

Sermon Discussion Guide

Jesus Outside the Box: Servanthood

Icebreakers:

1. When you were a child what are some of the things that you aspired to be when you grew up? (How many of you actually had a career doing what you set out to do?)
2. What is the most meaningful job you have ever had? (What is the most meaningful thing that you have accomplished in life up to this point?)
3. If you had a “do over,” in terms of your career path, what would you do differently?

Background: Being a servant is not generally the goal of anyone’s career. Being a slave would even be worse. Most people want to have a career that offers them stability, adequate compensation, a great benefit package, good working conditions, etc. Part of the challenge in motivating the American Church is that, by-in-large, people have prospered in their jobs and are content with the status quo. So, how do you motivate a group of people to “work” in the Kingdom when they have already put in their work week?

- We need to attribute a high value to working in and for the Kingdom of God.
- We need to grasp the idea that serving others helps us balance out our natural tendency to be self-centered.

Digging Deeper: (Read) Matthew 20:25. But Jesus called them 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.

1. Is it true that civil authorities tend to flex their muscles and flaunt their power?
2. Why do you think that people like control? (Especially over others)
3. James and John, also with their mother, just petitioned Jesus for “high” positions in the Kingdom they were sure that Jesus was going to establish. The teaching of servanthood was Jesus’ response. How do you think you would have responded to the “out-of-line” request?

(Read verses 26-28) Yet it shall not be so among 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-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

1. “It shall not be so among you!” Jesus makes it clear that the Lording it over others is not a sanctioned value in the Kingdom of God. (Have you ever seen this value creep into church organizations? What was the result?)
2. What are some of the most important characteristics of a good employee? (What is the value of serving above and beyond expectations?)
3. How did Jesus demonstrate servanthood in His sojourn on earth?

Wrap-up: (Read) Matthew 5:16, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- We probably avoid talking about good works, because historically it has been emphasized more than God's work of grace; however, these two concepts walk hand in hand. **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)** ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- We are saved by grace. We are saved for good works, which God has prepared for us.