

Thirty-Five – Week 5
Service – Ben Foote
October 3, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation--encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Bible References

Isaiah 1:11-17; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 23:34, 42-43; John 19:26-27; Acts 17:24-25; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9;

// Message Summary

Ben joins us this week to guide us on a quick trip through the Bible to see what God has to say about serving and how it can help us during our [35 Day Challenge](#) series. Service has always been part of God's plan; in the Old Testament God had to inform and often correct His people about the kind of service that would honor Him and His example of love for all humanity. In His time on earth Jesus made clear that He came to serve us through His life and His death. When He rose from the dead, His spirit became available to us; providing every believer with the ability, capacity, desire and means to serve.

// Biblical & Historical Context

Jewish history throughout the Old Testament reveals a pattern of rebellion against God followed by judgement which often came in the form of exile and a period of slavery and servitude to a foreign nation. Prophets would proclaim the error of the people and God's judgement – calling the people to repent after which God would deliver them from their various enemies. The nation would return to their promised land, attempt to serve God for a generation or two, before inevitably spiraling down into idolatry and repeating the cycle. We see this when Isaiah prophesied the rescue of the Jewish nation from Babylonian captivity and later deliverance through a messiah who would be king in Jerusalem.

During the time of Jesus, Israel was part of the Roman Empire which permitted provinces limited religious and political autonomy but imposed a heavy tax burden. The Jewish people rebelled against paying tribute to the Caesars who called themselves gods. The people desperately wanted a political king who would deliver them from servitude under Roman occupation. Prophets had foretold that messiah would be a descendant of David, the most famous warrior king of Israel's history, so they clearly expected deliverance through political kingship.

When Jesus arrived, He declared Himself to be the promised Messiah (John 4:25-26). Jesus perfectly fulfills Isaiah's description of the servant God would send to accomplish His purpose through obedience, suffering and giving His life for others. 'The Servant' shows up forty times in the book of Isaiah, as a reference to Christ (see Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12).

The gospel message is one of deliverance for all people through the Servant who lays down His life to deliver us from sin and restore us into relationship with the Father. Our life giving service in the Kingdom of God is proclaiming His gospel and serving the needs of others with encouragement, forgiveness, giving, hospitality, meeting the needs of others, and abiding prayer (Romans 12:7-13).

// Community Questions

1. How's it going with the 35 Day Challenge? What ideas have you come up with for a daily act of service?
2. Have you ever noticed someone who is particularly good at serving? How do you respond?

// Discussion Questions

1. In his talk, Ben said that sometimes we think of serving as a low position, or as weakness. Where do you think this idea comes from? What examples do you see of it in the world?
2. Jesus said that He did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). What does this tell us about the God who sent Him?
3. Look closely at Mark 9:41 to answer the following questions
 - a. What is the service in this verse?
 - b. Who is it done by and who is it done for?
 - c. Where and when does the service happen?
 - d. What is the spirit or intention that motivates?
 - e. What is the result for the one who serves?
4. What characteristics separate an act of Christian service from ordinary work?
5. We talk about attending a church service, we might even call it a worship service. How can serving be an act of worship towards God?

// Challenge

Take some time as you pray this week to meditate on Jesus words about service. Ask God to prepare you and point you to opportunities where you might serve by taking care of your family members, asking for or extending forgiveness to someone, or offering a gift of life. Thank God when you are able to do these things each day.