

**Series:** Path to Greatness  
**Title:** Serve the World  
**Text:** Matthew 20:27-29; I Peter 4:10  
**Key Word:** Reasons  
**Proposition:** Radiant Christ followers serve the world for the following reasons.

Good Morning everyone. My name is Chris Farmer. I serve as one of the pastors. We are thrilled that you have chosen to come and worship with us today. God is in this place. He is here to reveal His ways and purposes so that we can live the life God created us to live. He desires that we Love Him and others as He has first loved us. He calls us to grow to be like Jesus and to serve the world.

We are in the final week of a series entitled: Path to Greatness. We have been talking about some intentional steps that will lead us along this path. Pastor Bonita talked about Loving God and others as our act of worship and extending hospitality to others. Matt, our Director of Discipleship invited us to grow to be like Jesus. Like all living things, God has created and saved us to grow in our relationship with Him. Our involvement in a growth group and practicing the spiritual disciplines contribute to our spiritual growth. Today we explore another critical step in the path to greatness, serve the world.

I invite you to turn to the book of Matthew, chapter twenty, verse 27. ([Set the context: The mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John.....](#)) Let us see what Jesus says: *“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.”* (Matthew 20:27)

We all have a tendency to veer off God's path to greatness. Getting off track is rarely an intentional decision. It usually happens little by little. We get busier and busier, so we skip a day of prayer here and there. We put off our Bible study, thinking, "I'll catch up tomorrow." We say, "I'm too stressed to go to worship this week, I'll do it next week." Next week becomes next month, and we never get back on the path.

It is the same way with service. No one says, "I think I'll stop doing things for God. I think I'll walk away from God." It just happens. Our schedule becomes full with other things. Serving God loses priority. Soon, if we are not careful, we find that we are not doing anything to benefit anyone other than ourselves. If we are not careful, our Christian life can become just about "me, me, me—my problems, my prayer list, my blessings," and on and on. Like James and John, it is all about me.

A pastor counseled a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Feeling helpless, she asked her pastor, "What can I do? What can I do?" He asked, "If I tell you what to do, will you do it?" She said, "Yes." Knowing she had some free time and that she loved to cook, he said, "On Monday, I want you to bake some bread. On Tuesday afternoon, take it to the nursing home. Go into the common area where everyone watches TV and plays checkers, pass out the bread and talk to people. Tell them God loves them. Stay for at least an hour. Don't worry about not knowing anyone; you will know many before you leave. On Wednesday, bake cookies. On Thursday afternoon, take them to the children's hospital. Find a worker to help you

pass them out to the kids who need a visitor. Talk to as many of them as you can. Tell them God loves them and has a plan for their lives. Stay for at least an hour. On Friday, come back and see me."

The following Friday, he was disappointed that she didn't keep her appointment. About three weeks later, she came to see him again. "Sorry I haven't been back sooner," she said, "I'm serving at the cancer center everyday, and I've been so busy. Our small group is taking on this project together." He said, "But how about you? How are you coping?" "Coping with what?" she asked. "Everything's fine. All those things I was worried about before, I've moved on. Besides, I find so much joy in sharing God's love with people." Helping others enables us to find life even in the midst of challenging circumstances. Jesus said, "*Whoever loses his life for me will find it*" (Matthew 16:25). There is life in serving our world to share God's Word. Why are we committed to taking this essential step to greatness?

**First, it's what we were made for.** Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" (Ephesians 2:8-10) These verses make clear that good works do not save us, but we are saved for good works. We are saved to share Good News. From the beginning of creation God formed us to do good, then when Christ forgave us and made us new, He transformed us to do greater good. Jesus said, "*I tell you the truth,*

*anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”* (John 14:13)

**Secondly, it's the work of the kingdom.** Jesus didn't **just** announce that the kingdom had come. He went out and demonstrated it. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He connected with the lonely. He blessed the children. When we do these things, we fulfill the work of God's kingdom.

**Thirdly, it's what the world is looking for.** Todd Hunter says people today aren't asking if Christianity is true, they're asking if Christianity is good, if it is real. People are tired of hearing us talk about Good News. They want us to be Good News to our communities and the world.

Do you want to take this essential step? Do you want to experience the great life God intends for you? Then I invite you, Yes, I challenge you to take this step...serve somebody! Jesus said, "*The greatest among you will be your servant*" (Matthew 23:11). Here is how we can serve.

**First, imitate Jesus.** We want people to see a reflection of Jesus in our life. That's why our example is so important. Albert Schweitzer once said, "Example is not the best way of teaching, it is the only way." So let's guard our example. People in our neighborhood are watching everything that we do. They're watching to see how we live. In time, they will learn that we have fallen in love with this person named Jesus Christ, and he has transformed our life. We must always watch our example, because others are watching.

Shortly before his death, Jesus was alone with his disciples. He poured some water into a tub and began to wash their feet. This was the act of a slave, and Jesus performed this action to teach his disciples a lesson in Christian living. Afterwards, he said to them,

*"Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."* (John 13:12-15)

Do you want to imitate Jesus? Serve others. Ian Maclaren said, "The world cannot always understand a person's profession of faith, but it can understand service."

Jesus commands us to wash feet—in other words, to serve others. Albert Schweitzer suggests, "Do something for someone every day, for which you do not get paid." In fact, I would take it a step further. See if you can do something for someone everyday for no recognition. Serving others imitates Jesus. I encourage you to find an area of ministry that offers no glamour, no prestige. An area where you can serve in obscurity. An area that might be a little demanding physically. An area that causes you to get your hands a little dirty in the process of washing feet. Real ministry meets people face to face, where they live, serving them in practical ways. Imitate Jesus.

**Second. Serve out of your gifts, talents, resources, and passions.** Peter wrote, *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as*

*good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks let him speak as it were the utterances of God. Whoever serves let him do it by the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever."* 1 Peter 4:10

So many Christians use all sorts of excuses, "*Well, I can't do anything in my neighborhood.*" I can't do anything in the church. Can you bake or cook? Can you landscape? Can you water flowers while your neighbors are away on vacation? While you're taking your two-mile walk every morning, can you stop and give them a smile and take an interest in their life? Can wash dishes? Can you pray? Can you teach? Can you do home repairs? In all these things and more, bless the Lord. Serve somebody!

**Third, serve in teams.** Throughout the Bible, we see God creating teams. Adam had Eve, Noah had his family, Moses had Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. Elijah had Elisha; Jesus had His Father and the Holy Spirit, plus his disciples. Paul had Barnabas, Luke, Timothy, Silas, and others. Jesus sent out the disciples and the seventy-two by pairs. God does his best work in teams and through relationships.

I enjoy trying to look for ways to build relationships. Serving can take a relationship and add the glue to it that is so necessary. Service is an expression of grace to someone, an undeserved gift that we give to others—a cameo of the gospel. In fact, service is the language of grace. When we serve, we realize how much we need each other to make a difference in our world.

I enjoy serving on our Servants in Missions teams who go into impoverished areas to make a significant impact. Each team reminds me that together we can accomplish much more to improve the lives of the poor than I would ever do alone.

To conclude this message I want to suggest three ways to structure the habit of service into your life. First of all ...

*Try random daily acts of kindness.* You've heard the cliché about doing your good deed for the day. Try it. Look for opportunities to do something good for someone else. Something for which you receive neither compensation nor recognition. Anonymous random act of kindness causes the recipient to give God the glory. If your life is stressed to the breaking point, then I challenge you to try this. When you first wake up, instead of thinking about all the trials and tribulations, you must endure; ask this instead, "Lord, who can I bless today?"

*Try an ongoing, structured ministry.* Get involved in an organized ministry that requires your continued involvement—weekly or, at least, monthly. A ministry such as Stephen's Ministry, choir or praise band, kid's ministry, nursery, prayer team, student ministry, and so on. If you find that you are at a stage of life where your greatest service to Christ and His kingdom would be to provide resources for future ministry, then try our Endowment Fund, as a place where a tithe of your Estate would significantly contribute to future ministry. If you are not involved in an ongoing, structured ministry, or if you sense a desire to make an investment in future ministry, then I invite you to state your interest on the comment section of our get-connected

sheet in our weekly paper. Then place it in one of the baskets located at the exit. Try it and see what God will do to use you to change our world.

*Do something big each year.* We always offer at least one mission project each year; you can get in on one of those. Or you can be involved in Vacation Bible School. Perhaps, you can put together a team to help fix-up someone's home over the weekend. At least once a year, look for a big project to tackle.

Jesus said, "*He who loses his life for me will find it.*" In addition, he said, "*Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.*" Do you want to walk the path to greatness? Serve Jesus today—serve him by serving the world to share His Word.