

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Spiritual Disciplines Part 2: Service

Matthew 20:26; Luke 22:27

Ms Agnes Goh

SERMON SYNOPSIS

The sermon focuses on the spiritual discipline of service, contrasting the world's competitive definition of greatness with Jesus' kingdom values.

- **The Universal Desire to be Great:** The sermon begins by noting the stress and anxiety common in Singapore. This competitive culture drives individuals to seek the top ranks, place their worth and value on positive external assessments and affirmations. Even Jesus' disciples were frequently measuring themselves against one another and "jostled for greatness".
- **Jesus Redefines Greatness through Servanthood:** Jesus challenged the worldly standard of seeking status, title, or wealth. He taught that whoever desires to be great must instead become a servant or slave. Jesus was a model of this radical redefinition, serving as the ultimate example of the Servant King who humbled himself to the point of death on the cross.
- **The Disciples' Spiritual Blindness:** The Gospel recorded three instances where the disciples argued over who was the greatest, and each time, this argument was preceded by Jesus predicting his impending death and resurrection. This pattern highlights the vast difference between "kingdom values and human ambition". The disciples repeatedly failed to understand Jesus' mission and self-sacrifice, revealing their "spiritual immaturity" and ongoing focus on self-glory and ambition.
- **Serving Others is the Antidote to Self-Glory:** The solution to the world's toxic games of self-glory and human ambition is to serve others. The sermon differentiates between true service and "self-righteous service". Self-righteous service stems from human effort, seeks praise, and expects a return, while true service comes from a heart that loves God, ministers quietly and faithfully because there is a need, and seeks community unity.
- **To practice True Service:** Cultivate the same heart & mindset as Christ followers and be:
 - ✓ Secret Service Agents: Serve for the audience of God alone & others need not know. Serving secretly prevents self-glory & frees one from desiring praise or affirmation from others.
 - ✓ Small Service Agents: Serve by taking on "mundane regular service" & being faithful in these small, recurring tasks. Over time, this lifestyle requires discipline & regular sacrifices and thus shapes the individual to "die to our self-serving attitude" and meet the needs of others.

Even for those who serve in ministries seen by others like the choir or the worship team, there are many hours of *unseen* practice, rehearsals and personal worship cum devotion to the Lord before they serve on Sundays. The sermon concludes by encouraging everyone to pursue greatness by serving others in secret and in small consistent ways.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. When you think about the phrase "Christian service", what typically comes to mind?

REFLECT

2. The sermon reminds us that the world's concept of greatness (i.e. power, status, recognition) is self-seeking and self-glorifying. This is opposite of God's measure of greatness. In the kingdom of God, it is those who serve out of love and humility (even without recognition and worldly rewards) who are considered great. Using the Bible examples provided, discuss what are the characteristics of Christian service that pleases God.

[Verses to help us go deeper: Mark 12:41-44; Luke 10:25-37; Philippians 2:3-4]

RESPOND

3. What is one way you could serve as a "*secret service agent*" or as a "*small service agent*"? Alternatively, as a Connect Group, discuss & decide how you could serve as "*secret service agents*" or as "*small service agents*" **together!**

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank our Lord for giving us the opportunity to partner Him in building the kingdom of God through service and fellowship. This partnership is a gift because God chose us, flawed and ordinary humans, to accomplish His divine purposes.
- Surrender before God any inner motivations of your heart that run *opposite* of what God desires & requires of us when we serve. (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7 – God looks at our hearts & not our outward appearances & 1 John 1:9 – God willingly & faithfully forgives when we repent.)
- Pray and ask the Lord of the harvest to send out more workers into the harvest field to serve. Pray that we can be one of those workers, serving in whatever capacity we can.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." [Philippians 2:3-4]

UPCOMING COURSES & EVENTS

Vocational Conversations: Discerning Your Pastoral Call

Date: 8th November 2025

Time: 2–5pm

Venue: Wesley Methodist Church (Plaza Hall)

To register: <https://tinyurl.com/tracvoccon2025> (by 18th October 2025)