

Rhythms of Grace #11

Service, The Outward Expression

w/c 15 November 2026

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" (Martin Luther King Jr)

Read Mark 10:35–45

Why did the pair ask this of Jesus? Why do you think Jesus' response is relatively gentle? Compare this with his words to Peter recorded in Mark 8:33.

How do we recognise servant leadership? Interestingly, the actual term – at least in modern usage – does not come directly from this passage but rather a 1970's book by the American management thinker Robert Greenleaf.

We are all referred to as servants many times throughout the Bible. In places, it really does seem like the fundamental term (see Revelation 22:9 as an example) for describing the followers of Jesus. **Why is this important?**

Jesus came to serve. We are sent as he was sent. So, what does service look like for each of us? To answer this, let's move on to our second passage…

Read 1 Peter 4:8–11

Firstly, let's note how Peter sets all this – quoting Proverbs 10:12 – in the context of love. We can also recall Paul writing to the Corinthians where he makes the need for love in all we do so very clear. **Why is it vital that all our service is rooted and grounded in love?**

As with any of the other passages referencing the gifts of the Spirit, the list given here is very much incomplete. The key is verse ten: use what you've been given. Paul, writing to the church in Corinth, makes it clear that though there may be different gifts, it's the same Spirit; different service, same Lord; different work, but behind it all the same God.

Picking up from Hebrews 10 last week, much of our service can and should be in places where we can simply be 'doing' love and good deeds. Importantly, it's what God calls us to do. Both our passage here today and parallel ones in Paul's writings make it clear that all Christians have a calling from God; a calling to a particular ministry. It's not just something for a few 'special' people. The primary sacrament of calling and vocation for us is baptism. The key question of course will then be, "What is my calling?"

Let's think through two ways of answering such a question. Firstly, we can reflect on some words from Frederick Buechner, a US theologian, preacher and author, who said: *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."* **How aware are we of our own 'deep gladness'? How do we discover the 'world's deep hunger'?**

Secondly, there is the idea of Missio Dei… at its simplest, looking for where God is already at work and joining in; what some have called 'missional listening'. **How might we discern and discover this – either individually or collectively?**

"The highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service. The greatest form of praise is the sound of consecrated feet seeking out the lost and helpless." (Billy Graham)