

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

David Horner

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Follow Me

PART

7

TITLE

I Will Call You To The Low Places

SCRIPTURE

John 13:1-17



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Brian Frost: Hey, Providence family. 40 years ago, God used David and Cathy Horner to plant Providence, and for 37 of those years David led us and fed us faithfully from God's Word. I can remember many times hearing David speak of God's big heart for the nations, which is one of the reasons that I'm here in Central Asia. This morning we're going to be in John chapter 13, and I can't think of nobody who is more equipped than David to teach us from that passage, because it speaks of a life that's poured out for others. Would you please welcome our founding pastor, David Horner.

David Horner: Thank you. I told the first service, I said that is just mean, preach on humility and then put a video up right before you come up. That's just not right, but what an honor to be here and to be able to share in our time of worship this morning.

We're going to be in John 13 as Brian said, and it's a great joy to see him there in Central Asia. Not the least of which it means I get to preach here, but normally on Sunday morning if I'm not preaching somewhere else Cathy and I are right here among you somewhere. This is our church home. We love it. I remember years ago before we left people saying, "Are you going to go to Providence after you retire?" I said, "Well, it depends on who the pastor is." Brian was the pastor. I'm going like, "I'm in, all in." He is my pastor. Don't you love Brian? He's just awesome. Come on. Give it up for Brian. This is just a joy to be able to serve with that brother.

Now, I'm going to look at this passage with you this morning. We're supposed to look at verses 1 to 17, but there's so many different sermons in that passage we're going to kind of increase the odds that we'll get through in time by cutting out a middle section. There's a portion in there that talks about Jesus interacting with Peter and Peter resisting the washing of his feet. We don't have time to go into that this morning. That's a whole nother sermon. Come back at 2:00. No, I'm just kidding.

We will just forego that piece, but let's read verses 1 to 5 and then pick it up again in verse 12 through verse 17 and hear what happens as Jesus begins to wash the feet of these men that he's walked the dirty roads of Palestine with for all these years. Let's just see what the reaction is from our hearts as we look to see who it is who's doing this and why he's doing it. Let's read the Word of God, John chapter 13, beginning in verse 1.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end or to the uttermost. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Then down to verse 12. When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, 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 also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

Let’s pray. Father, as we come to this text, a very familiar text, one even unbelievers and people not even that familiar with the Bible know about this text, Lord, it would be very easy for us to glibly assume that we know what it’s about. I did. I’ve preached from it so many times, and to prepare for this message this morning I’m so thankful that your Spirit makes all things new. This passage is filled with truth and applications that really impacted me as I was preparing yet again.

Father, there are folks here this morning who need this message as much as I did. We thank you for the invitation issued by Jesus, your own voice, saying, “Come, follow me. Do these things that I have shown you to do.” Lord, speak and we will give you praise for what you’re going to do, how you’re going to say it, and what the outcomes will be in our lives as a result of our time here for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Just start off with a question. Do you know your rights? I think that’s an interesting question, because in the culture every day it seems like we hear somebody saying, “I know my rights.” Then they follow that up with a demand of something that they think that they have a right to or that they think they have earned or deserved. They’re very strident about that. We as a nation constantly are dealing with rights in conflict with one another.

We see it happening in all kinds of places, where in education, we have a right to teach this way, or in government I have a right to govern this way, or in homes I have a right to be served by my wife or by my husband, or I have a right for my children to treat me this way, or the children say, “My rights are such that my parents are violating.” We hear it over and over again.

What’s distressing is when we hear that language starting to show up in the church. “I have a right to my way, the way I like it, and it better be that way or Jesus is going to be sorry,” you know. You’re thinking no, no, no, no, no, no. Here’s the deal. Jesus wants us to understand something. When we say yes to Christ and we invite him to forgive us of our sins, we confess that we are sinners and we ask hi to come and change us from the inside out, we’re surrendering our lives to him. When we surrender our lives to him, something happens. We are, according to the scriptures, crucified with Christ and then made alive together with him.

That means, just follow the logic of this for a moment, if I am dead, what rights do I now have? To a proper burial. You're welcome to be able to fulfill that right right next door, Riley Memorial Garden or wherever you want to go to be buried, but you have a right to a proper burial, but you don't have any other rights to demand. The scripture says in Galatians 2 that I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life which I now live by faith in the Son of God I live in the one who loved me, delivered himself up for me, so it is Christ who is living in me. Whatever rights I have are connected with the rights Jesus has.

In this passage this morning, we hear Jesus saying, "I know about rights, and I give them all up to be able to wash the feet of these guys. One of them is a betrayer, a treasonous rebel who is going to give me up, and I'm still washing his feet. I have a right not to, but I choose to." Why? Because he had told them earlier, the Son of Man did not come to be served, but what? To serve and to give us his life as a ransom for many.

As we come to this passage this morning, we want to understand what this is about. Why is Jesus giving us this model, and then why is he insisting that we as followers of Christ follow him to the low places of serving?

We all consider ourselves servant after a fashion. If we get to define it, we're there. But is our definition of what it means to serve consistent with Christ's definition of service? Well, this passage begs the question. Actually, it begs three questions, and we're going to try to answer all three of these questions in the course of our study of this passage.

The first question is simply this. Who is he who bows his knee to serve in such a lowly way? Who is this? Is it a slave? Is it a servant? Is it somebody who would be expected to do that? That's the first question, who is he? Second question is why would he willingly engage in such humiliating, perhaps even described as demeaning, behavior? Why would he do that? If he really is who, we answer the question number one, if he is who that is, then why would he do this?

The third question is the application of all this to our own hearts. What does he want us to do? What does following him to the low places actually mean for us? How am I supposed to process this as a follower of Christ? When he invites me to come and follow him, what does it mean in terms of how I'm supposed to respond when I see from a human perspective that following him to serve others is going to violate some right that I think I have not to have to do that? Well, looks at it together.

Who is he? Who is this Savior? If that question is answered properly and we understand who he is who's kneeling before them, then it's going to help us really be able to process whether or not we want to follow him or not. Because if he's just another Joe Blow who's serving somebody, well a lot of people ought to serve people. We treat people that way, "You need to serve me. You need to take care of my needs. Jesus, you need to do that as well." But if he is more than just somebody who's doing a serving job, then we may need to reconsider.

This is one who reigns forever on the throne of the universe. What? He is the one who reigns forever on the throne of the universe. The one who's crawling around on his hands and knees in a second floor walkup in Jerusalem on the night of the Passover feast is the reigning sovereign Lord of the universe.

Now, let's package that in such a way that we can get a couple of handles on it. First of all, he's the king who has an everlasting kingdom. He has an everlasting dominion over that kingdom. That kingdom is a kingdom that will never be destroyed. It is an indestructible kingdom.

Back in the prophet Daniel, chapter 7 verse 14, it's talking about the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, when he comes. It described him this way. It says to him, the Messiah, was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should, what? Serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

He's the king of everything. He's on his knees crawling around the floor in the upper room, the king. That just seems highly inappropriate, doesn't it? It just doesn't seem right. Well, that's a part of the picture he wants us to understand, because not only is he the king with this indestructible kingdom, this glorious dominion, he is the creator of all kingdoms. He is the one who has established all things by the word of his power.

Hebrews chapter 1, verses 2 and 3. In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God, he is the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

All right, so just let your mind just think about that for a second, because sometimes we tend to tame Jesus. Jesus, it's only fitting that sweet little Jesus boy, you model that servanthood thing. Good for you. Way to go, Jesus. That's what Messiahs do. Hold the phone. He's the king of everything, and he is the creator of all that is. The floor that he's crawling on, he created all the materials that came into the composition of that floor. The feet that he's washing, he created the people on the top end of those feet. The dirt that's on those feet, the dust, the mud that was gathered as they were coming together to this place, he created all that dirt. The water that he's using to wash their feet, he created the water. The city and the surrounding mountains, he created those. The stars above those mounts he created, and now we see this one. Who is he who's crawling around on his hands and knees?

Man, I tell you what. If it doesn't choke you up a little bit, maybe we're not paying attention. Maybe we have tamed Jesus too much and have made him manageable instead of majestic. Who is he? The king, the one who reigns sovereignly on his throne. Yet, yet, he kneels to the floor in this upper room. He who just before he became flesh was seated on the throne in heaven is now crawling around the floor on the second story walkup in Jerusalem. Go figure. This is who he is. This is the one who has come to do that.

Therefore, we understand a little bit more of what's going on. He chose to actually take that low place. He chose to serve the very ones who owed their very existence to him. He chose to do that. In Philippians chapter 2, Paul is trying to help us grasp some of this in a doctrinal way. He wants us to get our minds wrapped around this. He saying, "Listen. You need to have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ." What is that? "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." He chose to do that. This act of kneeling should shock every knowledgeable person as to who he is that he is actually doing this.

There has to be in our minds some reason for this. Well, it's just a model to follow. We need to just be imitators of Jesus and do that part of what he did. It's got to be more than that. This is not behavior modification. "I haven't been serving. This afternoon, I'm going to start serving. Instead of yelling at my kids to come bring me something to drink while I'm watching the ball game, I might get up out of my chair myself this afternoon." Bless your heart. Aren't you the servant today. "Instead of letting my wife clean up the kitchen after the meal today, I might carry my own plate over to the sink." Such a servant. Such a servant. No. We begin to think these ways, and we begin to process that. Those are male images. Ladies, fill in your own blanks.

What we think is that if I just change some aspect of my behavior and once in a while on a whim sacrificially do something that's servant like, I will have done what Jesus says in this passage. Nothing could be further from the truth. He's not asking us to modify our behavior. He's asking us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in Christ, and to be conformed to the image of Christ, and to have the clear understanding that I've been made alive together with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. Therefore, I serve not because it is an act of behavior modification. I serve because it is in the character of my Savior to be a servant. That's who I am. That's my identity.

"Well, aren't you forgetting that we're heirs of the throne, and we are those who are going to be citizens in heaven, and that he's preparing places for us of grandeur and glory?" I'm not forgetting any of that, and Jesus never forgot who he was in the entire process of his humanity and while he was here incarnate, but he still understood humble servanthood from a very practical point of view. What does that mean? That means that we need to see why he would willingly engage in such humiliating behavior. What was it that prompted him to do that? Why would the king of glory, why would the creator or all things be willing to do those kind of things on our behalf?

Well, let's be frank. There's no way we can explore the end of the concept, of the topics, of the ideas of what would prompt the mind of God to do what he does. We can't be so audacious to think that way. Let me suggest that there are at least a couple of things that come to mind this morning that we need to at least process these two out of the myriad of things we could look at.

One of the things that would answer the question why would he do that is very simple, basic Sunday school information. Nothing new this morning, folks. Sorry. This is not a clever attempt to wow you with brand new doctrine. The simple reason that he would do this for us is because he loves you. “What else you got?” You’re finished processing that? The king of glory and the creator of all that is loves you. In verse 1 of this passage, it says that he loved his own to the full extent of his love. How much is the full extent of the love of Christ? Simply, a lot. The songwriter says the oceans, where they filled with ink, and every stalk were straw, and they were a stylus in the writer’s hands could never with all of that express adequately the depth and the breadth and the length of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Never. He wants us to understand, look, this is something that God is doing because of his great, great love for you.

In a few chapters later, John chapter 15, he say, “Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” “That’s not what Jesus is doing here. Well no, he’s just washing their feet.” Well, let me finish. Let me finish. What else does he say?

In Romans chapter 5 verse 8, “God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners,” hadn’t changed our game plan at all. There had been no behavior modification at all. There was still sin in our lives. “God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were still sinner, Christ died for us.” It’s a very simple picture here. Christ washed the feet of his disciples by a love that compelled him to do so.

Now, did this just spring up on his mind? “You know what? This is kind of a crazy situation here. We’re in a rented room. There’s no master of this house. There’s just me and these 12 guys.” If there were a master of the house, there’d be a bondservant or a slave or somebody who was assigned the responsibility of washing feet. There’s not anybody like that here. Jesus looks and discerns that there is a need in the room, and he begins himself to take it upon himself to wash their feet, the dirty feet that had just walked through the streets of Jerusalem to get there. They’re not sitting down to a meal where those dirty feet from one guy are right up against the face of the dirty foot from the next face, and the face of the guy is next ...

He says, “Somebody’s got to wash these feet or it’s going to be a very unpleasant meal. Thaddeus, why don’t you do it? You don’t ever get any credit in the scripture. Come on.” No, he didn’t call anybody else. It just says that he rose from supper and began to do it.

When was this issue resolved for him? Before he took the first step from heaven to Earth. It had already been determined that he was going to come in order to die. He had already made the commitment that out of love, God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us. Great love has no man than he lay down this life for a friend. That is the picture. He came because of his love, and he knew he was going to die.

Washing feet relative to the cross is not a big deal. Why? Because his whole life is wrapped up with that understanding. The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Washing feet is already a foregone conclusion. It wasn't behavior modification. It wasn't I will change my behavior here to match the circumstances. It's just who he was. If we're in Christ, following him means that we become like he is. He loves his own to the end, to the uttermost.

The second reason that I suggest, this is kind of a sidebar so we might rush through this one a little more quickly, but the second reason he does it is this act actually models the incarnation from his knees. It gives a sort of a snapshot of the incarnation. Look at verses 4 and 5 again real quickly and just let me comment as we read through the verses.

In verse 4, he rose from supper. Did he rise from his throne in heaven before he became flesh and dwelt among us? Yeah. He rose from supper at the table. Yeah, he got up from his heavenly throne. He laid aside his outer garments. Wait a minute. Did not he empty himself yet without for a moment ceasing to be fully God? He emptied himself and became flesh and dwelt among us. Yes. He took a towel around his waist. Did he not take on human flesh and become one with us? He became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld his glory. We see him doing that. We see him then pouring water into a basin. Did he not pour out his own life blood? Did he not then take that which was in the basin and apply it to that which was unclean and brings cleansing to those? Did he not do that with his blood at the cross and apply that?

After he's finished, it says then he put back on his outer garments. Well, after the resurrection, what happened? The glorified Jesus is then glorified further in their sight. He ascends to heaven. Then what did he do? It says that in this place he resumed his place at the table. Where is Jesus now? He has resumed his place on the throne waiting for the Father.

That's a whole nother sermon. Get a copy of it somewhere. It's a great sermon to just think through. I heard a sermon by John Stott on that topic years ago, and it's a picture that we can't get out of our minds. This is the Lord God Almighty on his knees bowing in such a way that he is doing the unthinkable, the despicable, the act of absolute demeaning slave like behavior. We're reading this and thinking, "Yeah, I get that. I understand." Do we really?

Why did he do it? Let's just leave it with those two reasons, because it is a vivid picture of the incarnation itself and the purpose of God coming to Earth to be able to redeem sinful humanity by becoming one with us. What a glorious picture that is here. Then that great picture, the glorious picture, he loved them. He loved his own to the nth degree, to the ultimate expression of love, so he washed their feet.



Now, the question then is begged, what does that mean for us? Why is this such a familiar passage, and we do think we really know it so well? Well, he's in essence saying to us, folks, "You've seen it, now go do it. You are becoming one with me. I'm a servant. That means you are too." The measure of whether we really have become servants, you've heard it many times repeatable right here, the measure of your servant heart is how you act when someone treats you like a servant. "I'm a servant of Christ. How dare they expect me to do that?" Well, I believe you just acted out of character. If you truly are a character who is like Christ in serving in humility you won't think it odd at all that he expects you to actually follow him onto his knees.

We look at verse 14. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." Got it. Okay, break. Let's do it. No. See, some people looked at that, and as a matter of fact there's one denomination that kind of builds its identity on being a foot washing people. That's what they do. They see it as the third ordinance. You have the baptist, the Lord's supper, and foot washing are the ordinances of that church. They're not all wrong. You understand that. They limit it if they say it's just foot washing and then they treat each other like dirt. That's not what I'm saying.

If they limit it to just foot washing, they miss the point, because what Jesus is wanting us to understand is you look around and find all kinds of creative ways of serving one another wherever their needs are. Look around and see how you can find a place to bow your knee in such a way that you are able to serve one another as one who has the identity of a servant. It's not unusual to be treated as a servant if you actually are a servant.

Serving means frankly from Christ's perspective behaving without any possible gain or advantage for yourself. That means that our motives are pure enough that we don't get anything out of it when we do it. It's called the principle of no advantage. Who wants that? At least I should get some recognition. Do they have plaques in heaven? Do we get an award? Do they have like a participation plaque at least, something to say that we did do that? No, no. It's the principle of no advantage. You don't get any credit for doing it.

Years ago, I've preached through this passage in John 13 many times through the year, and one of the occasions when I was preaching of servanthood referring this passage and others, I made a statement. Pastors are always making statements, but sometimes you don't really know whether anybody's going to listen to you or do anything about it. I had made this statement that, look, if you're not clear on what you should be doing as a servant, look around you like Jesus did. There are dirty feet. I need to wash these feet. Look around you. Find something that needs to be done, and then do it. Well, that's really profound. Find something that needs to be done and then just do it. Don't call attention to yourself. Don't call a special church business meeting to get authorization. Just go do it.

That was the sermon. A month or so goes by, and I'm after the last service of the day, and I'm talking to people who are coming by after the service. Out of the corner of my eye, I see a friend of our in the back of the old room just going up and down the rows. Some of you remember Glen and Helen Arrow. Glen was getting caught up with age and his health was not the best, and I'm wondering what in the world Glen's doing. As I'm talking to this person, talking to that person, Glen's still going back and forth.

Finally everybody else is gone. I go back, "Glen, what in the world are you doing?" He said, "Well, you remember that sermon you preached?" That's trouble. I don't even remember what I just preached, much less a month ago. What he said, he says, "Remember that sermon? You said to find somebody that nobody was doing and then do it. Well, it seems to me that after church every week that people left bulletins all over the floor and in the seats, and gum wrappers, and candy, and trash, and God forbid wet Kleenex." I mean whatever stuff is there. He said, "Nobody was doing that, so I thought I can't do a lot, but I can do that."

I hadn't noticed, but for the last month or so, Glen had been staying after the last service picking up bulletins. An older gentleman whose health was not able to do other things found it within his ability to bend over and pick up our trash. That was rather humbling. I didn't leave a bulletin on the floor for years after that, and I hope you don't either. I said, "Well, we've got a cleaning crew that comes in to do that." He said, "Well yeah, but we don't have to do that if we just all will. I can do this."

Right now, Brian's with a team of folks serving Christ over in Central Asia. They didn't have to do that. They have a right not to go to Asia. We have a group of guys who comes in at 4:00 every Tuesday morning, cooks breakfast for the men who are coming for Bible study. They don't have to do that. They have a right not to have to do that.

We've got people who are not here at Providence this morning because they're down in eastern North Carolina working in unthinkable situations with mosquitoes the size of vultures, and mold, and mess. Some of them have actually been going down there since Matthew. They were about to put the last coat of paint on the house that they'd been working on for two years when Florence came through. They just went, "You know what? Let's don't waste that paint." They're back down there again. You don't even know their names.

Years ago, I was getting ready to do a funeral of a dear friend of our who had been here at Providence, served the Lord in so many ways. She had a debilitating disease that took away her ability to speak. She couldn't do anything for herself. She couldn't cook. She just couldn't do anything. In preparation for the service, I found out that there had been about 6 to 10 ladies from this congregation every week for the last few years in her home. Wow. Reading the scriptures for her to her, cooking meals for her family, singing hymns with her, just loving her. I didn't know anything about all that. It wasn't on the evening news. They were just serving because they're servants.

Every week, we have people who are in assisted living homes and nursing homes and stuff leading Bible studies and worship services. Some are not here this morning because they're in the prisons leading worship there this morning. We don't know about these people, do we? Why? Because they're servants. They figured it out, and they are operating on the principle of no advantage. They don't get any credit.

As a matter of fact, after the first service I saw one of those women who were caring for the elder lady. I said, "Aren't you glad I didn't mention your name?" She said, "You did I'd have killed you in Jesus' name." She didn't say that, but I mean there was that kind of look. You're thinking you don't want to be recognized. You just want to do it because it honors Christ. What a glorious picture that is for us to be able to see that.

Because you're a servant, you assume that serving means that no credit is due to you. Luke chapter 17, Jesus is telling the story about the servants. He says, "Does the master thank the servant because he did what he commanded him to do? No, so you also when you have done all that you were commanded say, We are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty." We've only done what we're supposed to do. There's no credit in being a servant. This is not a fun sermon because you don't get any credit for it if you do what he says.

But see, here's the catch. After this morning if you didn't know it before, you do know it now. He says now if you know it, you're not blessed for knowing it. What's the blessing? In doing it. That's what he says to us, "You're blessed if you do these things."

We see him saying, "I'm inviting you to your knees, to the lowest place, to serve as I have served." A couple hours later we see Jesus kneeling again, but this time in the Garden of Gethsemane on his knees praying, seeking the Father. "I'm inviting you, my disciples. Can you not stay awake with me for just a little while and pray with me? Come kneel with me. Come bow down with me." It's a humble posture saying that I don't have it all together. I need you, Lord. I call upon you. I cry out to you. "Come join me at my knees, brothers," he's saying.

Then we get to another passage in Philippians chapter 2 where Jesus says there's another scene of kneeling coming. Not just kneeling to serve. That's important and you need to be doing that. That's the big here. You've seem me do it, now do it. The garden, praying, kneeling. He said there's another scene in Philippians chapter 2. We've talked about the fact that he didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself and all that, but this is what else he says starting in verse 9. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that's above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

You see, kneeling plays an important part in this whole life of Christ. We kneel to serve according to this passage. We kneel to pray according to the few hours after the passage. We see we kneel to worship, and we're going to join every tongue from every tribe, from every people in every age, kneeling before the one on the throne declaring he is Lord. He's the Lord. This Lord and master has called me to follow him to my knees. How can I not do that? I supposed to be a servant, and that's the calling that he gives me in Christ Jesus. So much more to say about that, but bottom line is that he calls us to do what we know. Verse 17, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Most problems among Christians today can be attributed to the depth of knowledge and the shallowness of obedience. We know it, but we don't do it. You ask the average Joe out there on the street who doesn't attend church, "Would you consider going?" "Well, not really." "Why?" "Because it's full of love." No, hypocrites, people who say one thing, affirm verbally one thing, but they don't do what they say. Their lives are no different. We're not impacting the culture because there's a disconnect between what we know and what we do. Jesus say, "You're my disciples and you follow me when you actually get around to doing what you know."

How do we process this? We've got to take this away real quickly, so just some things to think about. Number one, if you hear this and Jesus is saying to you, "Take the low place," there might be a temptation for you to be guilted into doing something today. Here's the thing. Responding to this kind of message that he's given us here from guilt is not going to sustain the attitude and the behavior of a servant. You're good for five minutes and then you're out. You do one thing and think, "Done. I finished." No, it is not going to be guiltling you into it that's going to make it happen.

Some of you are thinking, "Boy, that was just a real guilt inducing sermon." Hey, it ain't my fault. I'm just reading you the Bible, okay. But guilt is not going to keep you there. If it starts you in the right direction, then by all means be guilty, but that's not going to keep you there.

Second thing we need to understand is that ignoring this message through rationalization and making excuses is never going to result in you actually following Christ to the low place. "Well, I know Jesus doesn't mean me to do that. I mean that just makes me a doormat, and I don't want to be a doormat. He would never expect me to be a doormat. I'm a child of the king. I'll never." He said, "Well, no, no." Actually he does expect you to do that.

You can't rationalize it. You can't excuse it. You can be a servant. Find that place, and remember you've been crucified. It's no longer you defending anything. You don't have any rights when you come to Christ except the right to serve the king of glory in the power of the Spirit. No, don't rationalize it. Don't try to explain away what God's called you to do. Just serve as a servant from the heart.

Here's the last. If you actually have been given the mind of Christ, Christ himself will transform both your perspective and your actions. You will think like Christ does. You will survey the possibilities around you. You will be like Glen Arrow, and you'll see what's not being done, and figure out, "I can do that," and you'll go after it with gladness of heart because you know that you have the mind of Christ which was in Christ Jesus.

Jesus says, "I want you to follow me. One day, it'll be to the highest places of glory, but right now I want you to follow me to the low places. I want you to get into competition with each other to out-serve each other. I want you to go hard at it, not with the mind that you're going to get anything out of winning that contest, but you're going to finally get to the place where you're serving so automatically you never even think about it." It is just an unconscious act of a servant doing the thing that he never gets any credit for or she never gets any credit for because it's just what servants do. Christ says, "Now, come. Do you know these things? Then you're going to be blessed if you do them." Amen.

let's pray. Father, we're not like that naturally. We're not even inclined to think of ourselves in ways that actually submit to the mind of Christ. We tend to exalt ourselves instead of humble ourselves. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the incarnation. Thanks for coming here out of your great love for us to model that grace and love in such practical terms, not just at the cross to give us new life and forgiveness for sins, but in that new life to be made new, that we are being transformed and from the renewing of our minds we are a new people who are identifiable in heaven as servants of God most high.

Father, open our eyes. The world around us needs to see authenticity. May it begin on our knees as we bow, kneeling in your presence, because, Father, that is where we're going to meet Jesus in a most tangible way, when we meet him at the low place. Father, thank you for calling us to follow you into such a glorious adventure.

Now, Lord, we come to that part in our service we get to serve the needs of the church by giving, recognizing that this too is an act of submission to you, an act of serving one another, and serving the cause of Christ, and enabling others to be able to serve you wherever our hands might be able to reach and wherever our prayers can go. Lord, we want to give faithfully, and fully, and freely for Christ. Lord, make us servants as we are called by Christ to the low places. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.



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