

WordOne Bible Study

Healed to Help, Saved to Serve

by Tim Runtsch

Text: Mark 1:29-39 for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will gain a great understanding of Christian servanthood as a response to God's great love for us in Christ Jesus.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles
Pencils
Paper
Poster Board
Markers

GETTING STARTED

The group leader should share a rewarding time when he/she served other people. Then have each member of the group share a time when he/she served others. Particular attention should be paid to *why* the person acted in a serving way and *how they felt* after the time of service was concluded. Individuals should feel free to pass if they are uncomfortable sharing with the large group.

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Mark 1:29-31. Have a few volunteers role-play the short story of Jesus healing the woman. Feel free to use your own words to bring the story alive. After you are done acting out the Scripture scene, discuss the following questions:
 - a. What is the woman's response to being healed from the fever?
 She goes on a vacation
 She gets upset, saying that she liked being sick.
 She goes to her easy chair and watches TV.
 She gets up and immediately begins to serve Jesus.
 - b. In what way is the woman's response remarkable?
 - c. Does Jesus tell her that she is supposed to wait on Him?
 - d. What, if anything, can be learned from this woman?
2. Just as Simon's mother-in-law was healed to help, all Christians are saved to serve. In Holy Baptism you were sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ. It was there at the font that He washed you with Word-drenched waters. It was through that wonderful Sacrament that you were healed from a deadly sickness called sin. And now, like Simon's mother-in-law, you have the opportunity and privilege of serving your Savior. Rate yourself as a servant using the following statements. 1=agree strongly, 2=agree, 3=undecided, 4=disagree, 5=disagree strongly.
 - a. I am always concerned more about others than I am myself.
 - b. I often ask my parents if there is anything I can do for them.
 - c. I often give of my time to worthwhile projects at home, at school and in the community.
 - d. I do things that are of service to others without anyone every having to ask me; I just serve naturally.
 - e. Instead of watching TV, playing video games or talking with my friends for hours on the phone I go out and try to help others in many and various ways.

- f. I always try to help elderly people cross the street.
Add all of your scores together. Rate yourself. Low scores are good and high scores may indicate the need to reexamine servanthood in your life.
3. Read Mark 10:35-43 and discuss the following questions:
- What did James and John want from Jesus?
 - In this request, what were they after?
 - What does Jesus say that life in the kingdom is all about? (See verses 43 and 44)
 - How is Jesus the ultimate example of servanthood? (See also Philippians 2:1-11)
4. As you can see, Jesus calls each of us to servanthood as well. We respond to this call, not because it will earn us any points with God, but merely out of loving and willing response to how wonderfully Christ served us through His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. Read Matthew 25:31-46. Take special note of the response of righteous people at the end of time. It seems that they just served and served and served, without any want of recognition or reward. Jesus makes it clear that by serving others we also serve Him. See also Galatians 5:13-15.
5. A Greek word for servant is "doulos." This word can also mean slave. Slaves needed food and nourishment in order to properly serve their master. What forms of nourishment are we offered as Christians as we live our lives as servants of the Master?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

Servanthood is...

When you were little, one of your Sunday School teachers probably told you that joy comes from putting Jesus first, others second and yourself last. The first letters of the words "Jesus," "Other" and "Yourself" form an acrostic that spells "JOY." The word "SERVICE" can also form an acrostic that tells what servanthood is all about. Divide the large group into groups of 3-4 people. Each group should come up with an acrostic using the word "SERVICE." Their acrostic should seek to define what Christian servanthood is. Have them write their acrostic on a piece of poster board with markers. The name of the game is creativity. When all have finished, each group should share their acrostic with the larger group.

CLOSING

Close with a circle prayer. Ask the students to give thanks for specific situations in which they were privileged to serve God by serving others. The leader should then close with a prayer asking God to lead all the participants into more and more avenues of service.

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