

SERMON FOR DISCUSSION: True service

Colossians 3 v22-24 John 12 v23-26

So today the Queen wakes up FOR THE FIRST TIME as the longest serving British Monarch ever! **23,227 days**. A whole 19 years longer than Queen Elizabeth 1st !

In all the tributes to her yesterday ONE WORD was mentioned more often than any other. **It was her SERVICE to the nation**. 63 continuous years service with official papers to deal with every day and no let up until death.

Undoubtedly, her sense of service comes from her strong Christian faith.

Now service is not just something for Queens!

For ANY Christian, service is not just an occasional activity, somehow separate from the rest of our lives.

RATHER, service is HOW WE LIVE.

Whom, or what, we serve colours the whole of our life.

Even Bob Dylan famously sang, "*You gotta serve somebody*"

Whether we are aware of it, or not, each one of us has decided to orientate our lives around someone or something. And that decision colours ALL our other choices and decisions.

For the Queen that choice is "*country before self*".

JESUS in John 12 v26 SAID,

"Whoever serves me MUST follow me and where I am MY SERVANT will be also"

Serving and following are connected.

The Greek word for 'following' literally means "*going the same way as*".

IN OTHER WORDS, if you follow someone **you do as they do and you do it with them**.

So, following is a lifestyle choice. Those who follow Jesus have to give up all ambition **save that of going and doing their Master's will**.

There is no place for self. Why? Because Jesus said, "*No one can serve TWO Masters*". There CANNOT be divided loyalties. You cannot play for Manchester United AND Manchester City. Nor can you support both.

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The "grain of seed" of selfishness (John 12 v24) has to die.

We MUST choose our priorities. Just as the Queen chose hers.

SO, to follow JESUS is TO SERVE Jesus.

BUT the idea of service GOES BEYOND just what we do. -It also includes THE WAY, the attitude, in which we do what we do as well.

We are called to do everything "AS TO THE LORD"

Colossians 3 v23

"Work willingly at whatever you do with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

So, if we encourage someone who is struggling, if we offer a lift or help with the shopping for someone who is frail, if we are by the side of someone when they hear bad news, if we cheer someone up by a phone call WE ARE SERVING THE LORD.

But, like the Queen, we are ALL CALLED to serve because Jesus said:

"EVEN, EVEN the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve"

Now, if even JESUS, *Jesus, The Master*, had to serve then service is something we, who in the Colossians passage are "slaves of the Master", cannot escape. For

"Where I am, there MY SERVANT will be also" (John 10v26)

It isn't just service which is important -**but THE WAY we do it** and the attitude we do it with.

**Thanks Be To God for the Queen
who gives us a truly Christian example of
selfless and constant service
done in the right way.**

Preached by Martin Tanner in St Mary's at 10.00am
on Thursday 10th September 2015