

## **Remember: Service**

**By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison**

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**Mark 10:35-45**

Read in your **bulletin** about our 4<sup>th</sup> membership vow. Jesus said so many counter-intuitive things. Most every individual wants to be served not to serve others. Jesus told His self-absorbed and competitive disciples a direct counter to our natural bias of “me first!” Serving others in meaningful ways can be great therapy. Meaningful service shifts our focus from inward to outward. Service introduces us to the struggles, pain, adversity and hardship of others. Service releases gratitude and joy. The New Testament emphasizes that love, joy and peace isn't a consumer item taken off the shelf but is best given by service. Letting others go first demands humility, maturity and wisdom. Serving the Lord with gladness by serving others releases the blessing of God in our lives. People who love God have great energy for the things of God and deeply desire to serve Him. But servants beware – serving comes at a price and includes its share of hardship.

**APPLICATION:** Our Pastor Emeritus, Bill Mason, always told our congregation: *“Every member needs to serve some place.”* What is God calling you to do? One of my axioms is: *“Kids come first.”* It is a paraphrase of what Jesus said, *“Let the children come to me...do not hinder them, for such belongs the Kingdom of God.”* Will you serve in children's ministry? If not, where are you serving? Asbury has hundreds of places where you can find meaningful service. We can help you find your place.

Our **Newcomer Meal** today is at 12:15 in the Community Life Center. Drop-ins are welcome.

We Follow Jesus and Help Others Follow **by service**. **SERVICE** is our 4<sup>th</sup> vow.

**Jesus** served. He told His followers to serve, too. It is a key component of following Jesus.

In **Mark 10**, Jesus describes the importance of children. We enter the KOG by humility. Children experience humility, especially in the culture of Jesus' day. Jesus blessed the children. **Jesus would have been a volunteer at VBS.** Probably 10 adult volunteers (202 of them; 268 student volunteers – 679 kids) told me this week: *“VBS is my favorite week of the year.”*

After this, Jesus met a wealthy young man who asked Jesus how he could obtain eternal life. Mark's gospel says Jesus loved the man and He said something He told no one else: *“go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have*

*treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.”* The man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Jesus told His disciples how hard it is for wealthy people to enter the KOG. It’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the KOG. The disciples were astonished and asked, “Then, who can be saved?” **“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”** (Mark 10:27b = our VBS memory verse)

There are 2 types of people, those who “Get it” + those who Don’t. 2 of His disciples didn’t get then: James/John. They won’t “get it” until after the Resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let’s read about them:

### **MARK 10:35-45**

Humility leads us on a new path. Humility, not pride, opens the door to kindness, generosity and joy. I think it’s like a baseball diamond – humility is 1<sup>st</sup> base, kindness is 2<sup>nd</sup>, generosity is 3<sup>rd</sup> and home is Joy. At the center is LOVE. (Other teammates are peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We don’t want to play on the other team – they are nasty.) Sometimes the attitude follows the action (fake it until you make it). I think it all begins with humility, because the opposite of humility is pride which keeps Jesus from our hearts.

The Second Mountain contrast #1 with #2.

Happy	vs.	Joy
Success		Significance
Me		US
Grab		Give
Served		Serve

I won’t trash happiness or “success.” It’s better to be happy than unhappy. Let’s celebrate individual accomplishments. However, happiness has a short lifecycle. If we base our happiness on money and materialism, leads to a thirst for more. To base it on our appearance/beauty, we age and we find others more attractive. If we base our lives on power, we eventually lose it and we feel insecure, weak and afraid. If we base our lives on intellect, we eventually feel stupid and a fraud always on the verge of being found out.

This is **WHY** we need to shift from 1<sup>st</sup> mountain living to the 2<sup>nd</sup> mountain. Indeed, we don’t even need to be on the 1<sup>st</sup> mountain at all – many of us (most?) never really find the success we were desiring. The good news is the 1<sup>st</sup> mountain is not a pre-requisite for the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**HOW** do I move into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mountain? Our membership vows state: *"I will be loyal to Jesus Christ....expressed through Asbury...BY my PRAYERS/PRESENCE/GIFTS/SERVICE/WITNESS."* These are 5 simple ways to shift from following ME to following JESUS. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Mountain is a gift from Jesus to us. He will give us Joy, significance and His community of the Holy Spirit and the church. From that we worship, give, serve and share our faith.

### 2 stories from The Second Mountain

A woman volunteered at the Salvation Army one winter morning with a few other people from her church. A volunteer offered to give several of them a ride home. It had been snowing solidly that morning. As they were driving through a residential neighborhood, they saw an older lady standing in her driveway with a snow shovel. At the next intersection one of the guys in the backseat asked to be dropped off there. They let him out of the car, figuring he was close to home. But instead of going into some nearby house, he walked up to the lady, took her shovel, and started shoveling her driveway. A woman in the car saw this and said, *"I felt like jumping out of the car and hugging this guy. I felt like singing or running or skipping and laughing. I felt like saying nice things about people. Writing a beautiful poem and love song. Playing in the snow like a child. Telling everyone about his deed. My spirit was lifted even higher than it already was. I was joyous, happy, smiling, energized. I told my friends who clutched their hearts.* These moments wipe our feelings of cynicism and replace them with feelings of hope love and moral inspiration. These moments of elevation are energizing. We feel strongly motivated to do something good to help others. When we make generosity part of our daily routine, we re-fashion who we are. Our essence, unlike our legbone is changeable. Every action we take, every thought we have, changes us, even if just a little, making us a little more elevated or a little more degraded. Those who commit murder don't start there. They walk through many doors before getting to the point where they can take another human life. A life of ease is not the pathway to growth and happiness. On the contrary a life of ease is how we get stuck and confused in life. Joy emerges when desire is turned outward for others.

In 1849, a young man, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, was imprisoned in St. Petersburg with other Russian revolutionaries. The men were sentenced to die. They were marched into a square in their burial shroud's. The firing squad gathered. The drums sounded. Death was seconds away. Then, by prearranged plans, a messenger arrived on horseback. The czar spared their lives and sentenced them to years of hard labor. One man broke down crying singing out "Long live the czar." Another went mad. Dostoyevsky was taken back to his cell and suddenly

was overcome with joy. All the small things that used to concern him fell away. *“When I think about how much time I wasted on futilities, errors, laziness, incapacity to live; how little I appreciated life – my heart bleeds. Never has there seethed in me such an abundant/healthy spiritual life as now. Life is a gift. Life is in ourselves, not in the exterior.”* We won’t be marched in front of a firing squad and pardoned. Most of us learn the lesson FD learned gradually, over seasons of suffering. The lesson is that the things we had thought were most important- achievement, affirmation, intelligence-are less important, and the things we had undervalued -heart and soul-are actually most important. Most of us learn this after we have chased the shallow things in life and found them unfulfilling. Jesus emphasized that fulfillment and joy aren’t bought, they come through humility, kindness, generosity & service. Only then do we truly live. Humility and repentance open us to the 2<sup>nd</sup> mountain.

Have you opened your heart to Jesus? Just as Jesus blessed those children, so He wants to bless us. Just as Jesus looked at that rich man and “loved him,” so He loves us, too. We can choose to stay in the pursuit of other things OR we can respond to the embrace of Jesus. Jesus’ embrace brings life and life eternal. It means we turn away from our own pursuits of Happiness and turn to follow Jesus who opens us to the KOG. Could today be the day you will make your vow to follow Him or renew your vow to follow Him? His grace is available for you this day.

