

The Pattern for Servanthood

Matthew 20:24-28

Matthew 20:24-28 (NASB)

²⁴“And hearing *this*, the ten became indignant with the two brothers.

²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them.”

²⁶ “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,

²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

In the world’s thinking, great men are the ones with authority, prominence, and power. Though Jesus Christ had all that, He laid it aside to become a servant ([Isaiah 42:1](#)).

Isaiah 42:1 (NASB)

¹ “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.”

Jesus gave Himself completely to fulfill the Father’s plan of redemption, even though the beneficiaries—namely, each of us—were undeserving. God, who is holy and righteous, has “eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness *with favor*. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?” ([Habakkuk 1:13 NASB](#)).

But all of humanity is stained by wrongdoing ([Romans 3:23](#)).

Romans 3:23 (NASB)

²³ “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Everybody is born captive to the desires of the flesh ([Romans 6:16-18](#)).

Romans 6:16-18 (NASB)

¹⁶ “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

When people claim to be living on their own terms, they are actually serving whatever their human nature craves. The penalty for that false sense of liberty is death ([Romans 6:23](#)).

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Jesus' ultimate act of service was to give His life as a ransom for many ([Matthew 20:28](#)).

Matthew 20:28 (NASB)

²⁸“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The word ransom describes the price paid to set a slave free—Christ voluntarily purchased our liberation. There was only one way our holy God could remove our guilt yet remain true to His own law: Someone sinless had to pay our sin debt for us.

Jesus' sacrifice spared us the penalty we deserve. Instead, we receive the gift of grace and have been declared no longer guilty. Moreover, we are elevated from slaves to sons and daughters of the Almighty!

Jesus served the Father's purpose faithfully. He gave up His righteousness to carry the weight of all our wickedness—and endured a crushing separation from His Father. To meet our needs, the Savior held nothing of Himself back and thereby set a powerful example of servanthood for us to follow.