

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 29

What Mattered to Our Master

By

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Lord, it is our desire to be useable and useful for Your purposes.
May this session be used to that end, Lord. Cause us to really
have understanding and insight into that which You want us to
be about for the glory of Jesus Christ. Father, in His name we
pray. Amen.

Please turn to [John 17](#). On the first day of the conference I was sitting in the hospitality room, listening to my son, Peter Jon, teach on ministering in and through difficult days and tough times. I was so blessed hearing Peter Jon share.

I found, though, my mind racing back about twenty years ago when I was lying on the couch spacing out and Peter Jon walked by. He was five at the time. He was making a motion with his hands and fingers. He walked to the end of the room and he came back in my direction again, still doing the same thing. He caught my eye and I said, “PJ, what are you doing?” He said, “Daddy, I am practicing my snaps.” I said, “Oh?” He said, “Yeah. I know how to tie my shoes; I know how to whistle; and once I learn how to snap, all the hard stuff is done.” Well, he learned how to snap but he found out that all the hard stuff was not necessarily done.

It is not done until it is done. I am like you. I think all of us here today want to hear Him say one day, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That is a desire that is on all of our hearts. That is a goal for all of our lives. We want to do it in a way that is pleasing to You, Lord. We want to hear You say on that day, “Well done, good and faithful servant” ([Matthew 25:21](#)).

The question is, what ought we to do? If we want to hear “Well done,” what is it that He wants us to do? What is it that matters to our Master? In [John 17](#), as we come to this really well-known passage of Scripture, as we come to this place where we hear the high priestly prayer of our Lord and Leader, Jesus Christ. It is here that I think we can see a real key about what matters to our Master.

I was telling Peter Jon a couple of nights ago that I am tempted just to take this chapter and read it through, slowly and prayerfully. And then simply say, “Nothing more could be said, nothing more should be said, so nothing more will be said,” and walk off. I really thought about just reading the passage and letting it stand for itself. John Knox was right when he called this section of Scripture “the holy of holies in the temple of the Bible.” It is holy ground—you know that—because in this we hear Jesus praying for His followers. He is praying for you. He is praying for me. It is heart warming. It is thrilling.

Not only is Jesus praying for His followers, but there is something else that I find interesting here. He is reporting to His Father. He is praying for His followers, it is true. But He is also reporting to His Father about what He has done now that His public ministry is just about finished. I find this intriguing to see what Jesus thought was important in ministry. He never mentions buildings, budgets, or buses. None of that is in His report. What He is focussing on, I think, are the things that you and I ought to have as our priorities as well.

In this [John 17](#) passage, eight times Jesus says, “I have. I have. I have. I have.” Time and time again He says, “This is what I have done, Father.” Let’s take a look at those statements and see what mattered to our Master. Hopefully that will be a paradigm and pattern for you and me to say, “Okay, I got it. That is what we ought to be about too.”

The first time we come to that phrase “I have” in this well-known chapter is in verse 4. Jesus says, “I have glorified Thee on the earth.” ([John 17:4](#)).

Our Lord told us that we are to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven (cf. [Mathew 5:16](#)). Did you realize that every time Jesus did a miracle, delivered a person, worked a wonder—in every instance it says that they glorified God in heaven? The miracles never glorified Him in that way. He worked His wonders and did His miracles in such a manner that when He did them, the glory went to the Father. It is an amazing thing to me.

In [Isaiah 42:8](#), God declares,

I am the Lord, that is My name; My glory will I not give to
another, neither My praise to graven images.

“My glory is to only be going to Me. I am not going to share it with you,” the Father would say to us today. Why? Is it because He is a glory hog? Is it because He wants all the glory Himself to exclude you and me? No, it is not that at all. He knows that if people put their trust in me, or if I begin to take the glory, I am going to set them up to be terribly disappointed because I am not going to come through. I am going to let them down. I am going to drop the ball. So will you, by the way. And so the Lord is saying, “I want all the focus to be on Me, all the glory to go to Me. I do not want you to make any graven images.”

By the way, the Hebrew word there is interesting. It means “polished images.” Now, it is tempting to say, “I want to polish my image a bit. I want to try and be a little slicker in my presentation, a little more techno-savvy. What can I do to polish my image?” It is a real tricky thing because there is a temptation to want to present ourselves in such a way that, even though we justify it, in reality we can be taking the attention off the Lord. It is very subtle, but it is very real.

Perhaps some of you guys say, “Well, that is not a problem for me. Nobody knows me. I do not have an image to polish. Nobody knows me. I am not in the *Who’s Who*. I am in the *Who’s He?*” Well I say, “Good for you.” Jesus says that which is done in secret is going to be rewarded one day. Your time is coming. Perhaps it is only indicative of the fact that you are ministering in a way that is not about polishing the image but about seeing that the focus is on Jesus exclusively.

When I was at Biola University, in a one-month period, our school brought in three special speakers for our chapel. A well-known speaker came in to teach the first week. He gave a sermon and I can recall going to the dorm room afterwards and discussing it with those who were Bible majors and studying for the ministry. I can recall the conversation perfectly. We went on and on. “This guy,” we thought, “must read a hundred books a week. Where does he get those illustrations? How does he get all those stories?” It was amazing. This was in the time before the Internet, cassette tapes, or any of that stuff. We thought, “How does he get these statistics, these stories, these illustrations?” We talked about that endlessly.

Two weeks later another noted pastor and author came in to speak. He took a passage and broke it down in the original language in such a way that we thought, “How does he know about all that stuff—the historicity of the verb forms, noun meanings, the voices, tenses, moods, and everything else?” We were impressed and blessed. We thought, “My, this guy has a lot of knowledge.” We talked about it as we were struggling through our verb charts and conjugations. “Man, I have to learn this stuff!” But it was depressing to me.

And then Pastor Chuck Smith was brought in to teach. He was the third speaker that month and he gave a message on keeping yourself in the love of God. I will never forget this because in the dorm room afterward, we talked about God's love. We talked about the love of the Lord and the grace of God.

It is an amazing thing because when Pastor Chuck speaks, the attention is not upon how many illustration books he combed through to find those stories, or on how long he was on the Internet to get those facts. The attention was on the Lord in such a way that as we sat there in our dorm area after he was done, we thought, "That is the key. It is God. It is not Hebrew and Greek. It is not illustration books and statistics. It is the Lord."

That is my desire—I know it is yours too—that we might minister in such a way that people will just be impressed, blessed, and drawn to the Lord like bees are to honey, like moths are to a fire. They should focus just on the Lord.

Jesus said, "I have glorified Thee. Father, this is what I have done." And He did it in such a way that every time He ministered, the glory went to the Father.

Secondly, we see He also says, in [John 17:4](#), "I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. I have finished it." The roads from conferences like this are strewn with the carcasses of people who determined to begin but never followed through to the end. When I come to a conference like this I get pumped up. I am determined to do this or do that. But the key is not what we determine to do, but what we end up doing, practically.

In [2 Chronicles 2](#) we read that Solomon determined to build a temple unto the Lord. In [2 Chronicles 3](#) we read that Solomon began to build a temple to the Lord. In [2 Chronicles 5](#) we see that Solomon finished building the temple for the Lord.

Determining, beginning and doing, that is the pattern Solomon demonstrated. I am glad Noah did this as well. I am glad Noah finished what he was supposed to do. If he had not finished the project that was given to him, we would all be sunk, quite literally. He started it and he completed it all the way. He finished it.

That is my desire. That is what I see mattered to our Master, that He finished the work.

Saul, on the other hand, was told to go and wipe out the Amalekites. And he goes and wages war against the Amalekites there in [1 Samuel 15:13-15](#). As he makes his way back again, Samuel is before him. "Oh, blessed be thou of the Lord," Saul says, "I have done all that the Lord has commanded me to do. I have finished it. I have done it," Samuel says, "Then what meaneth this bleating in my ears?" Saul was told, of course, to destroy all the Amalekites, all the cattle, and all of the sheep. Samuel says, "What does this mean, this bleating in my ears? It sounds really baaaad." "I have saved a sheep to sacrifice to the Lord." Samuel looks at Saul and says, "Well, what is that? Who is that?" "Oh, he is the king of the Amalekites. I have saved him as a trophy." "Is this a joke? Is this a gag?" Yes! He saved Agag. (Pun intended).

The end result was that he did not finish the work. He did not finish the job. And so, there on Mount Gilboa, as Saul is laying there in his wounded condition, the life draining from him, a man is about to do him in. "Who are you?" Saul says. And the man responds, "I am an Amalekite of the tribe that you were supposed to kill, Saul. You were to finish us off. You were to do the job. You did not and now you are being undone. You are going to be thrust through by the very one that you were supposed to wipe out because you did not finish the work."

Now, watch this. Jesus says, “I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” I can never finish the work that people expect me to do or demand from me. There are pressures and expectations that will drive me crazy. But I can always finish the work which He gives me to do because His burden is easy and His load is light.

Brothers, listen to me. I have found this to be a real key in my own personal walk over these many years. It works. How can we really do what the Lord wants us to do? “I have finished the work which *Thou* hast given Me.”

In Mark 1 at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry there in Capernaum, we read that Jesus awakes a great while before the breaking of the day. He goes into a quiet place and there He prays. While He is in prayer, Peter tracks Him down. Peter finds where He is and says, “Master, everybody is looking for You and asking for You. Hey, our ministry is launched. It is underway. Everybody in Capernaum (the hot spot there in Galilee) wants You. They are impacted with what You did yesterday. They are impressed with what You had to say. They want You!” Jesus says, “No, we are not going to go to Capernaum today. We are going to go to some unwalled villages and towns” (cf. [Mark 1:35-38](#)). That is the only time that word “unwalled village” is used in the New Testament. It is a podunk place, a hick town. We are not going to go to Capernaum and do the big fancy thing. We are going to go to a podunk town, a hick town. Why? “For this reason came I forth,” Jesus said. He came forth from where? Not from heaven, but from His time of prayer.

He was in prayer and the Father whispered in His ear or wrote on His heart, “Here is what You are to do today. You are to make Your way to this podunk spot and there You are to share with the people.” Even though there were opportunities in Capernaum or expectations from His men, Jesus knew that He had His marching orders for the day.

This is very, very important. I have found that when I start my day early, find a quiet spot, have a quiet time and a quiet heart with the Lord, and say, “Lord, direct me today,” inevitably He will put one or two things on my heart. I write them down. I always keep a journal close by. He gives me one or two things. Now there are other things that I will do during the day, but in the morning, there are one or two things that are specifically placed on my heart or put in my mind. I know that this is what He wants me to do, and the burden is easy and the load is light. It is [Ezekiel 44:17](#) linen garments. It is inspiration, not perspiration. And as I do that in the morning time, I am set free. Oh, others might say, “Jon, come here. Jon, do this. Jon, take care of that.” And those are not going to be the priorities of my day. I am not going to be yanked around. I am going to seek to do what the Father put on my heart and in my mind at the beginning of the day. It is such a key for me.

It was on my heart a few months ago, to do some reading on the Middle East situation. “Go to a used bookstore and find some books. Just go do some reading, Jon.” I really felt that was from the Lord, to take some time in the afternoon to do some study on some issues that I had been wondering about and I was not clear on. So I made my way to a used bookstore where there are all kinds of older books. I was in line with a couple of books in my hands to purchase. The person in front of me had a book in his hand and it too was on the Middle East, interestingly enough. He went to the counter and said, “Look, can I buy this book? I really want to read this book. I only have ten bucks. Can I buy it for ten? I know it costs twenty-five. Can I buy it for ten? I will bring the money back in a few days.” The clerk said, “We cannot allow that. We do not work that way. We cannot do it.” He was talking with the clerk back and forth. And I said, “Can I buy that book for you?” He turned around to look at me and I repeated, “Can I buy that book for you?” “Well, yeah.” So I bought the book and then he said to me, “Why would you want to do that?” I said,

“Because my best friend is from the Middle East.” We began to talk and to share a bit. A wonderful, wonderful witness was given and we engaged in a wonderful conversation.

And I say that because I know that was the Father’s will for that afternoon. I know it. And the same thing is true for any day, for every day, for everyone who will come and say, “Lord, speak to my heart today.” I find that one hour in the morning of waiting on the Lord makes a huge difference for the rest of the day. One day a week which I set aside to slow down and to seek Him for the week, makes a huge difference in my week. We have a little mountaintop retreat at our fellowship, and I get away one night a month and just say, “Lord, I am here to seek You.” And then four times a year I get away for a couple of days and say, “I need direction and vision.” It makes all the difference for me.

This I do know—Jesus did get away early in the day to pray. It made a huge difference. He was able to say at the end of the road, “I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” And the same thing will be true for you. You will never finish the work that others want you to do or expect from you, but you will be able to do what He wants you to.

“I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” See, the work that He gives me to do is going to be different than the work He gives to you. Each one of us has a specific job to do. You know that. I look at that house that Jesus loved to hang out at, that Jesus loved to go to—the house of Mary and Martha. It intrigues me that He was drawn there, that He spent time there, that they were His friends because Mary and Martha were very different. We often put down Martha and elevate Mary. Mary is worthy of elevation, without question. But it says there in [John 11:5](#) that Jesus loved Martha and her sister what’s her name. I would have thought it would have said, “Jesus loved Mary and who is that other one in the kitchen all the time?” But you see in Luke 10, Martha was there, wasn’t she? She was serving. “Tell my sister to come in here and help me.” “Hey, Martha, no. You are stressed out. She has chosen this and it is a good thing to be at My feet.” We see Martha later on in [John 12](#). She is in the kitchen once more. She is still serving, only this time she is not complaining. And Jesus loved Martha.

What am I suggesting? Just that Martha ministered to Jesus’ humanity. Jesus was hungry, we are told. He would go there to that house and He would be served in that way, practically. Martha cooked up meals. She is seen over and over again serving. Mary ministered to Jesus’ divinity. She was the worshipper at His feet, sitting there listening to the words that He would share, wiping His feet with oil and her hair. Jesus was ministered to in His humanity by Martha and in His divinity by Mary. No wonder He loved to go there.

What was the end result? Their dead brother, Lazarus, was raised. In a church where the humanity of the body of Christ—the practical stuff—is being taken care of, and the divinity—that is where there is worship, ministry, communion, and praise happening—when those two come together in a house, the dead brothers come to life. There should be worship, praise, and practical service day after day. There should be those with bent knees and those with rolled up sleeves. The point of it is this: it is all needed. But if I look at somebody else and say, “Well he does these things” or “They do those things,” and I try to do what they are doing, I am going to miss the role that I have been called to do.

Now Jesus was able to say here, “I have finished the work which You, Father, have given Me to do.” That means when I go into the area where there is a multitude of lame people, I do not just go say, “Everybody rise up. Everybody walk.” There might be one person that You have put on my heart, placed in my mind, that I am to make my way to and say to that man, “Stand up and walk.” I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. That is such a key.

The third time Jesus uses the phrase “I have” He says, “I have manifested Thy name.” Number one, I have glorified Thee. Number two, I have finished the work. Number three, I have manifested Thy name.

The idea of manifesting the name is not so much proclamation in this case, it is demonstration. I have let them see Your name, Your nature. It is not just expounding or expositing Your nature from the pulpit, but letting them see Your nature in me, personally, practically. It is the incarnational stuff, the Word being made flesh. It is the stuff that really makes a difference. A sermon born in the head reaches the head, but one that comes from the heart reaches the heart. We all know that to be true. Jesus was saying, “I have manifested Thy nature. I have not just taught on it, but they have seen it in Me.” On the mountaintop, the Mount of Transfiguration, when He began to glow, Jesus was saying, “That is the glory of You, Father, shining through Me and from Me.”

It was not just on the mountaintop, it was also in that upper room where He said to Thomas, “Touch My wounds” (cf. [John 20:27](#)). He manifested not just the glory, but also the grace.

This is what sin does. It destroys, it scars. It was not His sin, of course; it was our sin that He absorbed. “Thomas, touch My wounds. I once was dead but now I am alive.” And Thomas said, “My Lord and my God!” ([John 20:28](#)).

I have found that in the hard times, setbacks, and the disappointments I have been through, that it is not just somebody showing me the glory of the mountaintop. There can be shiny examples that are very helpful. But in my own times of deep need, it has been people who have also said, “Touch my wounds. This is what I have been through. This is what happened to me. Touch my wounds and see how the Lord saw me through, lifted me up, and got me going again.” And I would say, “He is Lord and He is God.”

This incarnational stuff is important. You have to let people touch your wounds. I do not mean indiscriminately, but there are times when the Lord is going to send people your way who are doubters or who are cynical. The way to minister to them is to say, “Let me tell you what I have been through. Let me tell you a bit about my story that others might not know. Let me tell you something. Let me show you my wounds, my own sin, stupidity, setback, whatever it might be. Let me share with you how the Lord resurrects the dead and gets them back up again.”

Can I encourage you to be incarnational preachers, teachers, and ministers? Can I discourage you from falling into the error of Jeremiah’s day in which it says the prophets stole their words one from one another? Can I encourage you to watch out for Internet downloads of sermons and copying messages verbatim that are not really worked through your own experience yet? Can I encourage you to be able to say, “This is what the Lord has shown me?” That is such a key.

Jesus has said: “I have glorified Thee,” number one. “I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do,” number two. “I have manifested Thy name,” number three (cf. [John 17:4-6](#)). Number four is found in [John 17:8](#). “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me.” Look at [verse 14](#) for the second part of this. “I have given them Thy word.” “I have given them the word which Thou hast given Me. And I have given them Thy word.”

Now there are two different things being said here. I have given them the word. In verse 8, the word “word” is *rhemata*, from the word *rhema*. It means the exacting, specific, anointed word for that occasion. [Ephesians 6:17](#) uses the same word *rhema* when it says, “And take the sword of the

Spirit [the *rhema*] which is the Word of God.” The word “word” there is *rhema*. “Take the sword of the Spirit which is [the *rhema*] the Word of God.” And the word “sword” is *machaira*; it means an exacting, surgical type of instrument.

In contrast to that, in [John 17:14](#) the word “word” is *logos*. It is not so much the exacting word for that moment (the *rhema* word), but rather it is the word that is being taught and presented. In [Revelation 1:16](#) it says that out of His mouth came a two-edged sword. And regarding that two-edged sword, [Hebrews 4:12](#) says: “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper”—than what? It is sharper than a two-edged sword. The word “sword” in [Revelation 1:16](#) is *rhomphaia*, which means it is the big sword that you just use on the whole congregation. You are just teaching away and you are just ministering to everyone.

But there is also the word that is specifically intended for a given situation. There is a difference. We do the big stuff on Wednesdays and Sundays. That is great and necessary. But Jesus also had the precise, exacting word for the right occasion.

How did He get that word for the right occasion? How would He know what to say on any given day? In [Isaiah 50:4](#) it says concerning Jesus:

The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should
know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. For
He awakeneth morning by morning, He awakeneth my ear to
hear as the learned.

I get that word, day by day, morning by morning, that I might have the right words to speak to the one who is weary. It makes a big difference.

It was over twenty years ago that I was in an ambulance and the paramedic was caring for me as I came to. I said to the guy that was putting stuff in my arm and working on me a bit, “How is my wife?” He said, “She is fine.” I said, “No, she is not.” And then I said, “Yes, she is because she is in heaven.” And that guy looked at me right then and had a decision to make whether to tell me what really happened or to keep it from me at that moment. He said, “You are right. She is no longer with us.”

At that moment in my life, the Lord spoke to me in a way unlike anything else that I have ever experienced personally. I do not know if it was audible, but I am not sure it was not. I just do not know. The word I heard in that ambulance going down towards the hospital in Medford was simply this: “I know the thoughts I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to bring you to a glorious end.” I heard that. As a young man of twenty-eight, I did not know that verse at that time. Oh, I am sure I read it, but it was not familiar to me like it is now. There are plaques, posters, and banners. There is even a book out there called something like that. But be that as it may, I did not know I knew that verse. I am sure I read it, no doubt, but I did not know it. I never preached on it. I never heard a sermon personally from it.

I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts
of peace and not of evil, to bring you to a glorious end, or give
you a future and a hope. (cf. [Jeremiah 29:11](#))

I was brought into the hospital, and after being out for several hours, I came to again. My mom was there with a couple of close friends. I said to them, “The most amazing thing has happened. I heard something. I think it was a voice, I’m not sure. ‘I know the thoughts I think toward you,

thoughts of peace and not of evil to bring you to a glorious end.” As I finished telling my mom that and these two colleagues of mine, my mom was crying because my wife was in heaven. My children would be stuck with me raising them. Immediately after had I told my mom that and these two friends who were with me, Pastor Chuck called. Pastor Chuck had the word. After expressing his heart, he said, “Jon, I have a word from the Lord for you. ‘I know the thoughts I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to bring you to a glorious end.’” And then he said, “And now we get to see what kind of man the Lord has made you.” It was exactly what I needed to hear. It was the *rhema*. It was the exacting word that penetrated my spirit, taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the *rhema*, the exact word. It was the sword, the *machaira*—that is the exacting knife.

Sometimes people say, “Well, you do not need to say anything. Just be there.” I appreciate that and I understand that sentimentality. I know that. But I will tell you what is even better—when somebody has a *rhema*—a word from the Spirit that is exacting and precise. They can say, “This is what the Lord has for you. This is what He is doing in you.”

Seven and a half years ago, as most of you know, I was sitting there at our morning worship on Monday. We had just finished a retreat on the mountaintop. It was grand. It was great. We taught the book of Revelation over one weekend, which was a challenge. We sent the participants out to ponder and consider certain passages. My daughter was sixteen at that time. Her assigned section was that which dealt with the bowl judgments. We gathered again in the upper room and we were sharing what the Lord was speaking to our hearts. My daughter raised her hand and said, “Dad, I got this section here about the bowl judgments. Did you ever notice, Dad, how the seven bowls correlate with the seven last sayings of Christ on the cross? Bowl one correlates with saying one and bowl two with saying two, even as Christ received the outpouring of God’s wrath.” And she went on. She had that kind of insight. That was on the weekend.

The next Monday after that my daughter comes into morning worship at six o’clock in the morning. She sits right there in row four in our church. I am back further and we are worshipping the Lord. The leader opens it up for some time of prayer and praise. My daughter stands up and says, “Lord, I thank You for the promise of Your Word: ‘I know the thoughts I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to bring you to a glorious end.’” And that touched me because she did not know the story I just told you. I had never let that out to my kids or publicly. Few people knew. The guy that was leading was one who knew that. He knew what that verse meant to me. He looked at me and I looked at him. He wrote a song right then. [Jeremiah 29:11](#), he wrote it right then. I sat there and I thought, “I am so blessed.”

Ten minutes later there was a tap on my shoulder. “There has been a wreck.” I thought, “No, I have been there. I have already done that. That cannot be.” But it was. My daughter was ushered to heaven. The last thing I heard from my daughter was, “I know the thoughts I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil.”

It is that specific word. She prayed that prayer. She said, “Thank You for that promise. Amen.” She gave me a wink and a smile. She walked out and I will not see her until I get to heaven, but I will see her.

There is an exacting word for the congregation that I am going to be teaching on Sunday morning. There is an exacting word in every message. I believe there needs to be that precise word. There needs to be not just the meat of the word, but also the manna which is from heaven for that day for those folks. I believe a message ought to have three components: meat or commentary work, where you study to show yourself approved, rightly dividing the Word; milk,

always making sure the gospel is being preached so that the people hear the Good News; and manna, that specific prophetic word. These are important.

We have all sat through sermons that made us think, “Well, that is a fine presentation, but it did not touch the heart.” Why? It is because the manna is not there. When is manna found? When did the manna appear? It appeared in the morning. By the time the sun rose and the temperatures went up, it would melt away. That is such a key.

The first thing is to feel the full force of the Word. I think that is wise. Get the manna first. “Lord, what are You saying to me and to the folks that will be gathering in this retreat, this study, or at that church meeting? What do You want to say to them?” Get the manna first and then go to the commentaries, the tapes, or whatever. And then always make sure there is milk so that people who are not sure of the Good News might have the opportunity to hear.

“I have glorified Thee. I have finished the work. I have manifested Thy name. I have given the word”—both the *logos* and the *rhema*. Number five is found in [verse 12](#): “I have kept the flock—those that Thou gavest Me I have kept. I have kept the flock” (cf. [John 17:12](#)). That is what mattered to our Master, keeping the flock.

How about you? How about me? We too, ought to say that we are going to keep the flock. Now they might leave. They might not be at my study or they might not be in your church, but you can still keep them. How? We are told in the book of Exodus that the high priest was to wear over his heart a breastplate. There were twelve stones representing what? They represent the twelve tribes, the people. Also, those stones were on shoulders too. In other words, the people were to be on his heart. They were to be on the shoulders as well.

Here is what I am finding at this point, after twenty-five years of ministry in the same place, people come and go, and they will come and go from your fellowship too. It does not mean that you have to lose them. Oh, they might be mad at you, disappointed in you, ticked off at your youth pastor, or what have you. They can still truly be on your heart. You can pray for them. I can bear their burdens. I keep the lists of all of our church directories in my study at home, from the earliest days until now. I still pray through the whole kit and caboodle. Some folks have long since gone. Some folks are mad at me. I have not lost them. I keep them. I get to keep them in prayer and I do. I keep praying. And here is the cool thing—I no longer view myself as the pastor of Applegate Fellowship. I view myself as a pastor in the Rouge Valley, which means wherever the sheep are they are the Lord’s. I get to serve them whether they are sitting in the pews at Applegate or not. It has freed me up.

I have found myself over the years saying, “Well, if this guy goes to our church I will take time for him. I will answer questions. I will pray. But if he is going to the new fellowship down the road, he should go see his own pastor.” What happens in my heart is not healthy when those things occur. I am set free to say, “No matter where you are going to church, it does not matter. I am here in this valley.” I am now the oldest pastor, in terms of longevity, in our valley. I cannot believe that. I still think I am the new kid, but I am not. I am now the old guy and this is the opportunity for me to be a pastor over the whole flock in that valley.

Let me ask you a question. Have you kept those that the Lord has given to you or have you let them go because they are not in your church anymore? How do you know? How do you respond at K-Mart or at McDonald’s when somebody who used to go to your church but does not go there anymore, comes over and says, “Hey, can I talk to you for a minute?” What is your reaction? “I

am busy. Go talk to your own pastor.” Or is your response, “This person is still linked with me and always will be, even if they deny me?”

Simon, Simon, Satan desires to sift you like wheat, but I have—
[What?]
—prayed for you. You will deny Me, but I am praying
for you. And when you are converted, when you come back,
strengthen the brothers. (cf. [Luke 22:31-32](#))

I can stay linked with people, truly, through prayer. And it has been such a freeing, joyful, exciting thing for me. It is huge in my own life, to say I do not view myself as pastor of that fellowship. I am a pastor. I am an old pastor in the Rouge Valley and I get to care for all the Lord’s flock. Jesus says, “I have kept the flock which Thou hast given Me.” That is important.

He also sent them out. The sixth thing we see that He did is in [John 17:18](#). He says, “I have also sent them into the world.” He took chances with guys that probably were not really ready. Chuck did that with me. Chuck did that with you. We were not ready.

I can recall the first time I was sent out. I was fifteen years of age. My youth pastor said, “Jon, go preach at the rescue mission for me.” I did not know what a rescue mission really was, so I prepared a message on Zachias up in the sycamore tree. I studied really hard. I had a fifteen page typed-out manuscript sermon about how the sycamore tree relates eschatologically to a certain group of people and how it ties into future things. I get up there. I am not kidding you, I wore a suit and tie to the rescue mission with my fifteen page typed manuscript lesson on Zachias.

At the rescue mission in San Jose, the guys had to go to the church service before they could eat. That was the deal. So here I come. They sing a couple gospel songs and I stand up there in my suit and tie. I began to give this message on Zachias and I was on page two when a guy from the back row stood up and he wanted to eat. He said, “Sit down you overgrown tomato.” I could feel the sweat break out. I was only on page two! I quickly flipped to page fifteen. I was not ready for that.

I was not ready. The book of Proverbs says, “An empty stable stays clean, but an empty stable brings no profit” (cf. [Proverbs 14:4](#)). There has to be some messes or some chances. The barn floor might be a little bit messy, but that is where the profit is going to be too.

Jesus said, “I have sent them out.” This is what mattered to our Master. “I have sent guys out. I have done what You have wanted Me to, Father. I have brought glory to You exclusively. I have given them the Word, the *logos* and the *rhema*. I have kept the flock. They are on My heart. They are linked to Me. I have sent them out.”

“I have given them glory.” Number seven is in [John 17:22](#). “And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them.” I have given them the glory. Simply said, “I see them in their potentiality.”

Whom He foreknew, He predestined. Whom He predestined, He
called. Whom He called, He justified. Whom He justified, He
glorified. (cf. [Romans 8:30](#))

Paul said in [2 Corinthians 5:16](#), “I know no man after the flesh.” In other words, do not look at people in the flesh anymore; see them positionally and potentially. Jesus said, “I have given them

the glory. I see them. The glory that we have shared, I see that in them. I have given that to them.”

What a wonderful thing. Jesus touched that blind guy’s eyes. He was blind and then he could see. He said, “I see men as—[What?]-trees.” He lifted up the man’s head to heaven and the man could then see clearly. He said, “I see men clearly” ([Mark 8:24-25](#)).

Sometimes we see people as bad trees. We want to cut them down, chop them, burn them, and get rid of them. We wish they would leave. I have found—so have you—that what is needed is a touch from the Lord to say, “Look how they are going to be in heaven. Look at the way I see them. Look at how I care about them.”

This blessed me so much from our own paper, from our own fellowship.

Eleven days before Christmas somebody stole our live Christmas tree out of our yard. It was a tree we cared for and watched as it grew. Finally this year it was big enough to decorate for Christmas. To the Christmas tree thief, we forgive you. You stole it while we were visiting our twenty-six year old son at Providence Hospital, who had just suffered a stroke and is paralyzed on the left side of his body. He has a wife and four-month-old baby. We all salute you, because when we told him that our tree had been cut down, lights and all, and stolen away, he, for the first time began to laugh out loud. Even though his laugh and speech are somewhat slow and slurred, it sparked a sense of humor in this young man. It was a blessing in disguise. So, may this tree that you stole, warm your heart and be a special one for you and your family. Merry Christmas. Sincerely...

I like that. That is seeing stuff through the tree, the cross. That is seeing stuff in its potentiality. It is beautiful.

The eighth thing that He says, “I have done,” is in [John 17:26](#). “I have declared unto them Thy name.” Previously He said, “I manifested Thy name,” which is a demonstration. Now this is information or a proclamation. “I have declared Thy name.”

“Who are You?” Moses said. “I AM that I AM.” You are what? I am whatever you need. Jesus came and said, “I am the way, the truth, the life. I am the vine. I am the bread.” He is everything. And Jesus would say, “I have declared Thy name, that You are everything that people need.”

Listen carefully to me. People do not need principles from us; they need a Person. They need the Lord. If I can take a book and cross out “Jesus” and it does not make any difference because the principles on parenting, the principles on finances, or principles on marriage all work whether you are a Christian or not, then something is definitely missing. Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” ([John 15:5](#)).

“I have declared Your name, that You are the I AM. I AM whatever is needed. I AM that I AM. Without Me, nothing can be done.”

Servant Leadership – Lesson 29
What Mattered to our Master by Jon Courson

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I want to encourage you, in preaching, in writing, in teaching, or in speaking, if you can omit the Lord and the stuff still seems to work, then it is not what the Master did. When all of what Jesus did was about the Father, so all of our work ought to be as well.

Father, I pray that these things which we see that Your Son focussed on, gave account of, reported to You about, that these things might be worked out in our lives. Oh Father, help me.
Father, I thank You that Jesus is praying for us. We ask that we might be about the stuff that matters to You and not the stuff that may be impressive to others. Help us, Lord. Help us. Work in us. Have Your way. In Jesus' name. Amen.