



## DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### Treasures of the Transformed Life: The Speed of Service

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Matthew 20:25

We struggle when we're asked to serve. We can't see how we can fit anything else into the extra time we don't have. And many of us find it difficult to serve God, because we can't even see God. But today we're here to claim that if being a servant and serving doesn't sound exciting and sounds like work, just remember, God isn't just there for us when we die. God's promise is that he's doing something worth living for right now. In every moment. And it's happening before our very eyes. The tragedy is, unless we take the servant's stance, we may not even see it.

Matthew 20:25 *"Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 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."*

RADICAL JESUS. Imagine if you were God and you had about 3 years to work with people in the hopes that they would "get it?" If it were me... When Christianity moves into another culture, the Christ-followers don't take over the government. They take the servant role: medical treatment; teaching; helping people farm, helping people learn to read. Building schools. Do you know the millions and millions of people who get cheated all the time because they can't count past 20? Christianity seeks to serve and empower these people, even the lowest of the low, because Jesus calls us to serve. There are other religions whose pattern is to take over the governments; and thus the clash we find ourselves in around the world today.

We tend to see the pomp of power. The TV cameras focus on the great seal of the US, hail to the Chief, with the voice "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States". But then Jesus directs our attention to the quiet woman off-camera, with cleaning supplies and a broom. And Jesus says *that's* greatness. What a freaky contrast!

And if that's what Jesus is talking about and calling us to, how can service be a treasure? What would have to change for *you* to become a servant? What would change when you live out the life of a servant giving a life of service?

In church circles we talk about being culturally relevant, which means we're already behind culture. And how can we take a servant's stance, and be culturally relevant? Nevertheless, just look at those first disciples, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century. **THEY RAN AT A DIFFERENT SPEED.** The first disciples didn't keep up with their time, didn't spend energy keeping up with their culture. The first disciples changed time. They changed culture. They rewrote history. They radically impacted culture. The church was the forerunner, not the runner up. Out of the church's influence came the greatest art, the greatest music, and the greatest thinkers. How do we regain the kind of momentum that ignited the first-century church?

The church never intended to be a monolith or a monument, but a movement creating moments that change history. The Bible was never written for information alone. It was written so that we might respond to the truth and the voice of God.

And the world changes when you and I move at the speed of a servant. That's your mission from God. In the movie the Matrix, the agents pursuing Neo and his colleagues could move at superhuman speed. They could literally dodge bullets. If Neo was to survive and fulfill his destiny as the deliverer of his people, he would

have to learn how to move at the same rate of speed. What we discovered is that what others experienced at blinding speed, Neo experienced in slow motion. He could dodge bullets because they looked as if they were simply floating.

When you move with the spiritual velocity of a servant, with a clear sense of God's calling, with clear vision, and with a heart that moves immediately to obey the Spirit, the environment that once overwhelmed you with its rate of speed can now be experienced in slow motion. The way not to be overwhelmed by the radical changes and speed in our world is to know where you're going, to know why you're going there, and to do it with urgency.

EXAMPLE: One way to define my job is "management of volunteers." Another is "project manager," whether you're talking worship service, cell group meeting, wedding, or event coordinating. The person who shows up and asks "How can I help?" is THE most welcomed person...well, it's like having Jesus show up! ☺ Jesus is calling you and me to live with that question on our lips and on our lives.

WITNESS: Katie Major, who was in the middle of job hunting, came across an opportunity to spend a month on mission in Haiti. She was able to see that "bullet" for what it was, a terrific opportunity to serve, and she followed. She had some amazing experiences she's going to share with us...

And if being a servant and serving still doesn't sound exciting and sounds like work, just remember, God isn't just there for us when we die. God's promise is that he's doing something worth living for right now. In every moment. And it's happening before our very eyes. The tragedy is, unless we take the servant's stance, we may not even see it.

Serving others IS the practical expression of love. When you realize that, every moment is your opportunity to move at the speed of a servant: after church, when you look at all the different ministries, in the car, at home, at school tomorrow, and at work. Love begins to change everything about your relationships. In fact, this is one of the amazing things about God: God loves to serve.

Jesus tied a towel around his waist and began washing the disciples' feet. The foot washer was the lowest of the household servants. And here's the Master Jesus washing the disciples' smelly, stinky feet. This wasn't some extraordinary act for God. This was right in line with who he is. Jesus Christ was a servant. He was doing nothing more than expressing the serving heart of God.

It sounds sacrilegious to say that God is a servant, but that's only because our value systems are so corrupt and distorted. We want to realize those attributes of God that feel comfortable attributing to God those things we aspire to be: like all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-controlling. But to say that God is a servant seems out of touch. But love produces servant hood. Servant hood seeks sacrifice as a privilege. Because it's our best, most accurate way to live out how it was supposed to be all along!!!!

This church is a great place to learn, live, and love the servant life. We are experiencing God in so many moments, basically because everyone's too busy rowing to have time to rock the boat. You can't row the boat and rock it at the same time.

"Anybody can be great, because anybody can serve." MLK

If we only do what we know we can, God can leave us alone. It's only when we attempt something we know would fail unless God works, that we give God room to work. What if you and I, as a part of this church, attempt something heroic in our service? The world needs heroes who can move at the speed of servant hood.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for serving us and then calling us into a life of service. Help us move at the speed of a servant, that we may simply follow you in each moment. Be with those in need of healing of any kind. Be with those who have been victims. And enable us to live and serve in such a way that others would experience your great love. We pray in the name of the Great Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.