

Acts 13:22, 25 *And when he [God] had removed him [Saul], he raised up unto them [the nation Israel] David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." ...*²⁵ *And as John [the Baptist] fulfilled his course, he said, "Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose [untie]."*

Acts 13:29-30, 36-37 *And when they [Jews of Jesus' time] had fulfilled all that was written of him [Jesus], they took him down from the tree [cross], and laid him in a sepulcher [grave].*³⁰ *But God raised him from the dead: ...*³⁶ *For David, after he had **served his own generation** by the will of God, fell on sleep [died], and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption [and was buried, and his body decayed]:*³⁷ *But he [Jesus], whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

I. Introduction

A. Context: sermon given by Paul

1. Location: in synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (now Turkey)
2. Notice the theme of Paul's sermon: three (3) men – David, John the Baptist, & Jesus of Nazareth - about whom it is said that they served their generation

B. David of Bethlehem

1. Flawed man with sins recorded in the Bible
2. But God called him "a man after God's own heart"
3. Why? Because he repented every time after he sinned, and he wanted to glorify God at every opportunity
4. He did not permit his failures to keep him away from God
5. God promised David that all future kings of Israel would be his offspring

Psalm 89:35-37 *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed [offspring, children] will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

6. He fulfilled all God's will for his life

C. John the Baptist

1. Lived most of his life in the wilderness

2. Religious leaders asked him if he was the Messiah, or Elijah, or some other Prophet

John 1:19-21 *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?"²⁰ And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, "I am not the Christ."²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias [Elijah]?" And he saith, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" [see Deuteronomy 18:18-19] And he answered, "No."*

3. King Herod beheaded him for preaching against the king's morals
4. John fulfilled God's will in his life

D. Jesus of Nazareth

1. He laid down His life by His own will

John 10:17-18 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself [by my own free will]. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

2. He followed His Father's will

John 6:39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me [Jesus], that of all which he hath given me [meaning those who would believe in Jesus] I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

E. Their life was dedicated to serving God by serving people in their generation

II. They Served

A. Meaning of 'to serve' or 'to minister'

1. Greek word used in Acts 13 is '*hyperreteo*,' translated servant (or 'to serve'), the lowest of slaves
 - a. Based on word for slave rowing in a war ship
 - b. Used to indicate the lowest form of slave, one whose life only has value as long as he can perform work.
 - c. Their names were known only to themselves, not by their masters. When they could no longer work, they were discarded
2. A different Greek word for servant which was not used here is '*doulos*'.
 - a. Means bond-slave, a person sold into slavery. Often this condition was only temporary, until a debt was paid off. These slaves were known by their names and considered possessions of a family. They were generally skilled or educated, as in farmers, cooks, or teachers.
 - b. This is the word for servant most commonly used in New Testament

3. Another Greek word that is translated as 'servant' which was not used here is '*diakonos*'
 - a. Means deacon, a trusted servant. Joseph in the Old Testament is a good example
 - b. Used in sense of waiting on a table, or server
 - c. Word used many times in New Testament
4. Jesus of Nazareth the servant
 - a. Contrast usual human condition of domination

Matthew 20:25 *But Jesus called them [the disciples] unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion [the rule of a king or his representative] over them, and they that are great exercise authority [the rule of a slave-master or employer] upon them."*
 - b. Rather Christian greatness and position based on being a servant

Matthew 20:26-28 *But it shall not be so among you [disciples]: but whosoever will be great among you, **let him be your minister**; ²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, **let him be your servant**: ²⁸ Even as **the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister**, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
 - c. Jesus served other people his whole life – opposite of entitlements – as a carpenter, teacher, healer, and example.

B. Servants of God

1. Called of God to be a servant to all
2. David the king of Israel
 - a. As King Saul's son-in-law, David refused to kill the king when fleeing for his life

1 Samuel 24:6, 12 *And he [David] said unto his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master [kill King Saul], the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." ... [David speaking to King Saul, after Saul learned that David could have killed him] ¹² "The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee [and I will wait for God to settle the conflict between you and me]: **but mine hand shall not be upon thee.**"*
 - b. Later, after David had become king, he wanted to build God's temple – it sounded like a great idea (but God would later prohibit David from building the Temple)

2 Samuel 7:2-3 *That the king [David] said unto Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar [a king's palace with cedar walls], **but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains** [but the place we worship God is in a tent]."³ And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee."*

c. God denied David's desire to build God's temple

2 Samuel 7:12-13 [God speaking to King David] *"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers [after you have died], I will set up thy seed [meaning King Solomon] after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever."*

1 Chronicles 28:3 *But God said unto me [King David], "**Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.**"*

d. But God wanted David's son to build the temple instead

1 Chronicles 28:6, 10 *And he [God] said unto me, "Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father." ... [David speaking to Solomon] ¹⁰ Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.*

e. David became satisfied to simply make the plans (architectural drawings) and gather all the materials to build the Temple

1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19 *Then **David gave to Solomon his son the pattern** of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat [the Ark of the Covenant], ¹² And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: ... ¹⁹ "All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." (Read the rest of 1 Chronicles 28 to see the materials that David provided for Solomon to build the Temple.)*

3. John the Baptist

a. He knew the work that God gave him

John 1:26-27 *John answered them [priests and Levites from Jerusalem], saying, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not [speaking of Jesus]; ²⁷ He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me [He is superior to me in every way], whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose [whose shoes I am not worthy to untie]."*

b. He realized that Jesus' ministry was ever greater than his own

John 3:28, 30 *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said [You priests and Levites were there and heard me when I said], "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. ... ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."*

4. Jesus of Nazareth

- a. On the night before He went to the cross, Jesus washed His disciples' feet

John 13:4-5 *He [Jesus] riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself [wrapped it around himself (like an apron)]. ⁵ After that he poureth water into a bason [large bowl], and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

- b. Jesus washed Peter's feet, who would deny Him later. He washed all the disciples' feet, even though none of them would stand beside Him during His trials, beatings, and execution

John 13:6 *Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet ...?"*

- c. Jesus even washed feet of Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Him

John 13:11 *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, "Ye are not all clean."*

5. Good Samaritan story (those who should have been servants but refused)

- a. The Jewish man who was beaten and robbed was bypassed by two Jewish religious leaders

Luke 10:31-32 [Jesus telling a story] *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he **passed by on the other side.** ³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him and **passed by on the other side.***

- b. But the Samaritan (the Jews hated their neighbors) was the only one to open his heart to help

- c. Luke 10:33-34 *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he [the beaten man] was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, ³⁴ And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast [donkey or horse], and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

- d. Notice that the ones who should have helped, who were in the business of serving, saw the situation and purposely avoided helping, but a man who had cultural and social reasons to not help was the one who treated this stranger as if he were a member of his own family.

6. Christians today

- a. Too many have turned from service to self. Get over yourself & go out to serve others

b. Remember who we are

Luke 17:7-10 *But which of you [the disciples], having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by [as it gets close to evening], when he is come from the field, "Go and sit down to meat [Go and have something to eat]?" And will not rather say unto him, "Make ready wherewith I may sup [Go and make me something for supper], and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?" Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not [I don't think he would thank him]. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, "**We are unprofitable servants** [doulos]: we have done that which was our duty to do."*

III. By the Will of God

A. Society not impressed by serving God

1. John the Baptist did not impress his generation

Luke 7:33 [Jesus speaking] *For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye [the people listening to Jesus teach] say, "He hath a devil."*

2. Judas Iscariot [who did not have this servant's heart] did not approve of Martha's sister Mary wiping Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, questioning the waste of resources

John 12:4-5 *Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"*

3. Peter once rebuked Jesus for talking about going to Jerusalem to suffer & die

Matthew 16:22-23 *Then Peter took him [Jesus], and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee [Don't even let this be close to the truth], Lord: this shall not be unto thee."²³ But he turned, and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men [for your mind is set on the things of men and not on the things of God]."*

4. Human society does not want Christian message – only Christian service

5. Christian service is not dependent on what others think of Christians, nor should it be.

B. Jesus rejected by many people

1. His own family did not believe Him

John 7:1, 3, 5 *After these things* [after Jesus claimed to be the bread of life that came down from heaven] *Jesus walked* [Jesus stayed] *in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry* [He wanted to stay out of Judea], *because the Jews sought to kill him. ...* ³ *His brethren therefore* [Because His fame was increasing in Galilee, His brothers] *said unto him, Depart hence* [Leave this place], *and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works* [miracles] *that thou doest. ...* ⁵ *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*

2. Rejected by his home town Nazareth

Mark 6:3 *Is not this* [Jesus] *the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him* [because of His teaching on the Scriptures, and His claiming to be the Messiah, and His rebuke of His townspeople for wanting to see miracles after He grew up among them].

3. His friends thought he had lost his mind in the middle of His ministry in Galilee

- a. The crowds pressed on Jesus & His disciples so that they could not even eat a meal

Mark 3:20 *And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.*

- b. His friends thought He went too far with His miracles and His teaching

Mark 3:21 *And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, "He is beside himself."*

4. Deserted by His disciples at His arrest in Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:56 *But all this* [Jesus' betrayal by Judas and His arrest at night] *was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then **all the disciples forsook him, and fled.***

IV. Conclusion: In Their Generation

- A. These servants ministered in their own time & wherever they were
- B. There is someone somewhere going through difficult times that needs your help
- C. Look for one person to serve today. The greatest service you can do for someone is to change their life for all eternity by declaring the gospel to them
- D. A Christian's walk with Christ translates into life of service