

A Servants Heart Mark 10:42-45

Our world seems to think that the highest point in life is to be the boss, and to control what goes on around us. The rugged individualism of America calls out for self-fulfillment and charting your own course. Many never realize that there may be Someone bigger than themselves., Someone that calls t hem to a life grander and nobler than living for your own pleasure. One in five Americans think that meaning and purpose comes from working hard to earn as much as you possibly can and to make the most of life. Nevertheless, is this all there is to life?

The Lord Jesus provides a different perspective for us all, one that helps us to see what really counts in life. In **Mark 10:42-45** Jesus said to His disciples, *“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* In the Lord’s eyes, the greatest one must be the slave of all. He serves to please the Father and to please others, He see something bigger than his own pleasures. We see the servant heart of Jesus whenever we see that He sacrificed Himself upon the cross. Because He knows what it is to serve, the Father highly exalted Him and gave Him a name that is above every name.

The apostle Paul grew up in a privileged Hebrew home and he even schooled under the famous teacher Gamaliel. Gamaliel who was the highest honored teacher in 1st century Jerusalem. And yet in **1 Cor. 9:19** he said, *“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.”* For Paul, winning souls was more important than freedom to do as he wished. He was willing to

sacrifice himself and serve others that he might win them to the Lord Jesus.

Paul willingly gave up his place among the Jews in order to live for Christ. In **Phil. 3:4-11** he said, *“though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”* Some things are bigger, nobler, and worth more than what we can put on a resume. And this is why Paul would give it all up, and why you should consider serving the Lord.

Scriptures speak of slavery from the earliest of times. The O.T. Law actually protected Hebrew slaves from being abused. In fact, a person could choose to remain as a permanent slave (**Ex. 21:2-6**). These were people who found life as a Hebrew slave, better than life on the outside world.

As Christians, we belong to the Lord. When we become Christians, we confess that Jesus Christ is Son of God, but also that He is our LORD. To call Jesus Lord recognizes that He indeed existed in the form of God; but it also recognizes His authority over our lives. He is not just LORD; He is our LORD. **1 Cor. 6:19-20** says, *“Or do you not know that your*

body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.” As Christians we belong to the Lord Jesus body, soul, and spirit.

Jesus is not only Lord, but He is our Master! As He said in Mt. 6:24, *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”* As Master of our lives, Jesus will tolerate no other master. If we belong to Him, Jesus must always be our undisputed master above all other people or things. We don’t ask, what do I want? No, instead we are to ask, what does God wish of me? We serve at His pleasure in His kingdom. And we are only servants.

A partial service to God, or an *“on again, off again”* service, is not enough. Here is what Jesus said in Mt. 6:33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* We are to live each day with God at the center of our hearts. Seeking His kingdom and seeking His righteousness means focusing our hearts on pleasing Him as His people doing His will.

The Lord Jesus Himself serves as the great example of a servant who seeks to please. The apostle Peter knew the hardship of servants in the first century. He taught them in 1 Peter 2:18-19, *“Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.”* And then Peter points to Jesus in verses 21-24, *“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,*

that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”

Now Jesus set the example of how to bear up under injustice. He didn't strike back or berate the Jews, who were berating Him. Instead, He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges righteously; He left things in the Father's hands. He didn't focus on the pain of the cross but on the importance of doing what was right and the importance of what He was doing in saving mankind: the bible says ***“by His wounds you were healed.”*** He suffered so that you could die to sin and live to righteousness. Jesus chose to please the Father in bringing about the salvation of every one of us, if we follow Him, even if it meant going to the cross. Jesus knew His death would mean something to the Father. He said in **Jn. 8:29**, ***“And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”***

Paul too gave instructions to those who were slaves in **Col. 3:22-25**, ***“Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”*** People should do a day's work for a day's pay and be loyal to those that they serve. And when you work heartily at the job, you are ***“serving the Lord Christ.”*** By being faithful to the Lord in this life, even on the job, you can trust the Lord to reward you in the life to come. Whether a master or a slave, the Lord will reward righteousness and He will punish evildoing.

Now as Christians, we must have a servant's heart. Paul urged the Christian in **Col.1:9-10**, ***“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as***

to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

If you wish to please the Lord, you must seek to know Him and you must learn what He wills. Many praise God but know little of Him. It does little good to own a Bible but never read it. If you want to know the Lord, if you want to know what needs to be done to please Him, then study your Bible and apply the words to your life.

Let us never forget that Jesus is our creator, our redeemer, our Savior, and our Lord. **Col. 1:15-18** says, *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”* We need to understand, without Jesus we are nothing, He deserves to be first in our lives.

Paul revealed his determination to keep his heart and life right with God. In **1 Cor. 9:24-27** he said, *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”* Paul went to great lengths not to lose out on his imperishable prize – **eternal life**.

I think you are all mature enough to understand that each day you choose whom you will serve. You can choose to serve anything you want, if you don't care about the consequences. You can serve yourself, your money, your lusts, our culture; but you know what – these things won't lead you to heaven. Only Jesus Christ can give you eternal life.

In **Romans 6:16** Paul asks, *“Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?”* Choosing to serve sin only leads to death – it is obedience that leads to righteousness. **Romans 6:23** declares, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* You will earn wages according to whom or what you choose to serve.

In **verses 17-18 of Romans 6** we read, *“But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.”* According to Paul, these folks left their old ways of sin and obeyed the Lord from the heart, and God set them free from sin. God can also set you free from sin, if you too will obey from the heart the same standard of teaching that they did.

What was that standard of teaching? In **Romans 6:3-8** Paul tells us, *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”* The apostle Peter confirms Paul’s teaching in **1 Peter 3:21**, *“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”* So, what are you waiting for? We

have the same call to obey the gospel as Paul received in Damascus in **Acts 22:16**, ***“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”*** Won’t you respond as Paul did? I tell you in baptism we appeal to God for a good conscience; and God saves us! The Lord is calling you, Come!