Aspects of Love: Serving

Key Passage: 1 Peter 4:8-11

Introduction

In our culture, service is often viewed as an act of duty, charity, personal fulfilment, or even self-interest. The Christian understanding of service goes deeper. Scripture presents serving as a response to the love and grace that God has first shown us through Jesus Christ.

Peter connects love, hospitality, spiritual gifts, and service together. Serving is not merely something Christians do. It is an expression of who we are becoming as followers of Jesus.

How does God's love transform our understanding of serving others?

Part 1: Why Do People Serve?

Discussion

1. What are some reasons people serve others in society today?
2. Why is there a difference between serving out of obligation and serving out of love?
3. Have you ever served someone reluctantly, or joyfully? How did those experiences feel?
4. Which of these motivations might most often influence your service? (duty, social expectation, recognition, moral conviction, personal fulfilment or love)

Part 2: Jesus as the Model of Service

Read: Mark 10:42-45

Discussion

1. What does Jesus teach about greatness?
2. How does Jesus challenge worldly ideas of status and importance?
3. What does it mean that Jesus "did not come to be served, but to serve"?
4. Jesus' authority was expressed not through demanding service from others, but through sacrificially serving them. How might this challenge your understanding of leadership, influence, or success?

Part 3: Love Expressed Through Action

Read: 1 John 3:16-18

Discussion

1. Why is action an essential part of love?
2. What dangers exist in loving only with words?
3. Why do acts of service often communicate the gospel more powerfully than arguments?

Consider someone in your life who may need practical expressions of God's love rather than simply encouraging words. What could serving them look like this week?

Part 4: The Foot Washing Challenge

Read: John 13:1-17

Discussion

1. Why was foot washing such a significant act and why was Peter so uncomfortable with Jesus washing his feet?
2. Why do some acts of service somehow feel "beneath us"?
3. What does humility have to do with love?

Rather than actually offering to wash someone's feet, what might be an equivalent action you could take that expresses the foundational thought behind it?

Part 5: Faithful Stewards of Grace

Read: 1 Peter 4:10-11

Discussion

Peter says we are to serve as "faithful stewards of God's grace."

1. What is a steward – what does stewardship mean?
2. What grace have you personally received from God?
3. How does remembering God's grace change our attitude toward serving?

Christian service is the grateful response of people who have already received His grace. How might this change the way you consider people who may not be very likeable or lovable?

Part 6: Service That Changes the World

Read: Matthew 5:14-16

Discussion

The sermon highlighted the examples of St Francis of Assisi, William Wilberforce and Mother Teresa.

What made these people memorable was not wealth, status, or success, but lives marked by sacrificial service.

1. What impact can ordinary acts of service have over time?
2. Why do people often remember loving actions long after words are forgotten?
3. How can service become part of our witness to those around us?

Personal Application

Spend time praying through the following questions:

1. In light of God's grace and blessing upon me, who is God inviting me to serve?
2. Is there an area where I have been serving from duty rather than gratitude?
3. What gift, ability, experience, or resource has God given me to share?