

In order for our service to be fruitful in the Kingdom of God, it must come from Christ and not from us. It cannot originate in our hearts, minds, and spirits because without the transforming work of Christ in us those things bring death and not life. We must first have a relationship with Christ that completely remakes our natural inclinations, then we will find that our service is pleasing to the Father. Let's spend some time this week pursuing Christ.

Day 1

The Glory of Christ

The first thing we are met with as we sit at the feet of Christ is His glory. What does this mean? It is the all-surpassing goodness of His nature and character. When we sit at His feet and listen to His words we discover the incomparable goodness, beauty, and love of the Father manifest in the Son. In a practical sense, we become aware of just how good goodness is. This results in worship, or the recognition and expression of the worth of God. This worship takes many forms, from speech, to song, to joy, to a desire to emulate Him in every respect. The end result of this worship is that we joyfully find ourselves serving because we are filled with the same heart as Christ, we are motivated by the things that motivate Him, and our desire is to please the Father and to see the world moved back to Him. Understanding the glory of Christ becomes the motivation for worship that brings joy and energy rather than burden and weariness. If you are in a place where your relationship with God feels like an endless amount of work, perhaps it is because you have lost sight of the glory of Christ.

Verses: John 1:14, John 17:22, Matthew 5:16

Prayer Topics: Grandeur, Awe, Humility

Day 2

Loved Into Glory

When we sit at Christ's feet, the second thing that happens is being loved into glory. Seeing the glory of one like Christ does not have the impact we would expect. When people in scripture encounter even angels their reaction is not to be overjoyed, but to be terrified. This is the natural reaction we have as fallen people to the experience of encountering true glory. We will find ourselves unable to speak, unable to move, unable to even form coherent thoughts. Imagine an alien spaceship landing in your backyard at night, the door opening to reveal an almost unbearable light, and creatures walking out of that light toward you. How would you feel? If we are honest, we would be terrified. Why? Because they have a power, a glory, that we do not. We cannot travel to their home, but they have traveled across the expanse of space to ours. Now imagine a spiritual being, who is not physical like you and has come from not just a physical distance but another realm entirely. So why does Mary desire to sit at the feet of Jesus? Because that great glory loves her, and not only that but invites her into a relationship where the only possible outcome is being welcomed into that glory. She can not only marvel at the great glory of Christ, but can share in it because the love of Christ can only be satisfied when Christ has brought us into that glory. Why is this knowledge necessary for service? Because our sharing of Christ's glory is incomplete if we do not desire to serve as Jesus does.

Verses: Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:16, Galatians 2:20

Prayer Topics: Response, Gratitude, Repentance

Day 3

A Heart for the World

Have you taken a good look at the world lately? What a mess! It is very easy to despair of our world as we look at how the rich and powerful arrange everything to their advantage, how many despair into drugs, crime, and poverty, and how virtue and love seem to be so rare today as we are faced with division and dissension everywhere we look. It is easy to become angry, bitter, and to start seeing others as our enemies. It is easy to start becoming frustrated that the world is not a better place. It is easy to imagine buying a cabin on a remote piece of land and living a peaceful life away from everything. If we sit at the feet of Jesus, however, something else happens. Rather than seeing all the faults of the world and becoming bitter, we are moved with love to heal those faults. Rather than looking with hatred and rejection, we look with compassion and love. We see all the faults, but we respond to them quite differently as we love the world and desire to see it share in the glory of Christ. We know the Father's love for the world, we know the world's need for the Father, and we desire to see the two brought together. Our desire for this is so strong that no amount of effort seems unreasonable, and we become energized by the thought of bringing the world to the feet of Jesus to find what we have found.

Verses: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 1 Corinthians 16:14, 1 John 4:8

Prayer Topics: Compassion, Generosity, Submission

Day 4

Joy in Reconciliation

What brings you great joy? Sometimes it's experiencing a great blessing or seeing someone we love experience a great blessing. Sometimes it's seeing an enemy get what is coming to them. I know we don't like to admit it, but reality can be unpleasant. This might have been some of what was going on between the two brothers in the parable of the prodigal son. At the end of the parable, the son that had stayed was angry when his irresponsible brother returned home and got a party. He was so angry with the grace his brother received that he left the party in anger and was confronted by his father. Perhaps, when his brother left in such an irresponsible and insulting way, he thought about his brother and wished he would get what he deserved. He might have spent as much time thinking about his brother as his father did, hoping that he would return to the family's love. It's interesting to think about the two of them thinking about the same person at the same time with opposite thoughts. I can imagine that the day after the party, if the father's speech to his angry son was not effective, that he returned to his work to find it doubly toilsome. If there is no joy in reconciliation, our work in the kingdom will feel like work. I sometimes wonder if this is behind the curse of work in the garden, as we, in our fallen state, no longer find joy in reconciling the physical world to the Father. If we sit at the feet of Jesus, we will take great joy in reconciling the world to Him. When that happens, we will find that our service does not feel like work at all.

Verses: Ephesians 4:32, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Hebrews 12:14

Prayer Topics: Comparison, Fairness, Peace

Day 5

Food for Endurance

How do we not become weary in doing good? How do we find the patience to continue to serve even though our service so often doesn't seem to yield fruit? How do we put up with the criticism and lack of gratitude for our service? How do we suffer in our service hopefully? The only way is to sit at the feet of Jesus. Jesus experienced all the things that rob us of our joy in serving in the Kingdom. Remember that for three years Jesus taught about the coming of His Kingdom, and yet in the last week of His life the

disciples were still not getting it. Remember that the very people who Jesus was there to redeem, those who he healed and preached His love, Israel, sent Him to the cross even as he desired to embrace them. Remember that at His arrest every disciple turned their back on Him. Jesus served first and foremost because of His love of the Father. His Father saw what was done and was pleased, therefore what Jesus did was never wasted or in vain. Jesus also knew that the Father would also bring all things to fruition in its time, therefore He could be patient and experience peace. Do not try to serve in your own strength, for it will destroy you. Sit at the feet of Jesus, and let Him serve through you.

Verses: 1 Peter 5:10, Romans 8:18, Romans 5:3-5

Prayer Topics: Mediation, Transformation, Suffering