

Sermon Title: **“REDEDICATING MY LIFE TO SERVE THE LORD!”**

Sermon Text: **John 13: 1-17**

*Introduction:*

**SOMEONE SAID, “EVERY CHURCH IS FILLED WITH WILLING PEOPLE—SOME WILLING TO SERVE, AND OTHERS WILLING TO LET THEM SERVE!” TO WHOSE GROUP DO YOU BELONG?”**

**“SAVED TO SERVE!” THIS IS A COMMON SAYING THAT WE ALWAYS HEAR WHENEVER WE HEAR A SERMON OR TEACHING ABOUT SERVING THE LORD. BUT WHAT IS REALLY THE MEANING OF THIS PHRASE? WHY IS THERE SO MANY BELIEVERS NOT SERVING THE LORD? DO WE REALLY NEED TO SERVE THE LORD? COULD WE NOT JUST ENJOY OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THIS WORLD & GO FISHING EVERY WEEK OR PLAY GOLF OR DO WHATEVER WE WANT TO PURSUE & AS WE WAIT ON THE LORD’S RETURN?**

**ILLUSTRATION: “SERVANTS OF THE KING OF KINGS!”**

**WILLIAM CAREY, WHO IS CALLED THE “FATHER OF MODERN MISSIONS,” SERVED THE LORD IN INDIA FOR MANY YEARS. HE GRADUALLY BECAME VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF HIS SON, FELIX. THE YOUNG MAN HAD PROMISED TO BECOME A MISSIONARY, BUT HE ABANDONED/RENEGED ON HIS VOWS WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO BURMA BY THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND. WILLIAM CAREY WROTE TO HIS FRIEND, ASKING PRAYER FOR HIS SON, FELIX, WITH THESE WORDS: “PRAY FOR FELIX. HE HAS CHOSEN TO SERVE TO BE AN AMBASSADOR OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHEN HE SHOULD BE SERVING THE KING OF KINGS & LORD OF LORDS!”**

**I AM AFRAID THAT JUST LIKE FELIX, MANY OF US TODAY HAS CHOSEN TO SERVE OTHER “KINGS” OR “GODS” OF THIS WORLD WHEN WE SHOULD BE SERVING THE LORD OF LORDS & KING OF KINGS, EVEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

**LET US PRAY!!!**

**TEXT BACKGROUND**. THE SETTING OF OUR PASSAGE IS DURING THE LORD'S LAST SUPPER WITH HIS 12 DISCIPLES. THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME HE WILL DINE WITH THEM BECAUSE IT WILL BE JUST A MATTER OF HOURS BEFORE THE LORD JESUS WILL BE ARRESTED & SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS & SOLDIER WHO ARE GOING TO ARREST HIM & TORTURE HIM AND THEN CRUCIFY HIM.

THIS EVENT IS AN IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT INTRODUCES TO US WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE/TEACHINGS OF THE LORD JESUS WHICH STARTS IN CHAPTER 13 & ENDS IN CHAPTER 17 OF JOHN. NOW, THE TEACHINGS OF THIS CHAPTERS CONTAINS SOME OF MOST IMPORTANT TEACHINGS OF THE LORD INCLUDING HIS PERSON & NATURE OF JESUS, HIS MISSION & THE PERSON & MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WELL AS HIS HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER IN CHAPTER 17.

AND SO, WHAT THE LORD JESUS IS TEACHING IN THIS MOMENT ARE VERY IMPORTANT NOT ONLY HIS DISCIPLES THEN BUT FOR ALL OF US TODAY WHO ARE HIS DISCIPLES & FOLLOWERS. FROM OUR PASSAGE, LET ME SHARE TO US THREE IMPORTANT TRUTHS ON SERVING THE LORD & OTHERS!

A. OUR **MOTIVE** IN SERVING SHOULD BE **AGAPE LOVE**!

THE FIRST THING THAT WE OBSERVED IN OUR TEXT TODAY IS JESUS DOING THE LOWEST MENIAL WORK THAT A SLAVE/SERVANT WOULD DO AT THAT TIME – TAKING A TOWEL & WATER & WASHING THE DIRTY FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES TO THE SURPRISE OF HIS DISCIPLES! AS USUAL THE EVER IMPULSIVE PETER PROTESTED BUT COULD NOT STOP THE LORD FROM WHAT HE WAS DOING.

BUT WHAT MOTIVATED THE LORD JESUS TO DO SUCH A LOWLY TASK FOR HIS DISCIPLES? FROM VERSE ONE WE SEE & LEARN THE FIRST TRUTH FROM OUR STUDY TODAY - THE MOTIVE OF JESUS IN DOING THIS MENIAL SERVICE TO HIS DISCIPLES! IN FACT, THIS VERSE TEACHES US THAT LOVE IS THE MOTIVE BEHIND JESUS' EVERY WORDS & ACTIONS WHEN HE WAS HERE ON EARTH!

1) *The Lord Jesus shows His **FAITHFUL LOVE** for us!*

IN WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET, THE LORD IS SHOWING US HOW FAR HE WAS WILLING TO "STOOP DOWN" JUST TO PROVE HIS LOVE FOR US!

*"Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. **Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**" (v. 1)*

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT HE BEGINS THIS UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE WITH "LOVE" IN CHP 13:1 AND ALSO ENDED IT IN CHAPTER 17:26 WITH "LOVE"!

2) *The Lord Jesus shows His faithful love to us by becoming a **SERVANT**! (Phil. 2)*

IN FACT, THE LORD JESUS BEING GOD HIMSELF DID THE INCREDULOUS & INCREDIBLE & UNTHINKABLE – HE BECAME A MAN LIKE US & EVEN A SERVANT IN ORDER TO DIE FOR OUR SINS! WHY? BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO REDEEM OR SAVE US FROM GOD'S WRATH & JUDGMENT! THE APOSTLE PAUL IN HIS LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS DESCRIBES TO US MARVELOUS LOVE OF JESUS & HOW THE LORD JESUS BECAME A SERVANT BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR YOU & ME!

*"Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. **Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity.** And when he had come as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross..." (Phil. 2: 5-10)*

THEREFORE, THE LORD JESUS DID THE UNTHINKABLE & BECAME A SERVANT & A MAN BECAUSE OF YOU & ME! SO THAT HE COULD SERVE US BY DYING FOR US ON THE CROSS & BY HIS DEATH HE PAID THE PENALTY OF OUR SINS & SECURE THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS & ETERNAL LIFE!

**FRIENDS, HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN THE LORD JESUS THIS WAY? HAVE YOU ALREADY PLACE YOUR TRUST IN HIM AS YOUR SAVIOR & LORD? WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO THIS NOW? TODAY?**

**B. OUR MODEL IN SERVING IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

**THE SECOND TRUTH I WOULD LIKE US TO SEE & LEARN TODAY IS THE MODEL OF OUR SERVING! OUR MODEL IN SERVING THE LORD & OTHERS IS NONE OTHER THAN JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF!**

**NOW, TAKE NOTE THAT AFTER THE LORD JESUS WASHED HIS DISCIPLES FEET, HE SAT DOWN AGAIN WITH THEM & TOLD THEM HIS TWO IMPORTANT COMMANDS OR EXPECTATIONS FROM THEM & FROM US TODAY!**

**1) *The Lord Jesus expects us to serve one another!***

***“Do you know what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (vv. 12-14)***

**2) *The Lord Jesus expects us to follow His example of serving others!***

**AND THAT THEY ARE TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER NOT JUST IN THEIR OWN TERMS OR WAYS BUT IN THE WAY THE LORD JESUS SERVED THEM! IN OTHER WORDS, JESUS IS TO BE THEIR PATTERN OR MODEL IN SERVING THE LORD & OTHERS!**

***“For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.” (vv. 15-16)***

**THEREFORE, THE LORD DID NOT LEAVE US AT THE DARK AS FAR AS SERVING OTHERS IS CONCERNED. HE CLEARLY COMMANDED US THAT WE ARE TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER IN HIS TERMS - THE WAY THE LORD JESUS SERVED US!**

### C. OUR **MANNA** IN SERVING IS A **BLESSED LIFE**!

FINALLY, THE THE THIRD & LAST TRUTH I WANT US TO SEE & LEARN HERE IS THE BLESSING OR THE MANNA OF SERVING THE LORD & OTHERS!

1) *The Lord Jesus promises a **blessed life** to all who will serve Him!*

IN VERSE 17, THE LORD JESUS PROMISES A BLESSED LIFE TO ALL WHO WILL SERVE HIM FOLLOWING HIS WAY!

*“Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. **If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.**” (VV. 16-17)*

NOW, THE TERM “BLESSED” (GREEK, ‘MACARIOS’ ) LITERALLY MEANS “SUPREME BLESSED OR HAPPY.” BUT WHAT IS THIS “SUPREME BLESSED OR HAPPY” LIFE THAT THE LORD IS TALKING ABOUT HERE AND THAT HE PROMISED TO ALL WHO WILL SERVE HIM? IS HE TALKING ABOUT PRESENT OR FUTURE BLESSEDNESS? THOUGH THE LORD DID NOT SPECIFY OR GIVE DETAILS HERE IN OUR TEXT ABOUT THIS BLESSED LIFE, WE KNOW FROM OTHER PLACES IN GOD’S WORD WHAT COULD BE THE MEANING OF THIS.

a. **SPIRITUAL GREATNESS** – THE LORD JESUS CLEARLY TAUGHT US THAT SERVING IN THE WAY HE SERVE LEADS TO SPIRITUAL GREATNESS!

*“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. It must not be like that among you. **On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you 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: 25-28)

b. **ASSURANCE OF SALVATION** – SERVING THE LORD IS A SURE

## MARK OF OUR SALVATION!

***“If you love me, you will keep my commands.” And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth.” (John 14: 15-17)***

**IF YOU ASK ME, “PASTOR HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT I AM SAVED?” HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT I HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?” MY ANSWER WILL BE THIS - “DO YOU LOVE THE LORD? DO YOU SERVE THE LORD? ARE YOUN SERVING THE LORD TODAY?”**

**c. THE LORD’S COMMENDATION & ETERNAL REWARDS! THE WORD OF GOD IS CLEAR THAT GOD’S PEOPLE WILL BE COMMENDED OR REPRIMANDED BY THE LORD IN DUE TIME!**

***“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.’ Share your master’s joy.” (Matt. 25: 21)***

**d. THE FATHER’S HONOR – THE FATHER WILL HONOR ALL THOSE WHO SERVE THE LORD JESUS FAITHFULLY!**

***“If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”***  
**(John 12: 26)**

### **APPLICATIONS:**

**(1) WE ARE SAVED TO SERVE! TRUE & GOD-HONORING SERVICE IS ROOTED IN SALVATION. THOSE WHO HAVE TRULY EXPERIENCED GOD’S GRACE IN CHRIST WILL DEMONSTRATE A LOVING SERVICE TO GOD & OTHERS! NO ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE & KNOW GOD CAN TRULY SERVE HIM!**

**BUT WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “SERVICE” TO GOD OR “SERVING” GOD & OTHERS? SERVING GOD IS SIMPLY DOING GOD’S WILL OR OBEYING HIS COMMANDS!**

***“WHATEVER IS DONE FOR GOD, WITHOUT RESPECT OF ITS COMPARATIVE CHARACTER AS RELATED TO OTHER ACTS, IS SERVICE, AND ONLY THAT IS SERVICE. SERVICE IS, COMPREHENSIVELY SPEAKING, DOING THE WILL OF GOD. HE IS THE OBJECT. ALL IS FOR HIM, FOR HIS SAKE, AS UNTO THE LORD, NOT AS UNTO MAN. HENCE, EVEN THE HUMBLEST ACT OF HUMBLEST DISCIPLE ACQUIRES A CERTAIN DIVINE QUALITY BY ITS BEING DONE WITH REFERENCE TO HIM.” (A.T. PIERSON, “THE TRUTH”)***

**WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE & TRUE SERVICE TO GOD? RICHARD FORSTER GAVE US AN EXCELLENT COMPARISON.**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE COMES THROUGH HUMAN EFFORT. TRUE SERVICE COMES FROM A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DIVINE OTHER DEEP INSIDE.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE IS IMPRESSED WITH THE ‘BIG DEAL.’ TRUE SERVICE FINDS IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH THE SMALL FROM THE LARGE SERVICE.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE REQUIRES EXTERNAL REWARDS. TRUE SERVICE RESTS CONTENTED IN HIDDENNESS.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE IS HIGHLY CONCERNED ABOUT RESULTS. TRUE SERVICE IS FREE OF THE NEED TO CALCULATE RESULTS.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE PICKS AND CHOOSES WHOM TO SERVE. TRUE SERVICE IS INDISCRIMINATE IN ITS MINISTRY.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE IS AFFECTED BY MOODS AND WHIMS. TRUE SERVICE MINISTERS SIMPLY AND FAITHFULLY BECAUSE THERE IS A NEED.”**

**“SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE IS TEMPORARY. TRUE SERVICE IS A LIFE-STYLE. SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE IS WITHOUT SENSITIVITY.**



IT INSISTS ON MEETING THE NEED EVEN WHEN TO DO SO WOULD BE DESTRUCTIVE. TRUE SERVICE CAN WITHHOLD THE SERVICE AS FREELY AS PERFORM IT."

"SELF-RIGHTEOUS SERVICE FRACTURES COMMUNITY. TRUE SERVICE, ON THE OTHER HAND, BUILDS COMMUNITY."

(RICHARD FOSTER, CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE, "THE DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE.")

(2) SPIRITUAL GREATNESS IS **ACHIEVED** NOT BY THE **POSITION** OR **POWER** WE HAVE IN THE MINISTRY! IT IS ACHIEVED THROUGH **HUMILITY** & **DOING GOD'S WILL** OR **OBEYING HIS COMMANDS!**

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.**" (Matt. 7: 21)*

*"And the world with its lust is passing away, **but the one who does the will of God remains forever.**" (1 John 2:17)*

IT IS NOT ABOUT HOW HIGH WE HAVE RISEN TO THE LADDER OF POWER/POSITION BUT ABOUT HOW DEEP WE HAVE HUMBLLED OURSELVES & SACRIFICED SERVING OR OBEYING CHRIST & HIS GOSPEL!

NOW, THE TRUE JUDGE OF OUR SPIRITUAL GREATNESS IS NOT MAN BUT THE LORD! FOR HE ALONE KNOWS OUR HEARTS & MOTIVES! ONLY THE "BEMA" OR JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST WILL REVEAL THE HEART OF BELIEVERS!

*"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2 Cor. 5: 10)*

(3) THE **GREATEST COMMENDATION** I WANT TO HEAR SOMEDAY IS NOT FROM MEN BUT FROM THE LORD. I WANT TO BE ABLE TO HEAR THOSE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS: "WELL DONE! **GOOD &**



**FAITHFUL SERVANT! SHARE YOUR MASTER'S JOY!"**

REMEMBER THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS/MINAS? THE LORD JESUS CHRIST EXPECTS US TO SERVE HIM & HIS KINGDOM! AND THAT WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE & ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE "TALENTS" OR "MINAS" THAT HE HAS ENTRUSTED TO US IN THIS LIFE!

NOW, WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT THE TIME, TREASURES, TALENTS & GIFTS, OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN US? WHAT ARE DOING FOR THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL? HOW ARE WE SERVING CHRIST? AGAIN, LET ME REMIND US ALL OF THE PROMISE OF THE LORD JESUS TO ALL WHO WILL SERVE HIM!

*"If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."*

*(John 12: 26)*

**CLOSING ILLUSTRATION: "PLEASING HIS MASTER!"**

A STORY IS TOLD OF A FAMOUS VIOLINIST WHO WAS TO PERFORM AT A WORLD REKNOWN CONCERT HALL OF THE WORLD AT THAT TIME. AS HE STOOD BEFORE THE PACKED HOUSE THAT NIGHT AND PLAYED HIS VIOLIN, HE MESMERIZED THE AUDIENCE WITH HIS PROWESS AND SKILL. AS HE LIFTED HIS BOW OFF THE STRING ON HIS FINAL NOTE, THE HALL ERUPTED WITH THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE AND HE WAS GIVEN A STANDING OVATION. HE LOOKED AT THE CROWD FOR A MOMENT AND WALKED OFF THE STAGE ONLY TO RETURN TO RENDER AN ENCORE PERFORMANCE. TO THE AMAZEMENT OF THE MASSES GATHERED THERE THAT NIGHT, HIS ENCORE PERFORMANCE WAS EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL AND FLAWLESS THAN THE FIRST.

HE LOOKED TO THE AUDIENCE AND LEFT THE STAGE FOR THE SECOND TIME, BUT ONLY TO RETURN BY THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE MULTITUDES THAT ONCE AGAIN STOOD TO THEIR FEET IN ADULATION. HE GAVE YET ANOTHER ENCORE NUMBER, LEAVING THE AUDIENCE FUMBLING FOR WORDS THAT COULD DESCRIBE

**WHAT THEIR EYES AND EARS JUST EXPERIENCED. THIS SEQUENCE WAS REPEATED SEVERAL MORE TIMES UNTIL FINALLY THIS VIRTUOSO OF VIRTUOSOS FINISHED HIS PIECE, LOOKED TO THE AUDIENCE, NODDED HIS HEAD AND SIMPLY WALKED OFF THE STAGE WHILE THE FEROCIOUS CHEERS COULD STILL BE HEARD LONG AFTER HE EXITED.**

**REPORTERS PRESSED OUTSIDE THE VIOLINIST'S DRESSING ROOM, WAITING TO CATCH A WORD FROM THE MAN WHO HAD JUST GIVEN THE PERFORMANCE OF A LIFETIME. AS HE EMERGED FROM THE SMALL ROOM, ONE REPORTER ASKED THE QUESTION, "SIR, WHY DID YOU GIVE SO MANY ENCORE PERFORMANCES? YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED AFTER THE FIRST AND EVERYONE WOULD HAVE BEEN AMAZED." THE VIOLINIST STOPPED AND REPLIED, "FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME IN MY CAREER, MY MASTER, THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME TO PLAY THE VIOLIN, WAS IN THE AUDIENCE. WHEN I FINISHED MY PERFORMANCE, EVERYONE STOOD EXCEPT FOR ONE PERSON. I PLAYED AGAIN, AND EVERYONE STOOD TO APPLAUD EXCEPT FOR HIM. I CONTINUED TO PLAY. ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE LAST ENCORE I LOOKED INTO THE SEATS AND I NOTICED THAT EVERYONE, INCLUDING MY MASTER, WAS STANDING AND APPLAUDING. IT WAS ONLY THEN THAT I WAS SATISFIED THAT I HAD DONE A GOOD JOB & PLEASED HIM."**

**CHURCH/BROTHERS & SISTERS, WHO ARE YOU LIVING TO PLEASE TODAY? IS YOUR LIFE FOCUSED ON YOURSELVES & RECEIVING THE PRAISES OF MEN OR ARE YOU FOCUSED ON STRIVING TO PLEASE YOUR MASTER, JESUS CHRIST? THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SAID IN HEBREWS 12:2, "LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH..."**

**CHURCH/BROS & SISTERS! LET US KEEP OUR FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST AND SERVE HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY UNTIL LIKE THE VIOLINIST WE ARE SATISFIED BECAUSE WE KNOW WE HAVE PLEASED THE LORD WITH OUR SERVICE! AND THAT WITH GLAD EXPECTATION WE WILL HEAR HIS WORDS WHEN HE WELCOMES US INTO HIS HEAVEN, "WELL DONE, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT..." (Source: Unknown, submitted by Clark Graham)**