



Life Group Study Notes

“Bethel’s Discipleship Path: Serve”

Ps. James Lowe - June 10, 2018

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What was your favorite or least favorite household chore growing up?
- What is your favorite or least favorite household chore at present?
- Who do you know that exemplifies being a faithful servant to others?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Key Quote: It is correctly said, “No pain; no gain.” Christian virtue says, “My pain; your gain.”

Philippians 2:1-11 ESV *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but 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. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so 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.

Paul is suffering imprisonment for his faith, and is aware of the suffering that the believers in Philippi are undergoing due to persecution for their faith in Jesus. He writes to them to encourage them and to exhort them to live and stand together in a spirit of unity.

He reminds them of Jesus and the example of humility and service he provided. Jesus was not without ambition in that he highly desired to honor God and obey him in everything, so that he might serve us and benefit us. Jesus’ ambition was to faithfully fulfill his responsibility to die on the cross for our sins and provide for our eternal redemption.

Selfish ambition, however, is ungodly and harmful, both to others and ultimately ourselves as well. Selfish ambition turns people into “takers” instead of “givers.”

Ambition recognizes the truth of the maxim, “No pain; no gain.” Jesus however modeled a higher truth that displays God’s character, “My pain; your gain.” God calls us to live according to this virtue. We are to humble ourselves and give our lives in service to others according to the will of God for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

It cost Jesus everything to serve us and fulfill God’s will. He emptied himself of the outward display of his glory. He emptied himself of the free exercise of his divine powers through his humanity. He took on the nature of a bondservant and lived for many years a life of obscurity. According to the Father’s will he entered into public ministry at the right time. Yet this resulted in such fierce opposition among important powerful people, that he eventually was put to death. He was betrayed, tortured, and brutally killed. Yet he never shrunk back from his calling to serve us as our substitute.

God’s response was to reward him by raising him from the dead and exalting him to the highest place in heaven. He continues to enjoy this honor and will throughout time everlasting.

We are called to imitate Jesus in becoming God’s humble, obedient servants who give our lives according to his will to serve others. Any sacrifices we make in this life will also be rewarded by God, to some degree in this life and fully in the next.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Why is selfish ambition wrong? How does it impact people over the long run? When is ambition good?
- How do you decide what to do when faced with a conflict between your own interests and the interests of others? When is it appropriate to say “no” to others?
- What does the incarnation, obedience, suffering, and death of Jesus on the cross for our sins teach you about God and servanthood?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for Jesus serving us to the utmost by dying on the cross for us.
- Ask God to help us cultivate a greater servant’s heart in each of us.
- Ask God to open our eyes to how we can better serve one another and those around us.