the highest places in the kingdom. They don't understand. Uh, what they're asking? And then, of course, the rest of the disciples, Uh, are upset that these two, one of the highest plays in the kingdom. And so it says, when the tin heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

But jesus called them to himself and said, You know, that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over then. And those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet, it shall not be so among you not that there isn't authority but that it isn't domineering. Whoever desires to become great among you.

Let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, Let him be your slave. And then he uses these words in reference to himself as the model for this among believers. Just as the son of man, did not come to be served. But to serve, And to give his life a ransom for many.

And so, if you're thinking in a transliterary transliteration, sort of way, just as the son of man, did not come to be deaconed but to deacon and i know that's not proper, use of the language, but just to give you an idea, Of. How vital our being. Humble of mind slowly of heart.

Referring one another to ourselves, being willing to pour out our life for each other. Is. Such a vital part of the christian life. Because it is such a poor aspect of christ's character. When he comes as our redeemer. When he saves us for himself. And conforms us. Uh, to himself.

And so, this is Uh this is what the apostle picks up in Romans, 15.

He says therefore receive one. Another just as christ also received us to the glory of god, now i say that jesus christ has become a servant. To the circumcision for the truth of god. To confirm the promises made to the fathers. And again, the the lord jesus, as servant.

Luke 22.

This is all the disciples. Arguing now. There's a dispute among them as to, which of them should be considered the greatest, i'm in verse 24, Uh, he says to them the kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over then those exercised authority over them are called benefactors. Not so among you on the contrary, he was great.

As someone you, let him be as the younger who governs as he who serves? For who is greater he who sits at the table. Or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet, i am among you. As the one who serves.

You know, of course, that That the lord jesus quite literally left them a picture of that. Uh, when they went in for the last supper, And, That is more likely. What is behind when we get to acts eight? The. The apostles saying they can't leave. Prayer and the ministry of the word.

To oversee the ministry of table service. It's not, it's not saying that the deaconal ministry is primarily distributing bread to widows. That was the, that was the presenting issue that was a presenting situation. They're using language that goes back to jesus's own personal illustration. Of being willing to be the loliest.

And that is what the actual ministry. Of every believer is about. Considering ourselves and all that we are and all that we have entirely at god's disposal for the good of his people. Which is the glorious thing that the lord jesus has done for us. And yes, of course, that means Uh, money and wealth.

But it also means. Uh, time and effort but it's first. It's first a character thing. Uh, before it is a behavior thing. Again, john 15.

John 15 verse 12. This is my commandment that you love one. Another as i have loved you, Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life. For his friends. You are my friends. If you do whatever i command you. No longer do i call you servants?

For a servant does not know what his master is doing. What i have called you friends. For all things that i heard from my father, I have made known to you. Now, this is one of the Uh, one of the ironies, one of the difficulties in understanding the christian life, Is that the way up as the way down?

Jesus is the king of glory, the lord of glory, he is king of kings, and lord of lords. And yet he who did not consider a quality with god, something to be grasped. Humble himself. And now here he is the servant, lord. Teaching. Us. To be servants, but teaching us to be servants.

From a foundation that comes of the fellowship that we have with him. That he treats us as his friends. That he lays down his life for us. To show that he values us as his very own self. And so you and i who trust in christ and had been valued by christ.

He has valued us as his own self, as we values himself. That is what enables us freely willingly easily to be low with others. For we are. Not merely the servants of christ, which is the right place for us. Uh, but we are the friends of christ. To whom he has opened his mind and told us what he is thinking.

Um, you know a master did not tell. Yeah. Yeah. Invite his servants into his councils and tell him all of his reasons for doing things. The lord jesus has opened his mind and hearts to us and told us his purposes and desires, and how we fit into that. Uh, it's it's not, you know, a need to know military situation.

Where the only thing he tells us is what we have to do. Now our Just keep up, you know, picking up, keep picking up object, a and moving it to location B until you're done. Um, Now, the lord doesn't tell us everything. But we don't have the ability to comprehend everything.

Anyway, But he has told us much. And it is that. Fellowship that we have with him, that enables our lowliness with others, which Probably all i've told you already. I can't remember. I'm getting to be one of those old guys who tells you the same things over and over again?

Uh, but a very profound Um, Help. At one of the, at one of the, the big, Assemblies of elders. In the denomination, i was talking about earlier, where there were those who were trying to reason for a female diakonet was there was Um there was one general assembly to which at which the issue was going to come up again.

And, There was a letter from hundreds of women in the in the denomination that was sent. Saying. We love to serve. We love to do it in secret because our master tells us to do it in secret. We have sweet fellowship with him in our service. Uh, you say that we should have office so that we may be properly recognized by the church, but he tells us that if others recognize us, we lose our reward.

Uh, that As long as it remains in secret, we have a special reward from him whose season secret. So, please do not take from us. The sweetness of the fellowship that we have in this humility with the lord jesus. And serving in secret. Um, And that was very helpful, but that is Not just an answer to.

Now. Uh, not treating office in the church, the way the world does, right? That's what the disciples are doing. That's what james, and john, and mrs. Zippity were doing Um, But it's also. The proper application and foundation of all of our deacton ministry in the church. Is, it's a reflection of the character of christ.

We don't have an atoning mission. But we do in conformity to christ have that service that he has appointed. To each. To each one of us. And, We've already referred to it. Praise god. I hope i have good. Hope that it's one of the favorite passages of many of us.

Uh, because the picture of christ is so gloriously. Sweet. About philippians 2. If there's any consolation in christ, any comfort of love, And he fellowship of the spirit and he affection and mercy. Fulfill my joy by being like-minded. Having the same love being of one accord. Of one mind.

And all of that is, From christ by his spirits, application of his character to his people. As it is. Play it out and experienced in the day by day week by week, life of the church, not only in the same in the assembly but especially in the home. Yeah, you talk about spiritual warfare.

When we talk about, you know, how things are going with our marriage, how things are going between us and dark children? How things are going children between you and your brothers and sisters? And, A sweetness of fellowship and avoiding strife and wanting to not just I don't know if you've heard people use the phrase.

Um sadly, it's so alien to our culture and even in our church culture that brothers and sisters should be best friends. And we've got these. Um, these messed up. Un christ's life dynamics in our homes. Where Uh, where children think of others, their age in other places as their best friends.

Not their siblings, not their mom, and dad. Um, When they, when they have a joy, they want to share it with, you know, that that peer their age from somewhere else. They have a grief, and it's usually a grief in rumbling or complaining about their parents or about their siblings.

They go and share that with Um, But brothers and sisters. In the home, in a christian home or not, just supposed to be best friends. They're supposed to be a best brothers. And best sisters. That we have this fellowship and it comes from this. Deaconally. The the actinol-minded imitation of christ.

But nothing be done with selfish ambition or conceit. Button loneliness of mind. Let each team. Others better than himself. Just to give you an idea. Yeah, hopefully it's not. Uh, scandalizing to you. That. Our household needs to hear these things continually to But kids. Uh, i'll use a real life example.

Someone one sibling is doing laundry and asks, the other sibling. Maybe not as kindly as they should have. To to help with the laundry. And, There are two options in that moment. And if you choose option, Don't tell me what to do. You're not the boss of me. I was assigned this as other thing you, you could do that by yourself.

I already finished my job. Uh, if that's how a sibling chooses to answer, then, hopefully a parent will say or I'm so thankful that i finished what i was going to do so that i could. Help you with that, too. Thank you for letting me know and having this opportunity to serve with you.

All right, that might Verbally, end up being. Of course, i'd love to But you don't get to. Of course i'd love to Without thinking through how we should be thinking and conformity to christ a thousand times. Until the habit of having the mind in us, that is in the mind of christ.

That is the mind of christ until that habit has Form shaped our character to his. This of course, is something that Um, That we long for the lord to conform entire congregations to That the congregation is just a place where everyone is eager. To spend themselves for the sake of others.

And not begrudging. How poorly we think others are doing serving me? Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or concede. But in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out, not only for his own interests. But also for the interests of others.

But this mind be in you, which was also in christ jesus. Who being in the form of god. Did not consider it robbery to be equal with god but even though that was true of him, Made himself of no reputation. Taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men.

And that word by the way, is not the deacon word in verse 7. That's the slave word. And being in a being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death. Even the death of the cross. Therefore God has also has highly exalted in And given him the name, which is above every name.

That at the name of jesus, every knee should bow of those in heaven, those on earth and those under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god, the father And so there's the assemblies of the church and there's, there's your private and family worship times morning and evening.

Every day in which you gathered we say. Worthy are you of all? Praise and glory authority and power. Etc for you have redeemed us by your blood, you who are god took the form of a slave.

And became a man. But there's also the in between those mornings and evenings six days a week, In the laundry and the chores and the school, and the teaching.

And the Um, obeying right away, all the way in cheerfully and in dropping everything as a household, because there's another Family in the congregation or maybe a nearby neighbor who's not from the congregation. He needs help. And there's all those things in which the life that is conformed to christ because there's a mind that is conformed to christ's mind says, God himself took the form of a slave.

And he came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life, a ransom for many and the ransom, Live. Not to be served. But to serve, And to pour out their lives as a drink offering for him. In service of one another and of their neighbor.

So we are not, you know, one of those we're not going to say Um, You know, preached the gospel at all times, but and if necessary use words, another gospels made of words And, yeah, i hope it's something that's stuck in your head like it's stuck in mine and i know i've repeated this about times, it's like saying feed people at all times.

And if necessary use food, No, the gospel is worked and yet. The life of the christian. Should display the reality. Of the gospel. Because of who our christ is. And that's what the diagonal ministry of the church is. And We are a few minutes early. Any questions? Well, praise god.

Let's pray.

Our father in heaven. How we praise you, who our god, father, son, and holy spirit from everlasting to everlasting. In whom, There is no subordination. Or hierarchy. And yet to our love in yourself, each of the persons. Loving and adoring. We fellowship with Uh, one another In perfect intensity and holiness.

We have so little To connect to who you are. And so we thank you for the display of your love to us. Even the creature, even those who are infinitely, subordinate, Into whose bodies you made from dirt and it's whose knows you breathe life. And yet you made yourself a slave for our sakes.

And a servant of us. Even by the service of the cross. Oh, lord. Grant to us, such a like-mindedness to christ. Such a demonstration of the comfort and encouragement and sweetness and affection that we have from him and in him. That it would express itself. In a body life in which each serves all the other.

And then making us the best neighbors. That even our unbelieving neighbors could ever have Glorify christ by conforming us to him. By the ministry of your spirit. We ask blessing to us. His word even this portion of it and these portions of it that we have briefly considered for, we ask it in jesus name, Amen.