

Day 1: Monday

Good Morning!! Welcome to West Virginia!!

We have come to West Virginia to be servants. Today is the first day of a week long journey in which we will serve our God and our fellow brothers and sisters.

The New Testament clearly shows us that servitude is central to the Christian life. Jesus' life was an example of servitude. His words, actions and deeds revolved around service.

Consider these verses:

"...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28)

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:18)

Jesus also said, "Yet I am among you as the One who serves..." (Luke 22:27)

We somehow have the idea that a person called to the ministry is called to be different and above other people, but according to Jesus, he is called to be a "doormat" for others - called to be their spiritual leader, but never their superior.

Paul understood the spirit of servitude that Jesus spoke about in Luke 22. Paul said, "I know how to be abased..." (Philippians 4:12)

We have been called to the ministry this week. We have been called to be "doormats" for Christ. We come in a spirit of servitude and humility.

Paul's idea of service was to pour his life out to the last drop for others. And whether he received praise or blame made no difference. As long as there was one human being who did not know Jesus, Paul felt a debt of service to that person until he did come to know Him. But the chief motivation behind Paul's service was not love for others but love for his Lord. If our devotion is to the cause of humanity, we will be quickly defeated and broken-hearted, since we will often be confronted with a great deal of ingratitude from other people. But if we are motivated by our love for God, no amount of ingratitude will be able to hinder us from serving one another.

Examine your motives for coming to West Virginia:

- Are you truly ready to serve?
- Are you truly ready to be a doormat for others?
- Are you here to serve humanity or to serve Christ?
- What is your true motivator?

Day 2: Tuesday

Good Morning!! Welcome to your second full day in West Virginia!! Hopefully, you had a restful sleep and are ready to serve the Lord today!! How was your first day?? Was it anything like you expected??

List some of the ways in which you were surprised by what you saw or by what you did:

How does what occurred on your first day here match with what your expectations were??

Natural human love expects something in return. But Paul says, "It doesn't really matter to me whether you love me or not. I am willing to be completely destitute anyway; willing to be poverty-stricken, not just for your sakes, but also that I may be able to get you to God." "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor..."(2 Corinthians 8:9)
Paul's idea of service was the same as our Lord's. He did not care how high the cost was to himself - he would gladly pay it. It was a joyful thing to Paul.

We have not been called to become destitute this week in physical or monetary terms. We did not have to sell our possessions and empty our bank accounts before leaving home. But we have been called to give unselfishly of ourselves this week.

Examine yourself. During the first day did you give unselfishly?? Were you able to leave your wants and needs behind and focus on the needs of your brothers and sisters in West Virginia??

The institutional church's idea of a servant of God is not at all like Jesus' idea. His idea is that we serve Him by being the servants of others. Jesus actually "out-socialized" the socialists. He said that in His kingdom the greatest one would be the servant of all (see Matthew 23:11-12). The real test of a saint is not one's willingness to preach the gospel, but one's willingness to do something like washing the disciples' feet - that is, being willing to do those things that seem unimportant in human estimation but count as everything to God.

It was Paul's delight to spend his life for God's interests in other people, and he did not care what it cost. But before we will serve, we stop to ponder our personal concerns:

- What if God wants me to go over there?
- What is the climate like there?
- Who will take care of me?
- What will it be like?

All of that is an indication that we have reservations about serving God.

The apostle Paul had no conditions or reservations about serving God. Paul focused his life on Jesus' idea of a New Testament saint; that is, not one who merely proclaims the gospel, but one who becomes broken bread and poured out wine in the hands of Jesus for the sake of others.

So, once again, how was your first day?? Were you ever uncomfortable?? Were you ever asked to do something that you didn't want to do??

Take some time to meditate on the Lord and his mission for you here. Pray that as you step outside of your comfort zone that you will feel his presence surround you. Be bold and ask the Lord to place you in situations where you can minister to the people here in West Virginia.

Day 3: Wednesday

Good Morning!!

A Christian worker's greatest need is a readiness to face Jesus Christ at any and every turn. This is not easy, no matter what our experience has been, This battle is not against sin, difficulties, or circumstances, but against being so absorbed in our service to Jesus that we are not ready to face Jesus Himself at every turn.

The greatest need is not facing our beliefs or doctrines, or even facing the question of whether or not we are of any use to Him, but the need is to face HIM.

Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him; He appears where we least expect Him, and always in the most mundane situations.

Has Jesus appeared to you this week? Were you surprised? What was the situation?

I repeat:

Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him; He appears where we least expect Him, and always in the most mundane situations.

The only way a servant can remain true to God is to be ready for the Lord's surprise visits. This readiness will not be brought about by service, but through intense spiritual reality, expecting Jesus at every turn.

This sense of expectation will give our life the attitude of childlike wonder He wants it to have. If we are going to be ready for Jesus, we have to stop being religious. In other words, we must stop using religion as if it were some kind of lofty lifestyle or some kind of identifier that we attach to our character or personality - we must be spiritually real.

If you are avoiding the call of the religious thinking of today's world, and instead are "looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2), setting your heart on what He wants, and thinking His thoughts, you will be considered impractical and a daydreamer. But when He suddenly appears in the work of the heat of the day, you will be the only one who is ready. You should trust no one, and even ignore the finest saint on earth if he blocks your sight of Jesus.

Are you ready for Jesus to appear to you today?

Pray that you will be open to Him and to His presence today, for the rest of this week and after you return home from West Virginia.

Pray that you will reflect God in your life.

Pray that you will focus on God's intentions and not your own.

Pray that you will be open to His will.

Pray for our mission team.

"Beyond Belief" West Virginia Mission Trip

Day 4: Thursday

Good Morning!!

Beware of any work for God that causes or allows you to avoid concentrating on Him. A great number of Christian workers worship their work. The only concern of Christian workers should be their concentration on God. This will mean that all the other boundaries of life, whether they are mental, moral, or spiritual limits, are completely free with the freedom God gives His child; that is, a worshipping child, not a wayward one.

Has anything happened this week that has allowed you to take your eyes off of Jesus?
Are you proud of your accomplishments so far this week?
Have your accomplishments been yours or the Lord's?

A worker who lacks this serious controlling emphasis of concentration on God is apt to become overly burdened by his work. He is a slave to his own limits, having no freedom of his body, mind, or spirit. Consequently, he becomes burned out and defeated. There is no freedom and no delight in life at all. His nerves, mind, and heart are so overwhelmed that God's blessing cannot rest on Him.

Are you tired?
Do you need God's strength to complete your mission here?
Or, are you refreshed each day because you feel His presence near you?

Do you have even the slightest reliance on anything or anyone other than God?
Is there a remnant of reliance left on any natural quality within you, or on any particular set of circumstances?
Are you relying on yourself in any manner whatsoever regarding any plans, missions or ministries which God has placed before you?

Examine yourself by asking these probing questions.

It really is true to say, "I cannot live a holy life", but you can decide to let Jesus Christ make you holy. "You cannot serve the Lord..." (Joshua 24:19) - but you can place yourself in the proper position where God's almighty power will flow through you.

Is your relationship with God sufficient for you to expect Him to exhibit His wonderful life in you?

"The people said to Joshua, 'No, but we will serve the Lord!'" (Joshua 24:21). This is not an impulsive action, but a deliberate commitment. We tend to say, "But God could never have called me to this. I'm too unworthy. It can't mean me." We have no right to decide where we should be placed, or to have preconceived ideas as to what God is preparing for us to do. God engineers everything; and wherever He places us, our one supreme goal should be to pour out our lives in wholehearted devotion to Him in that particular work. Remember this as you embark on today's assigned tasks.

Pray for His life to flow through you.
Pray that you will be humble and accept His will today.
If you are weary today, pray for His strength.
Pray that His love will be reflected through you to everyone you encounter today.
Pray for someone on the team that seems tired or frustrated. Pray that God will give them strength today.

Day 5: Friday

Good Morning!

"Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20) In this verse Jesus is saying: "Don't rejoice in your successful service for Me, but rejoice because of your right relationship with Me."

The trap you may fall into in Christian work is to rejoice in successful service - rejoicing in the fact that God has used you. Yet you will never be able to measure fully what God will do through you if you have a right-standing relationship with Jesus Christ.

If you keep your relationship right with Him, then regardless of your circumstances or whoever you encounter each day, He will continue to pour "rivers of living water" through you (John 7:38).

Once you have the right relationship with God through salvation and sanctification, remember that whatever your circumstances may be, you have been placed in them by God. He uses the reaction of your life to your circumstances to fulfill His purpose, as long as you continue to "walk in the light as He is the light" (1 John 1:7).

Our tendency is to put the emphasis on service. Beware of the people who make their request for help based on someone else's usefulness. All direction and guidance come from God Himself, not from our measures of usefulness. It is the work that God does through us that counts, not what we do for Him.

All that the Lord gives His attention to in a person's life is that person's relationship with God - something of great value to His Father. Jesus is "bringing many sons to glory..." (Hebrews 2:10)

It is only a faithful person who truly believes that God sovereignly controls his circumstances. We take our circumstances for granted, saying God is in control, but not really believing it. We act as if the things that happen were completely controlled by people. To be faithful in every circumstance means that we have only one loyalty, or object of our faith - the Lord Jesus Christ.

Being faithful to Jesus is the most difficult thing we try to do today. We will be faithful to our work, to serving others, or to anything else; just don't ask us to be faithful to Jesus. Many Christians become very impatient when we talk about faithfulness to Jesus. Our Lord is dethroned more deliberately by Christian workers than by the world. We treat God as if He were a machine designed only to bless us, and we think of Jesus as just another one of the workers. The goal of faithfulness is not that we will do work for God, but that He will be free to do His work through us. Did we learn that lesson this week?

God calls us to His service and places tremendous responsibilities on us. He expects no complaining on our part and offers no explanation on His part. God wants to use us as He used His own Son.

Do you feel humbled by what God has accomplished through you this week? Did you feel Him working through your life? What have you learned about servitude through your experiences here in WV?

- Pray for a spirit of humility as we depart the mission field.
- Pray that God will continue to work in your life to mold you as a true servant.
- Ask God to rid you of any feelings of pride that you feel about what He accomplished through you.
- Pray for the brothers and sisters that you have met here in West Virginia. Pray that God will continue to work in their lives.
- Pray for the "Mustard Seeds and Mountains" mission. Pray that God will bless this ministry.

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