

The Bottom of the Ladder



Servanthood (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

Let's consider now the attitude of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, to the Father and to the Son. We just look at a couple of scriptures in John. John 15:26:

> "But when the Helper comes, [that's the title of the Holy Spirit otherwise called the comforter] whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father; he will testify of me."

So the Holy Spirit came and this promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost because the Father and the Son sent him. He came in obedience to the Father and the Son.

Then in John 16:13–14 Jesus continues:

> "Jesus continues 'However when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he will not speak on his own authority; [or he will not speak of himself] but whatever he hears, he will speak: and he will tell you things to come.'"

So, the Holy Spirit never takes the initiative. It's very interesting. The Son never took the initiative from the Father, the Spirit never takes the initiative from the Father or the Son. He only speaks what he hears. Then Jesus goes on to say in the next verse:

> "He [the Spirit] will glorify me: for he will take of what is mine, and declare it to you."

The Holy Spirit never seeks glory for himself. His sole purpose is to glorify Jesus. You can form a pretty good opinion of whether something in the church is truly of the Holy Spirit by considering whether it glorifies Jesus or not. Because, if it does not glorify Jesus it is not from the Holy Spirit. If it glorifies a human personality or exalts a doctrine or gives the church an inflated opinion of itself, you can be quite sure it is not the work of the Holy Spirit.

Then we see the actual conduct of Jesus the Son on earth. If there's one thing that marks his conduct consistently it was being a servant. Let's look in Matthew 20 for a moment. Verses 25–28. If some of you do not call yourselves leaders but you have an ambition to be leaders, I want to tell you this is the way to promotion. There is no other way in the kingdom of God. So, actually, you can determine how high you will go. I'll explain why in a moment. Matthew 20, beginning at verse 25:

> "Jesus called them [disciples] to himself and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you."

One of the translations says "not so with you."

> "...but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant: and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave..."

So you want to achieve greatness? Become a servant. You want to be the top? Become the bottom. It's very carefully worded. If you want to be great you become a servant. But, if you want to be chief you become a slave. In other words, how high up you will go is determined by how low down you are willing to start.

And then Jesus enforced it with his own example in the next verse, verse 28.

> "...just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

I suppose that is undoubtedly a pattern for everyone who calls himself a minister. We are here not to be served but to serve.

Then in John 13 Jesus at the Last Supper gave that dramatic example of doing the most menial task which everybody else refused to do. He took a towel, a basin, and went around and washed the feet of his disciples. How many of you have washed people's feet? Well, a significant number. I think you'll agree it's difficult to be haughty while you're washing somebody's feet.

This is just by the way, but God gave me a particular feat some years back in l970 of praying for people by praying for their legs. Many of you have seen me do this. I've prayed for thousands of pairs of legs. I am an expert in measuring legs. Some of my dear minister friends, I mean real friends of mine said, "Listen, you've got to be careful about this thing. You have a reputation as being a scholarly Bible teacher but you're going to spoil it if you go around kneeling in front of everybody and measuring their legs." I thought it over but eventually I came to the conclusion there really is no better position for anybody to be in than kneeling at the feet of the people he's ministering to. So I was happy to accept the job and God has blessed it. I have, I must say, hundreds of testimonies of people who've been miraculously healed when I ministered to them that way. It wouldn't be the way I would have invented, I didn't think of it. God did. I just mention that because sometimes our well-intentioned friends don't have the mind of the Lord. God bless them nevertheless.

Anyhow, I just want to read Jesus' comment now on what he said to his disciples after he had washed their feet in John 13, beginning at verse 12.

> "So when he had washed their feet, taken his garments, and sat down again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

That's very clear, isn't it? I mean, there's no misunderstanding that. I have given you an example.

> "Most assuredly I say to you, The servant is not greater than his master: not he who is sent greater than he who sent him."

He wraps it up with this pithy comment:

> "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them."

It's not what you know that makes you happy, it's what you do. Lots of us know things, we're not doing them. Generally speaking, we're far from happy. But when we do what we know, that makes up happy.

Then there's another scene which I don't think we've commented on sufficiently right at the end of John's gospel, chapter 21, after Jesus' resurrection. You see, you could say he was a servant while he was here on earth but even after his resurrection he still served his disciples. This is to me a very amusing incident. John 21. Simon Peter, who was a leader—and you know how you find out who is a leader? A leader is the person others follow. It's not always the person

who is called to be the leader. Peter, with all his mistakes, was a leader. He said, “I’m going fishing.” And they all said, “Well, we’ll go with you.” I don’t think they were short of food and, as I understand it, Jesus had called them to leave fishing for other tasks. But they went back and fished all night and caught nothing. How many of us in the ministry could say, “Lord, that happened to me. I went back to something that you had taken me from not because I absolutely had a financial need but just because I didn’t know what to do next.” Believe me, when that happens, we can fish all night but we’ll catch nothing.

Then in the morning light there’s this figure standing on the shore and he says to them, “Boys, have you got anything to put on your bread?” That’s what it means. Not are you short of food but what’s the motive of fishing? You’re looking for something to put on your bread. Then he said, “Have you caught anything?” They said no. Very simple, brief, negative. They were pretty sour anyhow and here’s this man asking the wrong question, Have you caught anything? They said no. So he said, “Why don’t you put the net on the other side of the boat and try?” Do you know what happened? They couldn’t pull all the fish in, there were so many. Then they realized it was the Lord.

I can identify so well with some of those things. When we go back to the things the Lord has called us out of we can fish all night but we’ll catch nothing. And we really don’t like to be confronted with the fact that it was disobedience and unbelief that sent us back.

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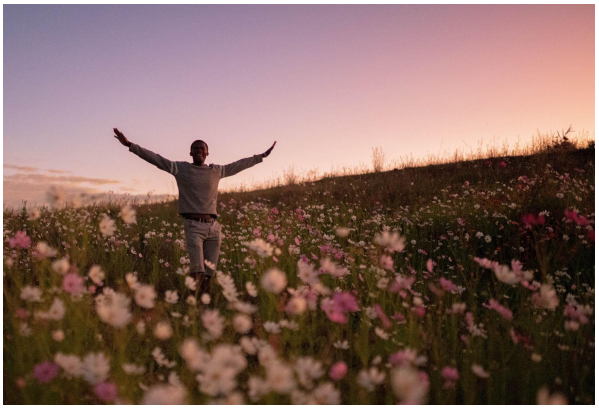
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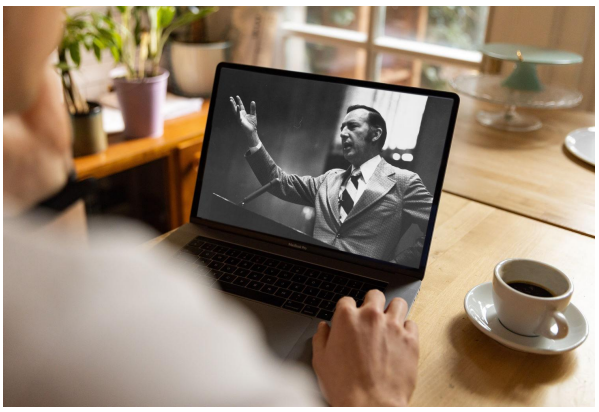
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