

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY
Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 16 Jesus, Part IV

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In our prior sessions, we looked at the nature of Jesus as found in His “Greatest in the Kingdom” teachings, and also in the passage in [Philippians 2](#) where Paul speaks of the “mind of Christ”

Let’s go through the points as a review. The first point was: servant. He that is greatest must be servant of all. And Jesus begins to teach about Himself as He says this. The second thing was: not lord it over others. And the third thing was: example. You have to live and lead by example. And the fourth item was: humble. Being humble is living honestly, being honest about ourselves, living without pretense, or without hypocrisy. And the fifth item was: as a child. As a child is humble, a child is unable to deceive, and a child is unthreatening. And the sixth item was: as the younger. This means understanding that we will always be the disadvantaged ones and also it means traveling light. Number seven and eight were: last and least, which of course are quite similar. And that completed the eight parts of His “Greatest in the Kingdom” teaching.

And then that brought us to the passage in [Philippians 2:5](#) where Paul says to us, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” In other words, the same set of attitudes should be in you that were in Jesus. We must let the same simple core of motivating being be in us that was also in Christ Jesus.

And we have looked at three items so far. Number nine was: no force. Jesus used no force on us. He left us free to make a genuine choice. Number ten was: no blind ambition. Jesus was not driven by blind ambition. His heavenly goal He achieved only by heavenly means. And then number eleven, which we ended on last week: He made Himself of no reputation.

Now that brings us back to the passage that we were discussing in Philippians 2. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who though He was in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped” ([Philippians 2:5-6](#), NIV). Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God. “But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man” ([Philippians 2:7-8](#)).

Now Paul is not trying to tell us here that Jesus was a facsimile of God or that He was a hologram of God. Nor is Paul saying that Jesus favored God, or was as much like Him as you are going to find here. No, he is telling us that He was exactly like God and exactly like man. He was not a facsimile of man, but He was exactly like us.

So number twelve is: human. Now for some reason or other that is a very difficult thing for a lot of people to consider—that Jesus was fully human. In fact, centuries ago, back in the Council of Chalcedon, the church struggled with that very question. Who was He? Was He God acting like a man? Was He man acting like a god? Was He half God, half man? Who was He? They came to what I think was the proper conclusion—that He was fully God and fully man. How can that be? I do not know! But I like it.

Now the “fully God” side we seem to be able to handle that fairly well, but the “fully man” side we still struggle with that. I am amazed at how often people want to say, “Now wait a minute.” But the fact is, folks, the Bible tells us right in the very opening chapter of John, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” ([John 1:14](#)). Flesh! What does that mean to you, flesh? Well, I know what it means to me. I am amazed at this thing called flesh. I have an ample supply of it.

Some years ago I was in Bhubaneshwar, India, a state of Orissa, which is the poorest state of India. And I happened to be walking around part of the city early in the morning. I like to do that when I am in a foreign country. And I came upon a dead cow hidden in a ditch along the dusty road. It was bloated and maggots were crawling on it. Isn’t this wonderful? I do not know why, but I walked over to see it. Now I do not have much of a need to see a dead cow. But I did it anyway. It did not take long before I had seen all of it I needed to see. The odor overwhelmed me and as I walked away from it, I thought, “Oh, man.” And then the Lord spoke to my heart and said, “Gayle that is a picture of your flesh.”

Flesh! And the Word was made flesh?—and dwelt among us. This is amazing. In fact it goes so far as to say that “God made Him in the likeness of sinful flesh” (cf. [Romans 8:3](#)). You can read it. He was like us! Can that be so? I think so. How? I do not know, but I like it. In fact, just to prove it the Bible tells us in [Hebrews 4:15](#) that He “was tempted in all points like we are.” Oooh! Have you ever thought you had an original temptation? Have you ever thought, “Oh no, Jesus, You would not be tempted this way. Not You.” But He was—in all points.

Now think of that, folks. Jesus was tempted in all points, not most points, not a good number of points, but in all points. “Yet [He was] without sin.” Isn’t that marvelous? That just overwhelms me.

Now here is where you have to fasten your seatbelts. James tells us that we are tempted when we are drawn away of our own lusts. What? You mean Jesus was built like us? That is exactly what I mean. That is why He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. That is why we can come boldly before the throne of grace. That is why we can come within the veil because of what He did. Amazing! Now that means He had a pretty well developed desire structure, didn’t He?

I don’t know why I do not like peanut butter, because I love peanuts. So you could place a peanut butter sandwich by my bed tonight and it would be there tomorrow. I just do not have a desire for it. But there are certain other things that would tempt me.

Jesus was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. Awesome! How can God take sinful flesh—how can He take that likeness and the purity of Himself and weld them together? It is impossible. I know it cannot be done humanly, but He did it. How? I don’t know, but I like it. I like it.

That is why He can plead our case before the Father. Do you realize that? He understands us!

Oh, now that brings up one of the marvelous benefits of His being truly human. When you are truly in touch with your humanity, you are in touch with the rest of the world. Did you know that? The Bible also tells us “There is no temptation overtaken us but such as is common to man” (cf. [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)). So if you know yourself, if you are in touch with your humanity, you are in touch with the entire world! That is why Jesus, I believe, knew the heart of man.

Long before I ever went to India, I knew what Indians were like. They are greedy and lustful, just like me. Long before I ever went to Africa, I knew what Africans were like—greedy and lustful, just like me. Long before I came to this church—I know what is going through your minds—we are all alike that way.

In fact, some years ago I was teaching a couple thousand pastors and their wives in Zimbabwe, an African country with a different culture entirely. And I got off onto family relationships, which is a dangerous thing to do in another culture. But fools rush in where angels fear to tread, so there I was. And at one point I said to this group, “It could be that you men woke up this morning and the first thing you said to your wives was—and I quoted something. And then your wives answered you back—and I quoted something else. And then you husbands answered them back—and I quoted something. And then your wives answered—and I quoted something.” And I noticed that these men and women were looking at each other and punching one another, and pointing at me. When I finished teaching, they rushed down to the front and said, “You were listening at our bedroom window this morning, weren’t you?” I said, “No, I wouldn’t do that!” They said, “Then you are a prophet!” I had to get honest with them and admit, “Well, actually, I was just sharing some words that my wife and I have used with each other in the past.”

We are all the same. We are just alike. If you are really in touch with your humanity, you know what everybody else is like.

There is another distinct advantage of being in touch with your humanity, being truly human. If you understand that we are in the flesh, you are not very impressed with yourself. You really are not. You understand that we are each just a ball of mud.

I am amazed, though, at how much attention we give this mud. Have you noticed that? All over this state there are mud houses, designed to help you redesign your mud! It is amazing! It costs lots of money, of course, and they make certain promises as to what you can look like when they get through with your mud. And we do it. We go there. We spend money on it. So we can say, “Do you like my mud?”

I was watching one of these body building programs on television. I had never seen anything like that before. I could not believe it. These guys, as they walked out on stage—They didn’t really walk out, they just sort of slunk out, you know. Rats and mice, it seemed were running up and down under their skin. And they went through their paces.

I could not believe what I was seeing. And then something dawned on me as I watched. I realized there is not a single person on that program my age—not a one! I wanted to shout at them, “Hey fellas, guess what is going to happen to you? There is a very powerful force in this world called gravity. It is going to win, believe me! All these muscles—know where they are going to end up on your bodies!”

You get up in the morning and you make a serious mistake when you go look in a mirror. I look and I think, “I have met the enemy.” And I realize I immediately set about changing everything I see. Oh boy, my nose doesn’t belong up there. Let me bring it back down. And we powder here and we spray there. Now, why in the world do we do that? Why do we do that?

It is because we know that flesh rots! The flesh is dying. Remember the cow? I want you to understand, as you look in the mirror and as you spray, the job you have ahead of you. If we truly understand that we are flesh, we are not going to be very impressed with ourselves. We will understand. You will not get proud. It is hard to get proud when you understand that it is just mud.

Now you may say, “But I am anointed!” Okay, you are a greasy ball of mud—big deal! I am convinced that some of the major failures we have seen on the public religious scene have come because individuals lost sight of their muddiness. They began to think that maybe they were a step or two above mere humanity. But folks, I have learned that if I am in touch with the reality of my muddiness, I know how to protect myself a lot more. I am more likely to pray, “Oh, and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil” ([Matthew 6:13](#)). And I will understand what I am praying about when I do that because I am truly human.

And then it tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient—that will be number thirteen in our list. He was obedient even unto death. The death on the cross is point number fourteen which will complete our list, by the way.

But let’s talk about being obedient. These fourteen points that we have gone over, are not only the nature of Jesus, but they have to also be the nature of the Father because Jesus said, “When you have seen Me you have seen the Father” (cf. [John 14:9](#)). And Jesus, who came and walked in the flesh, also lived out this nature of His Father. He was obedient to this.

After some interesting statements in Scripture relative to Jesus—some He made Himself—He says, “I only do what I see the Father do.” I am paraphrasing this slightly. “I only do what I see the Father do. I only say what I hear the Father say. My meat, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (cf. [John 4:34](#)). In other words “I delight to do His will. In fact, I have come, in the volume of the book it is said of Me—this is why I came, to do Your will, Lord” (cf. [Hebrews 10:7](#)). Marvelous!

As He faced what probably was His final and greatest struggling moment in that garden, do you know what His ultimate statement was? He said, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but

as Thou wilt” (cf. [Matthew 26:39](#)). He was completely obedient to the nature of the Father. I am in awe of this because it was even to the point of death, the death on the cross ([Philippians 2:8](#)).

Now, I personally think His greatest temptation was to escape death. They say there is no one single drive within us quite as strong as the drive to stay alive. So the opportunities that He had to stay alive were probably some of His greatest temptations. That is why when Peter recognized who Jesus was when asked, “Who do you say I am?” Peter said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus says, “Way to go, Peter.” I am paraphrasing here too. “Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. [Your brain bone had nothing to do with this.] The Father has revealed this to you” (cf. [Matthew 16:13-17](#)). And then Peter was basking in the glory of his revelation.

But now that the disciples know who He is, Jesus begins to teach about the difficult things that He is going to have to go through and ultimately suffer death. And Peter becomes an advisor to God. Remember that? He rebukes Jesus! Can you see it? “Come here, God. You quit talking like that. You aren’t going to have go through that. You are God, remember? I told You. And anyway, I am on Your side, remember? And I get revelations, remember?” (cf. [Matthew 16:22](#)). And it was then that Jesus said, “Get behind Me, Satan. You don’t know the things of God, just the things of men” (cf. [Matthew 16:23](#)). Peter was good at attempting to rescue Jesus. He did it again, remember? Peter had a sword in his hand in the garden and attempted to rescue Jesus when he cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. I believe that was a great temptation on the part of Jesus. If I were Him I would think, “Now let Me see. I will just empower his arm and there will be heads all over the place.” I can understand that temptation. But Jesus resisted it once again.

I think when Jesus stood before all of the courts, opportunity was given to Him to escape and He resisted. He would not let anything keep Him from fulfilling His call to come and rescue us and die for us.

Death is sort of the ultimate test of our servanthood, isn’t it? For what am I willing to die? That is a scary question but it is a very real one. I guess in some way we all have to face this. Now we live rather easy lives, as far as that’s concerned. We don’t tend to be in constant threat of death right now.

Death. Is there anything for which I am willing to die? A person? A people? A place? Things? A belief? A set of beliefs? Is there any place where I can say, “Here I stand and here I stake my life?” That is a good question. It is a scary question. For what am I willing to die?

Well, Jesus was obedient even unto death, death on the cross.

When I saw this, folks, I had two reactions. My first one was that I was absolutely overwhelmed with this man Jesus, absolutely overwhelmed! I loved Him more than I had ever loved Him before. I said, “Jesus, there is no one I have ever met that comes

anywhere near this. I gladly, I gladly give myself to You. I will follow You. I will gladly follow You.”

Then I had another reaction. Do you remember the past that you once had in the carnal nature that used to guide your life? Remember the habitual thought patterns that sort of zinged through your mind every once in while and now it doesn’t happen. Well, a thought sort of zinged through to me. And I began to think, “Now, come on. You expect us to win the world by being servants? Come on. You expect us to win the world by being humble and as children and the last and the least? Come on. You expect us to win the world by being of no reputation? You expect us to win the world using no force? Come one, God! Give us guns! We can do it with guns, you know. Give us money and we will buy the world. We know we can do that! Give us influence. We will vote the sinners out. That is what we will do.”

Then the Lord let me see that it is not over when it stops with death. It is not over because the next words in that passage in Philippians, the next words in Scripture say: “Therefore God has raised Him up and given Him the name that is above every name, at whose name every knee shall bow in heaven and earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father” (cf. [Philippians 2:9-11](#)).

Do you see what is going on here? When you walk the Jesus pathway, you get God’s results. When you do it God’s way then you hear, “Therefore God.” Oh man, I am excited by that!

Now you know that you do not have to do it this way in order to succeed in life. You do not have to do it God’s way to succeed. God help us, sometimes you do not even have to do it this way to succeed in church. When I see someone who really tries to live this out, usually I observe them saying, “Wow, God! How did You do that, God? Wow! This is beautiful God. Way to go, God!” And I ask them, “What is the secret of your success?” And they will say, “I do not know. Wow, God! Way to go, God!” I found out that when I figure things out, my success is usually over. Indeed I can do it my way and usually I do.

But I found this out that if I do it my way, first of all, I succeed only to the limit of my ability. Secondly, I damage people and thirdly, my fruit does not remain. But if I walk the Jesus pathway, first of all, I succeed only to the limit of God’s ability. I do not damage people and my fruit remains. Now I would much rather hear, “Therefore God,” than “Therefore Gayle” any day of the week.

In fact I am convinced that the only way we will succeed, because God is rather jealous about Himself and about His glory, and the only way we will truly succeed with the promises that He has laid out for us, is when we do it His way. It is when we lean so totally on Him that we discover, “When I am weak then I am strong. His strength is made perfect in my weakness.” (cf. [2 Corinthians 12:10](#)).

But now I need to confess something else to you. I am convinced that I am so corrupt from my nature and my culture that I really do not have a clue as to what true success

actually is. I tend to think that success is a body count. How many did we have? Or success is cash flow. How much did we get? Or success is media attention. How many cameras are there? But I do not think God is quite as impressed with that as I am. In fact, He seems to give honor, as Paul said, to the most unseemly part of the body. That makes no sense to me. But God does it that way. In fact He does not call the mighty or the noble, at least He rarely does. In fact He takes “the weak and the foolish to confound the strong and the wise” (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:27](#)). I do not understand why He does that. But He does and it just does not fit my logic. I do not have a clue as to what true success is.

Have you ever try to imagine what heaven is like? Do you ever think that the biggest mansion up there is going to go to the most successful Christian that ever lived? And when we get there we go rushing up to number one Glory Road to see whose name is on the mailbox. And we discover that it is Mr. Spiffleboofer Woostiwowow. You will probably say, “I have never heard of him.” I have an idea it will probably be that way.

Some years ago in a magazine I saw an ad by a Christian organization. It showed this fella who had just forded a jungle stream. He had what appeared to be everything he owned on his back. He was heading off into what appeared to be obscurity. I thought, “You will never see him again. That’s it. It is over.” And the caption beneath the picture said, “But Bob was voted most likely to succeed.” And that is the way with God. The world does not understand that. They view the Christian and they say, “Oh, how sad. He could have made a name for himself. He could have put his mark on this world. And here he is with a Ph.D. traipsing off into the jungle to translate for some God-forsaken tribe. How sad.” The world does not understand.

Let me tell you another very personal story, and if you will forgive me, I am going to brag just a little bit. When I was in high school and college I cut a rather wide path. This was not for physical reasons, but I was president of every student body that I was part of, you know. What can I say other than I was big man on campus. I planned to be a medical doctor, a surgeon actually. But there was no way I could do that. My parents invented poverty and it was hopeless. The Lord blessed me and I managed to win a scholarship that was so good it paid for every dime of my undergraduate work. It even gave me spending money. It was an awesome scholarship.

I was the boy from across the tracks who had made good and I had become kind of the town favorite—the fair-haired boy of town. And one of the banks in town did a most uncharacteristic thing. Their board informed me that they had decided when I reached medical school they would pay for my medical school expenses. I had it made. I went off to college and during those days, God began to deal with me and He said, “Gayle, I like doctors. But I have something else I want you to do.” I said, “Really? What?” “I want you to preach.” “Okay.” I wish you could have been there when I made the announcement. “You are going to what?” The city father came the hundred miles to that university to try to talk me out of this dumb decision. The bank president sent word to me that I was no longer their friend, which is kind of the way banks deal with me anyway.

Some years later I went back to that town for a reunion with my graduating high school class. In high school I had a teacher who was the best academic teacher I have ever had. He was really awesome. They ought to make a movie of his life because he was such a good teacher. He was at that reunion and I will never forget when he saw me that disappointment clouded his face. He looked at me and he said, “Gayle, I just don’t understand. I had such hopes for you. I looked into your eyes and saw the answer to cancer. But ministry? This seems like such a waste. I just don’t understand, Gayle. You could have been something.” Oh, I tried to get him to understand, but I could not. I tried to get him to understand that I had seen more cancer disappear or be prevented this way than ever had I wielded the knife. But he was in a different ballpark. He just could not understand.

Most of the world is in another ballpark, aren’t they? They are not going to understand your relationship with Jesus Christ, so don’t expect them to. But oh, please do not be fooled by the world’s view of success. We do not have enough time left for us to be fooled by the world’s view of success.

Now some of your friends and relatives will put you under great pressure about this. They will not understand your relationship with Jesus. I know that some of your parents or your friends wish that you would go back on drugs so they could understand you. And you wish that they would understand this Jesus thing. Well, that is okay actually. Just don’t be fooled by it. Don’t be fooled by it.

God may call you to work in some ministry that is so obscure that we never hear from you again. Your name virtually may disappear because of the obscurity of your ministry. But if you are doing it obediently and faithfully and joyfully, you are the most successful Christian on the face of this earth. If God chooses you to work in some ministry where your name is up in lights and you are famous—and that is very dangerous—but you do it faithfully and joyfully and obediently, then you are the most successful Christian on the face of this earth. But you are not one drop more successful than the person who works in obscurity.

You look in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that great chapter of faith, and you discover individuals who, by their faith, wrought such mighty deeds that they would end on the front page of today’s newspapers because of their faith. But in that same chapter you discover individuals who, by their faith, lived in caves, were fugitives, starved, were tormented, and gave themselves up to die. In the world’s eyes all of them were failures because of their faith. But what did God think of them? He said, “The world was not even worthy of them” (cf. [Hebrews 11:37-38](#)).

Oh, folks, I would much rather hear, “Therefore God” than anything else—than anything else. Please do not be fooled by the world. I guess what I am really ultimately trying to say is this: If God has chosen you to be a slave—and I suspect He has—don’t lower yourself and try to be president.

Let us now go forward and follow Him and watch while we hear, “Therefore God” in our lives.

Oh, thank You, Father, for Your kindness to us. Thank You, Lord, for these people who have come because their hearts are turned toward You. Fill them with Yourself. Overwhelm them with Your goodness, Lord. Walk with them each step so that they sense that You are there. Lord, give them opportunity after opportunity to see Your hand working in their lives. May joy overtake them and surprise them. May Your power be evident in their lives. May Your Word be so present that their lives will be filled with fruit, and never return void. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.