

Love BIG!
"Can I Help You?" (Serve Weekend)
December 9, 2018

Passage: Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you, it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Welcome to Serve Weekend! This is the weekend when the entire church has committed to going out and actively serving in an organization or charity that does well in our community. We are doing this first of all to acknowledge the blessings that God has given to us. Every day that we wake up, we have a chance to do something big or small to show God's love to someone.

This opportunity to serve starts in our own homes--in our families first. It is difficult to share the love of Christ with strangers or the lost when we are not as loving and kind as we should be to our own families. So, we can start with praising God, then sharing God's love with our own families in service.

We can also be more mission-minded through service to our larger community. As we know, the needs in our community all over Harrisburg are great. And the holiday season, particularly between Thanksgiving and Christmas, is a time of year when people reach out. People in need reach out asking for help with various needs: warm coats and shoes for the weather, Christmas toys for children, a hot meal for the holiday. As people are giving more money and gifts and time during the holiday season, something good happens. At Christmas time, it seems like people are more open to hearing about the love of God and why Jesus came to earth. Jesus tells us that the best way to celebrate why he came to earth is to serve one another.

Serving not only blessed the people and the organizations that we help, but serving blesses us the most. [Pastor Jerry Watts from Mississippi](#) says that our

Serving is a matter of our health, our happiness, and our heart.

For our health, getting up and getting out and sharing our time and energy with others Our bodies are designed by God to be in motion--active and useful. Our lifestyles in recent decades have become so sedentary that we have to exercise to stay healthy! Literally, the whole world is becoming less and less healthy because we don't have lifestyles of action and services. When we think of the days of active outdoor chores like mowing the lawn, plowing fields, tending garden, etc. we didn't have to think about exercising in order to stay in shape and keep our hearts strong.

The [Corporation for National Community Service](#) cited the results of seven different studies on the health effects of volunteering. The studies found that people who serve through volunteering experience greater health benefits than the people they are serving. Some benefits show lower rates of mortality when compared to people who are similar but who do not serve, lower risks of poor physical health,

Serving others may help to buffer the effects of stress in our lives and reduce the risks of certain diseases.

In addition to our health, serving others has a positive effect on our *happiness*. Some of the health benefits outlined in those studies were mental health and emotional health factors. People who volunteer and who provide social support to others also tend to experience positive psychological factors and a stronger sense of purpose. When we're able to serve others, it helps our own disposition. We can see the positive impact that our support has on other people. We get to feel good about what we have contributed, and how others will be a little bit better off from the time we have spent with them supporting and assisting them. It helps our mental health. When people are negative it is usually because they are focused on themselves and not on sharing with others.

We should also consider the condition of our *hearts* when we are serving others. Let's take a look at some of Jesus' teaching on serving to learn more about our heart condition.

Serving includes everyone.

"But Jesus called them together and said,..." - Matthew 20:25

At the start of our passage today, we come in the middle of a conversation that is already happening. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus has taken His disciples aside, separate from his other followers, to explain the crucifixion to them. The concept was beyond them. They did not understand. The mother of two of Jesus's disciples shows up in the narrative in a place that the scripture implies that she wasn't invited. She asks Jesus for two places of honor, one for each of her sons. After some dialogue with the mother of James and John, Jesus pulls in the other ten disciples and has a conversation with all twelve of them. The lesson he shares on humility and serving is for all of them--not just for the two who wanted the places of honor, and not just for those who were upset and offended, but all of the close, trusted followers of Jesus.

The first lesson that Jesus teaches here about serving is that

Serving sets believers apart.

But among you it will be different...Matthew 20:26

Jesus introduces His disciple to the concept of serving by explaining what it is not. He says in verse 25 that people in the world do things a certain way. In the world, when people are leaders, or in positions of influence or importance--rulers--they tend to "lord" it and flaunt it. They tend to focus on their titles, their roles, their responsibilities, how important they are.

We all know of experiences like that. Let one of your coworkers get promoted and how does it go? The person who used to have lunch and hang out and work with you now has their own parking space and eats lunch with the big wigs! People are running for office and shaking hands and kissing babies and at your door on the campaign trail, but as soon as they're elected, you can't find them! You certainly can't get them on the phone. We have in this day and age, unfortunately, too many examples of this. Jesus was in a culture and we are in a culture where people strive for positions and power.

Jesus did not actually say that desiring to have influence is a bad thing in and of itself. Jesus actually expects people to want to be leaders. He is challenging his followers to be different from what we see in the world every day. Specifically, he is calling on his followers to take positions of service.

Verses 26-27 says, "*But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave.*"

He is asking his followers to be leaders--to be people of influence. But instead of just being in charge, he wants His leaders to be people who set a good, Godly example. Give to others instead of taking. Serve others in their areas of need instead of expecting people to recognize you and defer to you and to serve you.

Serving reflects the heart of Jesus.

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others..." ~ Matthew 20:28

Here in our passage, service to others is so important that Jesus sets it as part of His mission. He says that the Son of Man--the Messiah--came to earth from heaven. He was with God from the very beginning. The Bible says that everything was made by Him and for Him ([Colossians 1:15-21](#); [John 1:1-5; 14](#)). If anyone is a Ruler, an Authority, and Official--it is Christ the Lord! He could have come to earth any way he chose and did his work any way he wanted. But He is saying in the scripture, "even I, in all of my authority, came here to serve others."

As followers of Christ, we ought to desire to do the same. If Christ is found serving, it should be our heart's desire to serve others as well. It was evident to the Lord that people need all kinds of help. We see in the Scriptures how Jesus ministered to people in a variety of ways. Jesus encouraged people. He helped to restore family relationships and community relationships. Over and over, Jesus healed people's bodies and returned life to them when there was death and despair.

We should be excited about serving! As we can see from the scriptures,

Serving has great impact.

²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." ~ Matthew 20:28

Even here in our study chapter, in verses 29-34, Jesus heals two blind men on the side of the road. As a result of Jesus serving the needs of these two men, their lives were changed. And as their lives were changed, these men followed Christ. Consider how many lives might be positively changed if two men that you knew were touched by the Lord and then consistently followed Christ.

We never know how serving might have an impact well beyond us and the people we help directly. We have testimonies here at Crosspoint of how serving others has helped to change their lives and to introduce people to Christ. At both our Colonial Park and Rutherford campuses, we have had visitors who have come to our services. They have been impressed and moved by the donations we have offered to local schools [[specific examples](#)]. Our church's service to the greater community has had a real impact. Not only have we helped students with their immediate needs, but other people in their lives were able to at least be curious to learn more about who we are and about the God we serve.

Serving is not necessarily simple or easy. Pastor Rick Warren shared this in a [recent Facebook post](#): "Serving is so contrary to the world's idea of greatness that we have a hard time understanding it, much less practicing it. The disciples argued about who deserved the most prominent position, and 2,000 years later...Everyone wants to lead; no one wants to be a servant. We would rather be generals than privates. Even Christians want to be 'servant-leaders,' not just plain servants. But to be like Jesus is to be a servant. That's what he called himself."

We have to sacrifice to serve. We have to make time and space in our busy schedules to do so. We have to step out of our comfort zones to share our talents and gifts. We have to think differently about our own health and happiness. We have to think of these as blessings and assets to be shared. We have to challenge the condition of our own heart toward helping others who we may not even consider to be deserving.

So this weekend, on Serve Weekend, let's start a habit if we don't have one. Let's begin to make it a practice to "love BIG" on others the way Christ called us to--by serving. Instead of making this just one event that we do periodically with the whole church, I challenge you to start a practice of serving others. As a family-first church, we can start at home. Consider at least one way to be more kind, supportive, and giving to our family members. Remember that it is difficult to share God's love with others if we are not consistently doing that in our own homes.

God has given each one of us spiritual gifts--abilities and strengths, "superpowers" if you will--to share with others. We are supposed to start sharing our gifts in the house of God, so if you are not serving in a ministry here in church, now is a great time to begin. [\(list of needs\)](#)
[Clothing connection, Food Pantry. Can be family opportunities.](#)

And from there, share your gifts, talents, abilities, and passions with the larger community. How much better off would Harrisburg be if the people of God served and volunteered regularly? We offered a list of places this weekend that needed help, but there are many organizations that need volunteers year-round. We can all share the love of Christ in our own local mission field by committing to volunteering as regularly as we can. Even once a quarter or four times per year will help make a difference. Remember that we are Christ's hands and feet in the world. Who would Christ serve if he were walking around Harrisburg today? How can we help?

[\(volunteer opportunities?\)](#)

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/search?l=Harrisburg,%20PA%2017104,%20USA>

<https://www.uwcr.org/volunteer/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities>