



grow. pray. study.

October 19, 2025 Serve Joyfully

Scripture: Isaiah 58:10-11, Matthew 20:26-28, Romans 12:6-8

God Wants Joyous Service, Not Empty Rituals

MONDAY 10.20.25 Isaiah 58:3-8

Isaiah 58 spoke to Israelites who did many “religious” things, including fasting, but did so from self-serving motives. (Isaiah’s contemporary Micah made the same point in [Micah 6:6-8](#).) Why, they asked, didn’t God honor their feasts and fasts? The prophet said their piety was only skin-deep. They didn’t need showy, external fasts. They needed to “fast” from mistreating other people and start finding their joy and glory in serving those who needed their help.

- Fasting is a helpful spiritual practice, whether from food or some other valued activity. But the Israelites’ fasting only seemed to be on the surface and never reached their hearts. Isaiah 58:3-4 noted sadly that the pious “fasters” kept abusing their workers and fighting each other. How do verses 6 and 7 speak to your heart and your life today? What is one step you can take to make your spiritual practices truly life-changing, as the prophet called Israel to do?
- Jesus’ echoed Isaiah and Micah when he said, “Go and learn what this means: *I want mercy and not sacrifice* [from Hosea 6:6]” (Matthew 9:13)? How have you seen your spiritual practices change your heart and lead you to a life of greater service? How have you found greater joy and satisfaction as your ability to show mercy to others has grown?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for opening my eyes and heart to care for and show mercy to your children in need. Use me and whatever good things I have so that through me “your light will shine in the darkness.” Amen.

God Stands Firmly for Justice and Mercy

TUESDAY 10.21.25 Psalm 82:1-4

In Psalm 82, God ordered the “divine council” to ensure justice and rescue for “the lowly and the needy.” (Some Hebrew writers used the idea of a council of “gods” common in the nations around them. Israelites, however, said the one God presided. Angels or heavenly spirits were council members—cf. [Job 1:6](#)). Widows or orphans without a male relative had no legal or social status in that society. It was clear that God cared passionately about helping the most helpless.

- Psalm 82 represented a whole strand of Israelite worship. For example, Psalm 146:9 sang the praises of “The Lord: who protects immigrants, who helps orphans and widows.” But God usually acts through people, through us, to accomplish divine purposes. In what ways, big and small, can you partner with God in carrying out God’s wish for justice and help for the most helpless to become real on earth?
- A key part of our heritage as Methodists grew from John Wesley’s stress on holding together the “evangelical gospel” (the good news of salvation as God’s gift, received by faith) with the “social gospel” (the good news that God actively seeks justice and help, particularly for the weak and powerless). When have you needed spiritual salvation? When (if ever) have you felt powerless, and needed justice or help? What makes it important that God’s people address both needs?

Prayer: Lord God, I trust you to be my help and my strength, even when all else fails me. Use me as one of your instruments to bring justice to your world. Amen.

Serving the Least Really Means Serving Jesus

WEDNESDAY 10.22.25 Matthew 25:31-40

People without enough to eat or wear, who can’t afford good (or any) care if they’re sick, who are in prison, who are outsiders—most of us are willing to do a little something to help “**them**.” Yet Jesus called that group of people “the least of these brothers and sisters **of mine**.” Joining Jesus redemption of the world means seeing that Jesus called us to love all of our neighbors, not just what we might consider the “upper crust,” as one human family, serving them as he did.

- In Jesus’ story, the “sheep” he said had helped him were surprised: “When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink?” They saw need, not a chance for reward. What can help you learn to see in the faces of the people you meet, especially the outcast or hurting, the face of Jesus? When have you felt the freedom and joy that comes from blessing others because you know God cares about them?
- Resurrection has big goals about specific ways we aim to change the world by 2030 ([click here](#) to view them). But what about you—what are **your** goals to change the world? In what specific ways can you personally join in Christ’s purpose, at Resurrection or elsewhere, to change the world for the better? In prayer invite Jesus to fire your imagination and give you big dreams. Write or print those God-given dreams and put them where you will see them often.

Prayer: O God, keep my eyes and my heart open to see your face in the faces of hurting people around me who need your touch through me. Amen.

Jesus' Kingdom Values: Service Over Status

THURSDAY 10.23.25 Matthew 20:20-28

Jesus kept talking about the Kingdom of heaven, his Kingdom. Weren't "kingdoms" about power, about who held the most powerful positions? James and John (and probably their mom, though Mark didn't mention her in [Mark 10:35-45](#)) thought they'd be smart, and get their bid for power in before the other disciples. "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. In Heaven's Kingdom, there is no status seeking. In my Kingdom, we serve.

- We know (as James and John did) what earthly status, power and privilege look like. Down deep, most of us would like to have at least some of those things. But Jesus' teaching was emphatic: "that's **not** the way it will be with you." Jesus said he didn't come to be served, but to serve, and even give his life. In what specific ways does choosing to follow Jesus change your approach to life and reshape your dreams and ambitions?
- Jesus told James and John, "You WILL drink from my cup." James was the first apostle martyred ([Acts 12:1-2](#)). On the other hand, Christian tradition said John, serving and writing, lived for many years, probably longer than any other apostle. In what ways did John, as well as James, "drink from Jesus' cup"? In what ways, if any, has your life so far called on you to do that?

Prayer: Loving Lord, I'm human. I have ambitious dreams and wishes. Keep reshaping me, making those ambitions into ambitions to serve you and others. Amen.

Jesus Modeled Humble Service

FRIDAY 10.24.25 John 13:1-17

"Washing others' feet was normally a servile task. Dirt roads made feet dusty." * That's why the disciples, acutely conscious of their relative rank in the group, all shied away from washing the feet of the others. But Jesus shocked them by unblushingly doing the slave's work. Then he pointedly told his status-conscious disciples, "I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do." When you do it, he said, "you will be happy."

- John's gospel used multi-layered language. Jesus "took off his robes" (v. 4) and "put on his robes" (v. 12) used the same Greek verbs as John 10:17 ("This is why the Father loves me: I give up my life so that I can take it up again.") John's choice of verbs said washing the disciples' feet acted out the meaning of Jesus' death, which followed the next day. In what ways might Jesus' example call you to serve family, friends or others more deeply?
- Peter didn't want to let Jesus wash his feet. Many of us are "high achievers," more at ease with "earning" than with "receiving." Pastor Hamilton homed in on the main spiritual question this story asks each of us: "Jesus wanted to make sure his disciples got it. The story in John 13 encourages us to ask this question: Are you—am I—worried about who appears to be the greatest, or are we focused on humbly serving others?" ** What's your answer? Has it changed over time?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, this is a hard prayer to pray. But I mean it: teach me how to find my greatest joy and glory in serving you and others in the ways you have equipped me to serve. Amen.

* NIV, *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (Kindle Locations 241225-241226). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** Adam Hamilton, *John: The Gospel of Light and Life*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015, p. 96.)

Love Empowers Your Unique Gifts

SATURDAY 10.25.25 1 Peter 4:8-11

“Worship was not something believers attended. It was not something they watched. It was something they *did*. They did not gather to be entertained, but to respond to God’s love and grace with praise and gratitude, offering themselves to God and seeking to bless others.” * As your worship leads you to serving joyfully, it’s vital to remember that there are as many unique forms of service as there are people. The apostle Peter called Christians to “serve each other according to the gift each person has received.” Too often, we have a “one size fits all” idea of service. Or, as the apostle Paul wrote elsewhere, “If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be?” (1 Corinthians 12:17) The call is to be yourself, as long as you make sure “being yourself” includes being a servant.

- In [1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#), Paul said using our gifts without love renders them useless to God (and, most often, to anyone else). In today’s reading, Peter, in a shorter form, made the same point. What makes love so vital as the environment in which we use our widely varying gifts? Who do you know who radiates joy while using personal gifts in love? What Peter said in verse 8 seemed to draw from the Hebrew wisdom of [Proverbs 10:12](#). Of that passage, scholar John Goldingay wrote, “Honesty (v. 11) and self-giving build up the community (v. 12).” ** Some people still argue that following pure self-interest makes for better lives than trying to help others. But both Old and New Testament Scriptures came down firmly on the side of serving others joyfully to build fully human lives. How easy or hard do you find it to accept that wisdom?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me not just to act loving on the outside, but to show “sincere love” to all your human children. Keep making my heart more like yours. Amen.

* Hamilton, Adam, *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life* (p. 25). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

** John Goldingay, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs for Everyone*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014, p. 46.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

To **Stacy Campbell and Amy Ehrhardt** following the death of **Robert Schultz** (Father), who died 9/3/2025.

To **Ashley Wonderlich** following the death of **Donald Jones** (Grandfather), who died 10/5/2025.

To **Mik Wiesing** following the death of **Tristan Wiesing** (Brother), who died 10/11/2025.

To **Ron Tillman** following the death of **Stephanie Tillman** (Wife), who died 10/12/2025.