



Prelude to the Cross-Part 4
Real Power & Prestige
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well think back with me, if you would, to sixth grade when all your peers were lined up against the chain link fence being picked for two teams. Let's imagine, whether or not it ever happened, that you were the team captain this day and got to pick the teams. It's not a kickball game on a Wednesday afternoon. It's a Saturday, there are no teachers, there are no coaches around, there's no one to break up, what you have anticipated, as the adrenaline ramps up, which is a very grueling afternoon of football with your buddies. But you got to pick teams first. And you see against the chain link fence, as you think about picking your team, just what you would expect from all these prepubescent boys in the sixth grade with their scrawny little bodies and some are short, some are a little taller, they're lanky. There they are, but then as your eyes move down the line, you encounter him. Not a boy. He's a man. He's a beast of a man. He's a brick of a man, he's strong, he's got hair on his knuckles, he's standing there and you think, there is the ultimate..., I mean, this guy is the ultimate football player. This guy could be your entire offensive line. And you think this afternoon, when we're playing football, this guy can make or break it. Either he's going to be your offensive line or he's going to be the biggest, strongest, fastest, you know, pass rusher you've ever seen. And, believe it or not, in this little imaginary tale, you have first pick and, you know, the other guy that's picking is your classmate who has been your nemesis. I mean, this is your opponent. You know what he's going to do and you have the choice to make that first choice. Now, it goes without saying but you know what you would do at that point. Right? You're about to play a very physical game of football. What fool would give up taking this giant of a boy and making him your ally, when if you don't choose that, he's going to become your opponent. I mean, no fool, you think, would do that.

Speaking of fools, by the way, the Bible addresses us Christians and a choice that we face every single day as you contemplate aspects of your Christian life. It's addressed to us in several places in the Bible, the Old Testament in Proverbs 3, it's depicted in First Peter 5. And in James Chapter 4, is the one I have in mind, where it says very clearly in a very simple sentence in the Bible, "God..." I'm just quoting it for you now, which by the way, I should pause on that word, that's a very big word, is it not, representing a very big deity, an omnipotent, almighty, omniscient, sovereign one of the universe. "God," here's what it says about his relationship to you, "is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace," he gives favor, he gives support, "to the humble." God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

And you think to yourself, well that is an amazing statement right there. What fool would choose to do something in that verse, so simple, so straightforward, that whatever would make God your opponent? I mean, you certainly want God to be your ally and before you throw a flag on that play and say, "Well, well, well, that's not fair. I'm a Christian. You don't understand, God loves me. He's my Father. I mean, he would never oppose me." Then you need to understand the context of both First Peter 5 and James Chapter 4. They're addressed to Christians. I mean, people sitting in churches just like this throughout all generations, including that first generation, where they heard this exhortation for the first time. It starts with this. He says, "Listen, don't you guys recognize that friendship with the world is hostility or enmity with God?" You have a choice when you decide to live by the world's standards, which, by the way, in essence, as he ramps up to in that passage, is self-aggrandizement, it's self-promotion, it's all about you, it's all about your pleasures, it's all about your life, it's all about doing things your way. You can be like that, you can adopt that, but if you do that's enmity, that's hostility with God. That, in essence, if you want to make it clear, is a prideful mindset that makes God your opponent. "But he gives grace to the humble." Now it's a call to



repentance in that passage, very clearly, just as it is in First Peter Chapter 5. There is a clear calling for you and I to look at this one aspect of our self-reflection, our view of ourselves and say, you can either go in the category here of pride or you can go in the category of humility. If you look at those two it's going to turn everything about whether God, this week, is going to be your opponent or your ally. And that's a big, big deal.

And I understand you understand what it is to be saved, what it is to be justified, to be declared righteous, to have God as your Father, I get that. There are times, I think you can think back, even in the healthiest, best scenario, even with a fairly obedient child that you might have been, that you do not want your father, who loves you and will never send you packing in terms of saying I'm never going to be your father, you don't fear that kind of break in relationship but you know you don't want dad to become your opponent. You understand there's a power in that state. And God says to you Christians, "Listen, why would you make me your adversary when I could be your number one ally this week." And it comes back to how you deal with this very simple issue of how do I view myself? That is so important. And it's no surprise, then, it's one of the last lessons Jesus taught his disciples before he went off to the cross. If you think back to where we ended last time we were together, in Luke Chapter 22, we ended with this scene where Jesus initiates the Lord's Supper coming out of the Passover he modifies the Passover and leaves them with a very important statement regarding what we are to be doing until he returns regarding this cup and this bread. We learned all that last time and that was very important. Then almost like a strange appendage to the passage, we had this reminder by Christ, "Well, there's someone around the table right now who is going to betray me." Remember where we left this and Luke Chapter 22 verse 23 where it says they all began to question, "Who could this be?" I mean, you can picture them, and I actually said it's a good thing, as counter as it is to the world's thinking, that we sit around, as we said, in reflection to Psalm 139 and ask yourself, "God, is there something grievous in me, is there any way in me that's wrong?"

Let's reflect, let's think about that. So here they were considering who could be the worst among them. And then we run into Chapter 22 verse 24 in Luke and if you haven't turned them yet please do, as we see a complete reversal of that kind of questioning, who could be the worst here? Follow along as I read this text for you. Luke Chapter 22 verses 24 through 30, as right here in verse 24, after them saying, "Who is it? Who could it be? Who's the betrayer?" It says, "A dispute also arose among them," reading from the English Standard Version, Luke 22 verse 24, "as to which of them was to be regarded," not as the worst but "as the greatest." And before you say, "Well, this is fantasy. This is fiction. There's no way this would happen." Really? Think about it. What about the social dynamic of sitting around and having your leader say, "Someone here, and I know, because I know all things, is going to betray me." We have a Judas here, to use our terminology, among us and for you to sit there and think, "Well, wait a minute," as it says in verse 23, "Could it be me? Could it be me? Could it be you? Well, why wouldn't it be me?" Well, if you really started to discuss that and think about that as they question which of them it could be, you can understand why you try to distance yourself from that accusation. "Well, I don't think it's going to be me. I mean, have you seen me out there preaching when Christ sends us into the village? I'm so into this, I believe it. As a matter of fact, I think I'm a lot better than you at it. And when it comes to my devotion and, I mean, I got a better knowledge of this. You know, I think my relation with Christ is a little bit closer than yours. I would never betray him." You could see where this would subtly turn into comparing resumes, comparing our lives, and really starting to build a pecking order among the group saying, "No, no, no, no, no, it's not going to be me. It would never be me. I would be the last person who would do this." You could see them start to sit here and really dispute who is greatest. I mean, it's not that they were sitting around saying, "I'm greater than you." "No, no, I'm greater than



you." That is not the dialogue, but it is the divine commentary on what's happening, regardless of how subtle and adult and mature this might have been. They're really trying to figure out who's the greatest and they were arguing about, they were disputing about it.

Jesus adds a little backdrop. He says, "You know what? You sound a lot like the world here." He uses the word "gentiles" not in the sense of an ethnic identity, although they were all Jewish boys, you need to understand this is a statement used in Scripture for those who do not know God. In the New Testament, this is a picture of those who are alienated from having any life and thought and direction and connection with biblical thinking. And it says, "Listen, it's the kings of those Gentiles who exercise lordship," they exercise that kind of leadership and authority "over them," over the people that they lead. "And those in authority," those who have those positions, they "are called benefactors." They're called benefactors.

In the Greek language, unfortunately ending in this, there's some ambiguity because this ending can either be a passive or a middle voice in the verb. So there's this sense in which you have to choose whether or not this is a soft thing like, "Oh they just happened to call me a benefactors" or, you know, "This is what I want to be called," they call themselves benefactors. The idea here, in this passage though, I think fits very clearly with the people saying, "I want to be called a benefactor." And benefactor, if you know anything about English etymology and the background of words, "bene" you understand, comes through into our language as the word "good." And so it is in Greek, the particle "eu" in this passage, which is "good." It's a really bad vernacular translation, you're not going to find this in an expensive lexicon, but what do we mean by this Greek word? "I'm a do-gooder. I'm a do-gooder. I'm a guy who does good. I do good to people.

And they're sitting around trying to figure out "who's the worst" and eventually it degenerates into "who is the best?" It was a great illustration. You know those Gentiles, they really love to exercise their authority over people, and they like to be called, I think they even demand that they're called, that you would recognize what a good guy that I am. And as he's watching all this, this is the perfect response to show them that's what non-Christians do. Verse 26, "but not so with you." Let's not make that happen here. "Rather, let the greatest among you..." You want to talk about who's the best? Here's how you can prove it. "Become as the youngest."

Now in our day, I suppose, perhaps it's not quite as dismissive in terms of, "Well, you're the youngest, you have to do it," but it's certainly in ancient Near East, this was clearly the case. If you had, for instance, the scene, where in David's life, when Samuel comes to pick the king and Jesse is told you're going to have a king picked from among your sons, and they all line up for the interview as Samuel gets there with his briefcase to have this kind of, you know, this job interview, as this is unfolding, the youngest was David and because someone had to keep those lambs safe during this process of having this feast and hosting the prophet and sitting down and figuring out who the next king is, the youngest has to sit there and keep working. He has to be there. And it was, I mean, he always got the short straw in terms of responsibility.

And so while they're all getting gel in their hair to get ready for the interview, he's out there keeping watch over the sheep. And so it was so often. And there's a pecking order certainly in our modern equivalents of that. Nevertheless, he says, if you want to be the greatest you got to act like that person, ready to do that work, which is exactly where he goes in the next line. The leader, you want to be the leader, you want to be the best, you want to be marked out as the big gun around here? Well then you'll be the one who serves.



And then in an illustration. "For who is greater? Just answer me this guys. One who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table, the person that is there at a table, at a banquet, is more considered to be the higher up, if we're going to look at who's being served and who's serving, and certainly in a kind of a caste system of the ancient Greco-Roman world, you'd have the master who was being served and the servants who were serving and that's the way it always was. But even today you go to a restaurant, you got someone there running around in the kitchen and they're doing all their work, they're going to go home tired and sweaty and you're they're being served as you're sitting at the table.

There's a clear someone's in charge here, even in that short little social, career, vocational picture and certainly in the ancient world in a kind of caste system, if you will, of hierarchy. And the one who's going to be served, I mean, that's certainly a greater one than the one that's serving. And yet he says. "But," verse 27, "and I don't even assume I was in the running for deciding who was greatest here because you all know I'm the Messiah, clearly I am greater than all 12 of you. But you know what? In my greatness, have you seen what I've been doing? I am among you as the one who serves. So, this is kind of turning the whole value system on its head. I am the greatest in this group, clearly, and I'm the one serving like the youngest, like a servant."

And then again, much like the last paragraph, here are these last three verses that almost seem like how did we turn from that description to this? It may come as a jarring kind of downshift in the logical thought, but don't miss the connection between these last three verses and the previous four. Verse 26. "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials." OK. You're still here. Matter of fact, you're going to be bridging over into the Book of Acts, you're going to be preaching, you're going to be doing these. You're still my guys here, you've been faithful. "And I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom." A kingdom? Yeah. "That you may eat and drink at my table." And don't picture the clouds and cotton ball and super long, eternally long table that everyone's at. Picture the wedding reception where there's a table up at the front that has a limited, finite space for places to sit.

Ok. "You guys, you're going to sit at my table, at the head table in my kingdom and you're going to sit, when you're done reclining at this table, you're going to sit on thrones." Thrones. I mean, they don't even use chairs to have their meals, but they have thrones, not folding chairs, thrones. They're not sitting on a rock, they're sitting on a carefully crafted throne that shows that I'm important, I'm in power. Thrones. Judging, administrating, being in charge of, the 12 divisions of the millennial kingdom, "the twelve tribes of Israel." How did we go from being a lowly, humble servant to now all of a sudden you're talking about sitting on thrones and eating at the head table? Yeah. We got to piece all that together, which I don't think it's too hard to figure out, but, clearly, he adds this to give some sense of perspective.

Let's take this a couple verses at a time, versus 24 and 25. Jesus is trying to point out at the beginning of this that these guys are debating with each other, competing with each other, as to who's the greatest. He then gives two statements about the world. You've got people who love to be in charge, and by the next illustrations in verses 26 and 27, partly because it sure is easier to be in charge than the one having to do all the stuff, it's easier and more convenient to be the one in leadership than it is to be the one who's doing all the manual labor. And they certainly want to be called something. What? I'm going to be called a do-gooder, I want to be called the good guy, I want to be called the leader.

So those three elements that we see in versus 24 and 25 give us a sense that Jesus is saying, "Nah,



that's not good. Don't do that." Clearly the "but" the transitional conjunction in verse 26, you're going to say there's a different way to do it. But right here what do we have? We have him saying, "This isn't right. This is not what you should be, you should not be competitive, shouldn't be worried about exercising some authority over people because you want an easier life, you shouldn't be worrying about, in this passage, when it comes to being called something and being, you know, having your ego stroked with titles, you shouldn't worry about all of that."

Now, note carefully the way I'm going to summarize all this in the first point, the qualifying statement, the qualifying word. Here's how I put it and I'd like you to jot it down if you're taking notes. There's always a worksheet in your worship packet. You can always download this digitally every Friday afternoon at around 5 o'clock, it will be posted, if you're taking notes on an iPad or a laptop. This is how I want you to put this. There is something that needs to be done with. We need to quell it. I say quell because it's always something that is going to be a recurring kind of impulse in our fallenness. So, quell this impulse. What is it? An impulse for, a desire for, here it comes, two words, here's the qualifier: "selfish power."

Now, I put it that way to make a point and that is that you and I need to distinguish it from a different kind of quest, a different kind of ambition, a different kind of desire for power that's not selfish. And I got to say that just to qualify this. Because if I were just preaching simply and I didn't really think and care about the rest of Scripture, I'd just say, "Hey, stop trying to do, you know, anything big, stop trying to be someone at your work, stop trying to be someone in your church, just, you know, just chill out, relax. I would leave you with a sense that ambition is a bad thing. And the Bible does not teach that at all.

As a matter of fact, all throughout the Scripture, there is a sense in which the analogies deal with almost a competitive spirit. "Run the race to win. I don't box like I'm beating the air. I am going to fight to win the prize, the goal, the wreath, the trophy." Those concepts are all over the Bible. All of these motifs of wrestling and running and boxing and fighting. Those are pictures that certainly show a kind of ambition to achieve. And not only that, to be someone. Think about this passage, let me quote it for you. First Timothy Chapter 3 verse 1. Paul is writing about people who Timothy is going to identify for leadership in the church. This is just one slice of the pie in your life. You got church life, you got home life, you got work life. But in that slice of church life, he says there are going to be some people there who are going to have a desire to be leaders.

And he uses the word "overseer." There are three synonyms for the pastors in your church. "Pastor" is one, that's a shepherd, that's someone certainly leading. Right? "Overseer" is the one here. And that word is really borrowed from the Greco-Roman world for a senator who is leading in government. OK? So we got the overseer. You've got the pastor. These are all synonyms for the same class, the same office, and then "Elder," and that's borrowed from the Old Testament synagogue system, an Old Testament tribe, someone who's in charge, a leader.

So, he says this and I'll just read it for you. First Timothy 3 verse 1. "This is a trustworthy saying: If anyone aspires," you want it, "to the office of overseer, he desires," that's the word "Epithymeo", "thymos" is a desire a "burning desire" and "epi" is a compound, an intensifier of that, and it's the word that sometimes is translated "lust". And you often think of lust in terms of something sinful, temptation that's bad, and all it means is a really strong desire. A lot of times we strongly desire the wrong things, but in this passage he's saying if someone desires to be a leader, that's a power position, a leadership position, he says, you know what, "he's desiring a good thing, a noble thing." There is ambition that is certainly good.



Now, if I said this: you need to quell desires for power, that would not be a biblical statement. But you wrote down this: "Quell Desires for Selfish Power" and there's a difference and the difference is defined by the three things we've looked at in verse 24 and 25. I've already kind of teased them out. The first thing is: "A dispute arose among them as to which was regarded as the greatest." Is Philip better than Nathaniel? Is Nathaniel better than Thomas? Is Thomas better than James? Is James better than Peter? All of this was going on so they get their pecking order.

And here's part of the problem with selfish power. Selfish power: wanting to be in a position, an elevated position, a position of authority or influence or power, is often really concerned about horizontal competitiveness. It's really, as some insightful authors have rightly said, so much of our pride doesn't really matter what role I have, it doesn't really matter how smart I am, how attractive I am, it doesn't matter how much money I have, it just basically means, really, do I have more than you? A person that I'm looking at and I want to make sure I'm above you. It doesn't matter, really, about the stuff, I just want to make sure that here I'm advancing over you. That is a horizontal kind of comparison, a horizontal comparativeness, a kind of competitiveness, that in a passage like this shows us, that's really selfish power. That's a grab for something. I want to be the manager, I want to be the COO, I want to be the CFO, I want to be a CEO, I want to be a leader, I want to be a Sunday school leader, I want to be a ministry person, I want to be on staff, I want to be a pastor.

I want to be somebody powerful in whatever arena I'm thinking about, because I want to make sure I can look at people who I want to think I'm better than and go, "I got something you don't have." That's a part of this selfish power grab. Nothing wrong wanting a position of leadership, as we'll see in a minute, that has something to do with some kind of vertical agenda that God wants to advance an agenda. As a matter of fact, our passage ends with him sitting on 12 thrones adjudicating, administrating over people's lives. That's a good thing. There's a good, godly purpose in that. But here, competitiveness, that's the first element.

What's the second element? "The kings of the Gentiles love to exercise authority over them." And I can only say, based on what they would think about when they thought about Gentile lords, certainly as illustrated in the next two verses that we're going to look at in a minute, when it comes to a servant having to work harder than the person reclining at the table, who certainly has an easier, more comfortable, more convenient experience than the one running around trying to get the food for them. That is a picture of saying, I want to be in charge, let's just put it this way, the selfish power that I want could be so that I can have the conveniences, I can have the comfort, I can get out of the work, I can not have to sweat or get things under my fingernails and go home with calluses at night. I want to have that position of power so I can have the corner office, nice view, my feet up on the desk, and I can kind of make my life easier.

So if it's about personal comfort, if it's about personal conveniences, if it is about saying I want that position so I can have something that would make my life easier. Again, I think that's condemned in this passage. That's a kind of selfish desire for leadership, power, advancement, climbing a ladder in any arena of your life, than it would be to what he's about to describe for us and give for us and versus 26 and 27.

Lastly, he says, "those in authority, they want to be called benefactors." That's what they're called. I want to be seen as a good person. I want a label that says, "Listen, I'm good, I want you to see me as someone important, a stroking of my ego. I want you to applaud me." Now again, you can understand there's a motive in Scripture regarding ambition and even living and serving in positions



where we hear from God, "Well done, good and faithful servant," getting the commendation from God that's godly, that's good. But in this case it's the praise of men, as the Bible often compares with the praise of God. It's the applause of people as opposed to the approval of the Lord. Those are the kinds of things you need to say, "I don't want to be going after this position, I don't want to go after this authority and I don't want to go after this kind of role, if my heart is really just doing this because I want people to go, "You're really great." And I think those are kinds of things that we would not probably say out loud, but because it is a perpetual propensity of our fallenness, we've got to guard our hearts. When we see it pop up we got to quell that selfish desire.

Now there's a good side of all three of those, and we can look at those when we illustrate the next two verses. But I want to give you one Old Testament example, if I could, really, really quickly. Turn with me if you have your Bibles to Second Samuel Chapter 15. If you don't, there's always a Bible underneath the seat there in front of you. Turn to Second Samuel Chapter 15. Let me introduce you to a guy that I know you know, but you need to see him as a perfect example of everything that we're seeing in our text. And the only problem I have with showing you this text is that when you read his name you'll go, "Oh yeah, I know that guy." You're going to see him as such a cartoon, a caricature of the bad thing that we're trying to talk about right now, that you'll never see that connection between the Twelve Apostles who are sitting in this room.

This was a warning not for Judas, this was a warning and exhortation for all of them. There is a nice, glossy, kind of combed overview of this kind of pride that is not as ostentatious, it's not as in your face, as what we find here. The guy I want you to look at, did you find the passage? You know who he is, Second Samuel Chapter 15 verse 1. We start with a man named Absalom.

Now what do you know about Absalom? Sunday school grads, what do you know about Absalom? You know this: he's got a famous father. Who's his father? David. David the king is his father. What kind of king is he? Imperfect but good. He's a man after God's own heart. God thinks the leadership of the nation of Israel right now has got a good king, a good leader, all his good. Absalom is his son, and here's what we learn about him beginning in verse 1. "After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and 50 men to run before him." What in the world is that? That's something you don't see on Crown Valley Parkway. Right? Some guy, chariot, horses, 50 guys running shirtless in front of it. What is that? What is that?

Well, the same thing does happen on Crown Valley Parkway in a more updated motif. But there is something about transportation in this early setting that was all about, "I want to make sure people know that I am important." You want an example of someone saying, "I'm a good guy, I'm an important guy, benefactors stroking my ego." Or even just seeing that, you know, "You don't have 50 guys, you don't even have 10 guys running in front of your chariot. I got 50 guys." I mean, this is a kind of competitiveness, certainly, that's described..., this guy is a bad guy and we see it from the beginning.

Now Peter never said, "Well, before I go to Galilee for that preaching, I'm going to get 50 guys to run ahead of my chariot." This is a caricature of that. It's historic and it's all real. But in your small group, when you've got someone falling to this sin, which by the way, I don't want you to think of that guy, I'd like you to think of yourself and the temptations you face. You need to know it's not going to be as ostentatious as this passage and yet it's reality.

I think you'll see yourself, maybe more, in the verses that follow. Verse 2. "Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate." Now rising early has never been a good thing. In the



ancient world, 3,000 years ago, it's as bad as it is now. Right? Unless you have a sleeping problem no one wants to rise early. But he rose early. He's a young man. He rises early because he's going to work hard to do something. And, by the way, when people work hard sometimes people say, "Look at that great guy." Right? This isn't because he's a great guy. This is not because he wants to help people. He is the person Jesus is talking about. I mean the kind of leader of the Gentiles, which of course he's a Jewish man, but he clearly typifies this. He's rising early to do what? To sit there by the gate, the gate that led into the capital city, the walled fortress there in Jerusalem.

Take a look at this, middle of verse 2, "And when a man had a dispute come before the king for judgment..." He needs some kind of adjudication, some kind of settlement of some dispute, some problem. Absalom would call them and say, "From what city are you?" I mean, this guy, he's good. He's got a great car, cares about people, asks personal questions, and when the guy says, "Hey, your servant is from such and such a tribe in Israel," Absalom would say, "Ahh.. see, your claims are good and right. But there is no man designated by the king." The king, the king, it's your dad, man! "No, I know that. But if I were king I'd do it." "But the king, to hear you, he doesn't have the right staff in place. Ah, my poor dad doesn't have it figured out." Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were a judge in the land! If I could just have the authority then every man with a dispute or a cause might come to me and I would give him justice?"

Now, whenever you go to court for justice someone wins and someone loses. Right? That's the thing. You've watched enough TV to know that and you've been in court, someone wins. Here's the thing, you can't have everyone be happy with your decisions. I guarantee you this, there are a lot of people in David's kingdom, when they came for a dispute, they left upset at David. This is the great thing about not being in leadership and only wanting leadership, vying for leadership and foisting a coup d'etat, which is exactly what's about to happen, this insurrection in Israel, is that you can get people to think that if you were a leader, if you had the reigns, you'd do it the way they like. I guarantee you, when something is as simple and blatant in this passage as adjudicating an dispute, guess what? 50% of the people lose. Right? Do you think Absalom ever said, "Hey, that case, that's a bad case. That's not a good thing. I don't understand it. You're the loser. You're not right."

No, of course, he was saying to everyone, "You're good, you're right." This is called flattery. And part of what the prideful person does is engages in flattery. And often it's, you know what, those leaders, they're critical of the leaders, just like Absalom was of his dad, David. "I don't think he's doing it right. He has not pleased you," which every leader's going to displease people. "But, you know, if I were the leader, if I had that loyalty from you, if I had that position of power in this country, I would please you." It's the promises we see all the time from leaders, but when leaders actually lead, they don't please everyone.

Nevertheless, that was his strategy. "Oh that I were a judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me and I would give him justice," and, you know, it would always be what you like, always be what you would think is good. "And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him," so he bowed down, this is the king's son, he's a prince, "he would put out his hand and take hold..." Oh, no no no no. No, don't do that. And he'd bring him up, "and kiss him." There's nothing romantic, obviously, about this. This is the ancient, Near Eastern way to greet someone, so you can see his beard, you can even imagine before Right Guard and deodorant, I mean this is kind of a smelly encounter. Nevertheless, it was something they did. And he's reaching out and starting to show this customary affection to a common guy, a guy who was just coming for a dispute to be answered. And he's ingratiating himself to him. He's kissing up, literally, in this case.



Verse 6, "Thus Absalom did to," 50% of Israel. No, this is what Absalom did "to everyone," everyone. People who deserved it, people who didn't. People who had a good case, people who didn't, people who would win, people who would lose, it didn't matter. And "so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." And we know, just based on the first verse, we're not supposed to read this with neutrality. We're supposed to read this with this guy is the guy with the horse and the chariots and the 50 guys running in front of him. This guy's all about himself. And as the story plays out... you know the story of Absalom? He does, in some ways, really leads a successful coup in the land. And David is exiled for a time and then, of course, Absalom is killed, he dies getting hung on a tree. You know the story. David comes back. It's a horrible experience for David, part of God's discipline for what he did with Bathsheba, but nevertheless, he ends up being this villain, this bad guy, this prideful Absalom, he becomes the hallmark of what we're talking about of a guy who's into self-promotion.

Let me give you one last passage as long as we're close to it, Chapter 18, Second Samuel 18. Just to give you, I mean, kind of the summation of his life, verse 18 of Chapter 18, Second Samuel 18:18. "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar that is in the King's Valley." We're assuming that the Kidron Valley, east of the fortified city of Jerusalem, the downslope of the Mount of Olives.

"For he said, 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance.'" At least that's what he said. I think he would have probably put the monument up either way. "He called the pillar after his own name." He didn't say it's the Kidron Valley pillar or the king's pillar. No, it's Absalom's pillar, "and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day." Now, of course, that's the writer of Second Samuel's day. Nevertheless, if you go to Israel today, you'll still see a reconstruction, a later reconstruction of those very ancient, from our perspective, of Absalom's Monument, Absalom's tomb, his tribute there, in the Kidron Valley. You can look it up on Wikipedia right now through our free Wi-Fi access. But you can see it there and there should be a Wikipedia page description of that. And it sits there with this kind of inverted funnel on the top of it, 50-60 feet tall, that is even to this day called Absalom's Monument, which is interesting, it's almost poetic, it was Absalom. I mean he is the poster child for prideful, self-promotion, self-aggrandizement, and there it sits, even to this day, not this particular one, but a re-manufactured one in the valley just outside of the old city of Jerusalem today. Absalom's Monument.

You and I need to realize that we can, in a very civilized and insidious way, be the Absalom in our small group, be the Absalom in our office, be the Absalom even in our families, just like Absalom was in his biological family, if we're not careful to quell selfish desires. And like a lot of things in Scripture someone can get up on a Sunday and say, "Stop lusting, stop worrying, stop being prideful," and it's not as an entirely helpful as we would hope because how do I do that? It just keeps happening.

Well, Scripture, often we'll see this, quite often, if not entirely, gives us this prohibition and says, "Listen, it's not just about you trying to fight this thing, it's about you replacing it, like the simple passage in Philippians 4, "Don't worry. Stop worrying," How do I deal with that? "Pray about everything." So, there's a replacement, and so there is in our passage. It's not just about you stop with this competitiveness and this wanting leadership and wanting everyone to see you as a great guy, "How do I stop that? I just got to stop that, how am I going to stop that?" Here it is, versus 26 and 27.

Back to our passage. It's printed on your worksheet, Luke Chapter 22 verse 26, "Not so with you.



Rather," here's your prescription, here's how you solve this problem, "Let the greatest among you," if you really do think you're great, here's your job description, "become as the youngest." Which, of course, in that day had great implications about what you had to do. You always got the short straw and had to do hard work. "And the leader as the one who serves," gives the illustration of the table and the servant. Of course, the guy at the table seems to be of higher status and, nevertheless, the highest of statuses among them was Christ, and he is among them as one who serves.

Now, in the margin you should put John Chapter 13, because I hope you know, if you know your Bible, that all the Gospels talk about this Upper Room scene. In the Upper Room scene John records the most information about this and the thing that he talks about in Chapter 13 is that what started this Passover meal was Jesus going around and washing the disciple's feet. Unless you're new to Christianity, I hope you recognize there are no sidewalks, there are no pathways, there are no bike paths. Everything in ancient Israel was a dirt, dusty trail. I guess there were some exceptions, but you're going to get your feet dirty and there's no steel-toed boots, they weren't wearing Nike's, they were walking around in open-toed sandals all over the ancient world.

And what happens is your feet get really dirty. And when you go to a banquet to eat, guess what? Leonardo da Vinci was wrong. Leonardo da Vinci painted them all in chairs sitting at a table. Didn't happen. Matter of fact, our text gives us the verb, they "reclined" at the table. In the ancient Near East, that's how they ate. In Israel in the first century, they reclined, they laid down, they laid on their side and the tables weren't tall, they were short, just off the ground. You still see some cultures today that do that. And guess what? When you're laying down on your shoulder, on your elbow and leaning against your shoulder and you're eating with your hand at the table, your feet end up being at the same level as the next guy's head, and you're all kind of lined up around the table that way, you're reclining.

And here's one thing, if I'm going to eat, I don't want your stinky, dirty feet near my face. Right? I don't want that. Now granted, the way they did it, your feet would be behind the guy who's next to you. I get that but still I don't want your feet near me and I certainly don't want your stinky, dirty feet near me. So guess what? You go to a banquet and you're about to eat. Just like we would go to a restaurant and go wash our hands in the restroom. They would have someone wash their feet. Now, if you came to someone's house banquet, usually a nice place, guy has money, he's got servants, those servants were there, then they were tasked with washing the feet of the people who came to eat there.

Jesus, it says, takes the basin, he takes the towel, he goes around and he starts washing all the 12 disciple's feet, a very practical matter. In that act, when it says in this passage, verse 27, I am among you..., last phrase. "I am among you as the one who serves," you could think, without that context in your mind, this is a whole life description. And if you thought that you'd be right. It is a whole life description of Christ. It's said twice, in Matthew and in Mark. He summarizes his life this way: "Even as the Son of Man..." Son of Man, I hope you've learned at this point whenever you read that in the Gospels you think back to Daniel 7, the most powerful, authoritative person in the universe. "Even as the Son of Man did not come to be served," not in the first coming, he didn't come to be served, "He came to serve, and to give his life," here's the ultimate apex of the whole reason he was incarnate, to give his life as a payment or, "as a ransom for many people."

So Christ's whole life can be depicted that way. So when you read the verse, "I am among you as the one who serves," you say, "Yeah, that's the whole point of the Incarnation." But if you remember the Upper Room Discourse in John 13 through 16, what do you think? Oh, I know what



he's just done in this immediate context, it was within hours of him saying this, he had gone around and taken Philip's grimy, little, dirty feet and he washed them and dried them and got between his big toe and his surfer toe and he was cleaning the feet of the disciples. Oooooh...! Well, everyone had to do that, but it was usually the servant who did it, and then he'd go to the next guy, "Thomas, give me your feet," and he would wash his feet. "Peter, give me your feet. James, give me your feet," and he would wash their feet. And so the illustration is: "Listen, this is a menial tasks that someone would do who is just a servant in the house and I'm telling you, you've seen me, not only is my life defined this way, but the acts that I have been doing in the Upper Room. You understand I've been the one who serves, even down to the practical, menial needs that you have in this. I've been doing that."

That is how you define, that is how you focus. Look at the first word, the verb, on the second point, that is how you aim your mind, you aim your identity, you aim your thinking this way. Number two on your outline, "Aim at Intentional Servanthood." Aim at intentional servanthood, where you say, "I am committed and purposed and resolved to do this." If you make that your goal, guess what? The first point's a slam dunk, easy. You will then say, selfish power comes into immediate conflict, always immediate conflict, with my purposeful intention to be a servant.

Now here's the problem with the word servant. It's always used in modern context as it relates to ministry, so much so that you might see the word servant as something that never makes you think of serving. You say, "What are you going to do on Wednesday?" "Well, I'm going to church and I'm going to serve at Camp Compass this week." Serve. You may say that and you're just thinking, "Well, I am going to go to church, I'm going to help," but you may not think of really the act of hard service. Talking about, "I'm going to serve in ministry." Even the word ministry means service. I'm going to serve. I going to go into the ministry. We don't often think of what it means. It's like saying, "I'm going to go to Seattle and I'm going to be a Seattle Mariner or I'm going to go to Milwaukee and be a Milwaukee Brewer or go to Texas be a Texas Ranger. You don't think of those things in terms of sailing or brewing beer or being a cop or whatever a Texas Ranger is. You don't think of those things. You just know that's a moniker, a label for playing baseball.

So it is that people think it's about being employed at the church or working at the church or serving in the church, but serving just means kind of doing a task there. I want you to think of servanthood and serving as being a servant. What does a servant do? He comes in with a towel and a basin and says, "How can I meet a need. How can I help?" That's one way we get around the word servant, here's another way. We like to call ourselves "servants of the Lord." Now I doubt you'd introduce anybody around coffee and donuts this morning, "Hi, my name's Mike, I'm a servant of the Lord." But, if the word servant came up you might think in those terms. "Well, I serve the Lord, I try to serve the Lord at work, I try to serve the Lord in my neighborhood, I try to serve the Lord in my family, I serve the Lord at church. I try to serve the Lord, serve the Lord, serve the Lord."

Here's the thing. God doesn't need any of your service. He's got everything he needs. If you ask God, "What can I get you?" You know what he's going to say? "Nothing. I need nothing." And I get that right out of the Bible, Acts Chapter 17. He doesn't need any of it. There's nothing our human hands can do to serve God. Nothing. But, of course, there are needs, they're just not his needs. The needs are among his people, the needs are in this world and so he says, "I need you to serve them and you will serve me, and I want to show the connection between me and those people by saying it's like they," particularly the church, "are my body and I am the head, I'm the administrative head of all this. So to serve me, which I don't really need anything, but you can serve them."



Now, you go to the donut table and say, "Who are you?" And I say, "I'm Mike." Instead of saying I'm the servant of the Lord, which is really shorthand for what that really should mean. Intentional servanthood means that "I'm a servant of you." Now, if you met me at the table and you didn't know who I was, and you say, "Who are you?" I say, "I am Mike. I am your servant." I think that would strike you in a completely different way than, "I'm a server of the Lord." If I said, "I'm a servant of the Lord," you'd probably go, "Oh brother. How prideful is this guy?" I doubt you'd accuse me of pride if I said, "Hi, I'm Mike. I'm your servant." You'd say, "Great, go wash my car." I mean, I don't know what you might say, but that would be a whole different mindset for you.

And all I'm telling you is think of the word servant as servant, and think of the word servanthood as your calling in life. Not to say I'm going to, somehow, ethereally serve the Lord, which means more time with my smoking jacket in my library reading theology. Listen, I'm not saying that's not a means to serving the people of God, it can be if you're a pastor or a teacher. But serving the Lord means you're serving his people.

Matter of fact, Apollos is one of the most mighty descriptions of a guy we know very little about in the book of Acts. He shows up again in First Corinthians when he talks about the mighty Apollos, and Paul talks about himself and he says, "What then is Apollos? What is Paul?" I'm quoting now First Corinthians 3:5. He says one word: "servants" we're servants.

Just to make it clear you're not just saying, "servants of the Lord." This wasn't some kind of resume building phrase. Second Corinthians 4 verse 5. In the next book he writes to the Corinthians, at least the second book we have in our Bible, Second Corinthians 4:5, he says, "Listen, my job is proclaiming," not ourselves, we're not promoting ourselves, "we're proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord," and, here comes, "ourselves as," here's a pronoun, "your servants."

Now who is greater, Paul or the wacky Corinthians? Right? Paul is. And yet Paul introduces himself in that passage, if you will, as their servant. Clearly, your servant, I'm your servant. It wouldn't be bad, I know you can joke with me at the door, "Hey, I'm Bill. I'm your servant." Right? Be careful, I might put you to work. But, here's the thing: that needs to be your mindset. When you go to work this week, you're a servant. It doesn't mean if you're the CEO of your big gigantic company, you're going to go out in the parking lot and scrape gum off the sidewalk. I'm not saying that would be a wise use of the opportunities you have to serve. But I am saying the position, and there's nothing wrong with acquiring a greater position in your office, in your home, in the world, in this church, but as you do, you see it not as a horizontal competitiveness, "I want to have more than you, I want an easier life, I want some kind of accolades for my ego." No, it's just the opposite. I'm looking up and looking at the agenda. This vertical sense of how can I accomplish the agenda of God? How can I help?

And you know what? God's going to say, "Those people need your help." And you need to say, like the Apostle Paul, Second Corinthians 4:5, I'm your servant. How can you in your position be a servant? Let's go to that slice of pie at work. How can you, in your work, say, "I am a servant in this company," whether you are the janitor, whether you are the CFO, whatever you are. I'm here to serve, and in this position I'm going to serve. I'm going to serve society, I'm going to serve this company, I'm going to serve the Lord by serving in this role. Whether you're a parent, a mom, whether you're an architect, a plumber, whatever you are, you think in those terms.

C.S. Lewis, I did put one of his books on the back, maybe I should have put two. He's insightful and kind of analyzing the problem we have with pride and humility. I put the Screwtape Letters, I think



it's Chapter 14 or 15 in that book, that fanciful book. It's a great, insightful, creative, even fun read, if you haven't read it. But he talks about pride and humility. One thing he says in that book that is so helpful in the kind of fanciful fictional debate between these demons and how they're going to take down Christians, is he says, "Listen, this is not humility. Humility is not trying," and I love the phrase, he says, "not trying to make pretty women think that they're ugly and clever men to think they're fools." That is not humility.

The goal is not trying for us, as I often put it, to think less of ourselves. Right? It's not trying to think less of ourselves. "Well, you know, I'm this. I can do that. I'm gifted I went to this college and had this. But you know, I'm the principle architect at this firm. I need to try and think that I'm less than." That is not what humility is.

Lewis like to talk about a self-forgetfulness, a self-forgetfulness, which is like, I like to put it, maybe I stole it from someone, maybe from him, I don't remember it from any of his books, but it's not about thinking less of ourselves, it's about thinking about ourselves less, and that's a whole different thing. And I agree with that. It's us being self-forgetful.

Now, he catches kind of the objection you might give to that in his book Mere Christianity, which I also think is helpful in that section on pride and humility. And he says this: "It's not about you not thinking that you are someone who has gifts or that you are maybe better, smarter in terms of a comparable assessment of yourself. But it's you being able to say, as he often says in that consistent, self-forgetfulness, say yes, "God has gifted me..." Let's just use that because he uses that in both books, I think he uses it in both books, "as an architect. I'm a gifted architect, I've got a building to build, I'm going to build it. And I know that I'm that gifted architect. But here's the thing, I'm going to know that I am that, and therefore this role is right for me, and then I'm going to forget about it, no longer worrying about being a better architect than the next guy, always trying to be better at meeting that need." Why? Because that's what servants do. How can I meet that need. That distinction is so helpful, I think, that in this passage we have this strange contrast, the setting of "be humble" and then we're going to end with "sitting on thrones judging 12 tribes of Israel." But the passage is all about service, service, service, intentional servanthood.

If you're in a plane flying across country at 30,000 feet, the flight attendants say, "Hey, we need a pilot." That's always a bad sign, by the way, if you ever hear that. I'm sure there's a better way that they're trained to say it, but let's just say they say that, and you happen to be a pilot. You've learned that, I mean, you've been to pilot school. You end up taking a different career, but you study that, you know it, you pass tests, you can fly a plane, a big plane, a jet, and they say, "Well, are there any pilots here?" I don't think that's a time for some false humility. "Well, you know, I don't know, I don't like to brag." You're sitting in 14C and they need a pilot. Get up to the front and fly this plane.

Now as you're walking up to the front, I doubt there'd be any temptation for you to think, "Yeah, pilot, that's what I want to be. Now they cruise right through TSA, they got their own line, they flash their badge, guys look so good in their uniforms and stripes and the little bag, they all seemed to get a sign they carry around, so cool. I want to be a pilot. I want that." You don't think about the advantages, you don't think about the authority, you don't think about the comforts, you don't think about getting through TSA quickly. You just think about the fact there is a need, there are 200+ people on this plane that need me to meet that need right now. And you walk up and you meet the need.

Now, I'm not asking for someone who, I don't know, works at Del Taco to say, "Yeah, I'll try to fly



the plane." No, sit. I need someone who can do it to fly the plane. OK? I'm not saying there are not any pilots who work at De l Taco, although the odds are very low, I'm sure. But I'll get an e-mail this week, and plus we're on the radio. Someone's going to write me, "I know a guy at Del Taco who is a pilot." I don't need to hear that this week. Just save your time. I need a pilot. And you know what God needs in your home? You know what God needs in your workplace? You know what God needs in your church? Something that you are gifted to do. It doesn't mean you don't aspire to say, "Yeah, I should be a pilot," but you say it not for the office.

Let me quote for you again. First Timothy 3 verse 1. "It is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to the office of overseer..." Right? It is he who desires a noble office. No "It's he who desires a noble task." That's what I'm looking for. I want to desire to do the task, not the office, not the corner office, not the perks, not the comfort, not the convenience, not the ability to order people around, I want to do the task. Now it may come with the fact that you got employees, you got people that do what you asked them to do. It's not about that. It's about serving. It's an intentional servanthood.

Now, as I said as I read the passage, if you look at verses 28 through 30, well, this is a strange hard downshift. I mean, why did we go all of a sudden from really defining a humble, a lowly servant attitude to, you know, sitting at a head table and judging the thrones of Israel. Because the Bible always does this. When it comes to the issue of humility and pride, God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble. That grace in both First Peter Chapter 5 and in James Chapter 4 that I started with, that allusion to those two passages, in both of those passages, the grace that God gives is... We have the same verb in both contexts. Let me read them for you. James 4:10, that's the first context, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will," here's the verb, "exalt you." Same thing, First Peter 5. I mean, we're talking about the opposition of God.

You could focus on how he's going to oppose you instead, here's the carrot, it's not the stick, the carrot. "Humble yourself before the Lord under his mighty hand so that the proper time he may," there's our verb again, "exalt you." This passage rightly and logically and biblically ends with God will exalt you. You worry about being a servant, God will exalt you. You worry about serving, God will put you in a place where there will be authority, there will be prestige, there will be power. But it's a power done in the right way at the right place and God will take care of what kind of position or class you're in. You just worry about being an intentional servant. And that's what he says. You're going to eat at the head table, you're going to sit on thrones.

Number three, you and I need to know that all the sacrifice of servanthood is worth it. It's worth it. God will always repay it. You need to focus on the sacrifice and it's worth it. Now, it's hard for me to say all that because some of you are sitting here saying, "I don't see that it's worth it in the short term," and you know what, I can't promise you it will be worth it in the short term. I can't. It may be hard to be a servant. And you're saying, "Well, I don't want to do anything that pastor Mike said in this message because I will be a doormat. I know if I go to my family thinking I just want to serve, they're going to walk all over me. If I go to the office they're certainly going to pummel me. I cannot be a servant wanting to help. I don't want to introduce myself on the patio, 'Hi, I'm your servant, how can I help you.' Because I'm afraid I'll be nothing but tasked with all of the tasks for the rest of my life." A doormat.

The only hope I can give you in the short term is the illustration I often give when I'm preaching at marriage conferences and I look at that great example of being a leader. What kind of leader should I be? A servant leader in my family. I, as a husband and the head of the home. That's what the Bible says. I have a wife who is now depicted in that passage as my body. Just like Christ is the head of



the church, I am now the head in this relationship and the Bible says, the head should be sacrificial, just like Christ gave himself up as a fragrant offering, that's how Ephesians 5 starts. Now we have a marriage and in that marriage be the kind of leader that sacrifices for your bride.

And he says here's the thing, it's like a head sacrificing for the body. And since those are two inextricably bound components of your life, your head and your body, you don't want those to separate, right? Smile at me if you don't want your head separated from your body. You want those to be together. Right? It's why God says, "What God joins together let no man separate." That is the organic whole in God's mind.

Now, I often illustrate it this way when I'm at those marriage conferences, I say, it's like me when I rented the apartment down here in Orange County. When I was married a couple of years, we went and rented this apartment for three years and we had, looking outside of our apartment, we had, it was probably a hundred yards away, a spa. Right? Of course, it wasn't our spa, it was the apartment complex's spa, but I was paying rent so I got to use the spa. I would come home at night, I'd be done preaching or teaching or meetings or whatever, I was tired and my body was aching, I want to sit in the spa.

Now when my body wanted to sit in the spa, my head said I don't want to sit in the spa. I don't want to sit in the spa because I go down to the spa, the weirdo from 13C is going to be in the spa and I don't want to talk to him. It's weird, it's late, I've talked to people all day, I just want to relax. I don't want to go there. My head doesn't want to go, my face doesn't want to be there. My mouth doesn't want to be there, but my body goes, "I'd really like to be there." And you know often times my head, sacrificially, said from my body, which I know is an absurd comedic illustration, but in reality that is the kind of thing that the Bible says you should see it as. When you love your wife, this is like you're loving yourself, because you will be blessed.

Now, that's an analogy for your marriage. And in a sense, I realize I win when I give up my rights and serve my wife. I win. Why? Because we are one. And God says, when she's pleased, it's not like "Happy wife, happy life." That's not the point. Right? I didn't mean to say that so disparaging or disdain that, but I'm just saying, that's not the principle. The principle is I have someone that I now love and that person that I love is going to have what she wants. When we disagree we state our desires clearly, I can concede what she wants, that's what the Bible says should happen. It should happen in both directions as best we can, we'll fight over honoring one another. But the point is, we should recognize we're loving, it's like loving ourselves. It may not feel like that. That may not be much help to you, but I can say this: when you start doing what God asks you to do in serving the people around you, it's not like you're loving yourself.

Matter of fact, the Bible doesn't say that the body of Christ is your body. Right? I just used the analogy. The people of God are the Body of Christ. It's not like you're serving yourself. It's not like you're loving yourself, you're loving God. As a matter of fact, the Bible says that in Proverbs. When you give to someone who is in need, you're not being generous to a person, you're being generous to the Lord, you're lending to the Lord. If you stay the extra hour, spend the extra dollar, go the extra mile, as I often say from this platform, and you say, I'm going to serve, serve, serve, not just as a word and a moniker but I'm really going to see myself as an intentional servant at my workplace, in my home and at my church. I'm telling you this: the Bible's very clear, you are loving Christ in that. And you know what? He always rewards people who love him. He shows his faithfulness, his mercy to generations, that's what it says from the beginning of the Bible, to those who love him. I'm just telling you this: it is always worth it.



Speaking in picking teams, you'll be surprised to know that I am actually aware that it was the NBA draft this week on Thursday. I say that, if you're new, I don't know these things normally. I only know it because the story I'm about to tell you was actually told on a non-sports channel. Nevertheless, Thursday was the NBA draft. Lots of gifted athletes giving up their college senior years to go play on these NBA teams. And one of them was Villanova's Mikal Bridges. Mikal Bridges, gifted, I think as a junior, saying, "Listen, I'm going to put myself up for this." And so, all of this was going on in the draft and then the 10th pick of the first round, the guy gets up and says we choose Villanova's Mikal Bridges and immediately the camera goes over to his table and he stands up, he's so excited and, of course, everyone's excited, his girlfriend or wife, I don't know if he's married or just dating her, she stands up and hugs him and his mom is sitting next to him and she's like, "Yeah!"

And then you learn the story and the guys tell you the story, as I watched the YouTube story unfolded in real-time on that video. The mom works for the Philadelphia 76ers and it was the Philadelphia 76ers who chose him in the 10th round. He grew up there. That's his hometown. His mother is the vice president of human resources there, and she's like, "Oh, my son is coming home. He's going to be in our town. He's going to be in our organization, he's going to work for our franchise, I get to work in the front office, he's going to play..." Everyone was so excited and like often happens they whisk him away to have some interviews and he starts interviewing. "Oh, how great will it be." And I watched this too on YouTube. Here he is being interviewed and his mom's being interviewed, "Oh, it's so great to have him home. McHale, it will be great to have him, and the girl friend says, "Oh, it's exciting, it's so wonderful. Can't wait. This is just idealic, it's storybook." It's going wonderfully. And about the time they're wrapping up the interview, 45 minutes after the announcement in the 10th pick, the 16th pick comes along, they make a deal, they brokered this deal and they end up, the 76ers, trading him to the Phoenix Suns.

Now, I'm not a big basketball fan but I have lived in Arizona for a while and, I don't know, I don't think that's a good, exciting thing to cheer about at that point. Off to the Phoenix Suns. If you're a basketball fan, I mean, I've been told they're not as great a team as the Philadelphia 76ers. They're poised for good things in the future. The Suns are the Suns, and the whole state is baking under the sun at 110 degree weather. It's like, here he is now, all of a sudden, with his mom excited, back to my hometown, everyone's happy, high-fiveing, and now he's traded. I thought, wow, what a weird twist. What a story, that's weird, that's sad.

So I looked him up on Twitter. I thought I wonder what his reaction to all this is? Here was his tweet: 8:33 p.m. June 21st, after all this happened. All capital letters: "LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!!!" Triple exclamation point. Then he tagged the Suns. I thought to myself, that's a great response. That's a great response. Matter of fact, it inspired me to actually be talking to you about him today. I know nothing about this guy, except for somebody said they're good friends and showed me a picture at the door after the last service. So, hello Mikale, if you're watching..."

I'm telling you what: this guy inspired me. Because here's what I thought, "Oh, that the people of God were so excited to serve the Lord whenever and wherever he puts us." I thought here's a guy who loves basketball and says, "I want to play basketball. Hey, Suns, LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN." I thought, ah, that's good. Go Suns. Right? I'm thinking he's leaving his mom. He's leaving in his hometown. I mean, who knows what kind of hardship this is for him.

And you're thinking, "Hardship? What are you saying? Don't you know the NBA?" I understand



that. Matter of fact, the last line of the newscaster who reported this on a non-sports channel said this, this is his last line after he told the story, which I think was just a throwaway line, it wasn't in the prompter. He said, "Well, he's still going to make a lot of money." I thought, "Oh yeah, we're talking about the NBA here." Right? This isn't junior basketball league in Laguna Hills, this is big time. I'm assuming the big checks with lots of zeros is all going to cash in Arizona, he's going to be a wealthy guy. And I thought, that's a perfect summation of what I'm trying to preach to you this weekend. I understand, you and I may be called to do tasks that we don't really want to do, we may seem like we're doormats and servants and all the rest. And I can tell you this: let's just have the attitude of this young Mikal Bridges who can say, "Hey, let's just go do it. I love to do this. This is what I was made to do, I want to do, I'm called to do, I'm passionate and zealous about doing."

Jesus made it very clear, Matthew 19, "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, children or lands, for my sake," because you're a servant of mine, "are going to receive a hundred times as much." And that's a better tip than Bitcoin right there. Right? Hundred times as much. It's an investment you and I should make, to say, as I often say around here, any thing, any place, any time. I want to serve the people of God. And that means, not only in our church, that's where it starts, Galatians 5, the household of God first, and then everyone else. Serve your people in your community, serve them in your neighborhoods, serve them in your workplace. Well, let's start by serving the people of God here.

Let's pray. God, Colossians 3:24, what a great passage, you reminded us that all of our work is really for you, even though it's directed at people. And that we will receive our inheritance and our reward from you and ultimately we are serving Christ by serving your people. And God, we know that we're called in several dimensions of our lives, not just to serve the regenerate people of God in our church, but to serve people in our offices, to serve people in our neighborhoods, and to be servants, putting our agenda behind ourselves to honor others more important than ourselves, to put their agenda before our own. Just as Philippians 2 makes it clear, the greatest Christological passage in the New Testament about Christ laying aside his glory, the independent exercise of his divine attributes, so that he can come and redeem us and die on a cross. All of that, it says, should be the mindset of each one of us. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

God, help us to be servants this week. Let it start on the patio right now. Let it start this afternoon in our homes. How can we be helpful? How good for us to think that way. God, we know that we're all in different positions in life. We have different jobs, different titles, different roles in our families, but what a great thing to release a whole ton of people into our community this week who have been at Compass Bible Church this weekend, to go be servants, servants ultimately of Christ, but servants very practically of the people all around them. God energize us to do this work this week. We know that you're a rewarder of those who do so.

In Jesus name, Amen.