

## 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sermon 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2018 by Pastor David Kuss

Texts:

### John 1: 23-26

<sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" <sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Now the Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

<sup>26</sup> **"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. <sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."**

<sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

### Mark 9:30-37

<sup>30</sup> They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, <sup>31</sup> because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."<sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

<sup>33</sup> They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

<sup>35</sup> **Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."**

<sup>36</sup> He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

### Mark 10:45

<sup>45</sup> **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

## Message notes

Who is serving who around here?

This building has served us for 80 years – what a blessing.

Agree, or has it been a curse?

A curse no one would say it has been a curse!

We all know that a church plant, a pastor, and a manse do not come cheap. Pastor Tim is easy but he is not cheap.

There is a real question. Have we served the building or the kingdom?

It has been a necessity to serve the building, in other words, maintain the property, and make the offerings cover the expenses. How much time have we spent doing just that – maintaining property and covering expenses? How many property meeting and church council hours have been spent serving this church building? How many hours have been spent serving the kingdom?

Mark tells us very clearly that Jesus came to serve and not be served. Jesus does not want to be served? If we follow his word we are called to serve people – just as Jesus served people – most often the poor and rejected people in the world.

God's word does designate certain people to maintain the building (The Temple). We can see that in the Old Testament very few people served the Temple. In the New Testament we find there is no building. There is no one serving the temple or building.

When we define church I think for most of us we think of a building. When Jesus and the New Testament defined church they think people. What do we think?

Our text describes servanthood. And the greatest in servanthood is the least. John the Baptist in a strange way declared that he cannot untie Jesus sandals because he is not a lowly enough servant. OR in other words John is saying that Jesus ought to be untying his sandals. It is his way of saying Jesus you're the greatest (or lowliest) servant of all.

There is a very good place for church buildings and that is to provide a place for us to worship. Of course here the true meaning of servanthood and Jesus words – I came to serve and not be served – played out. Unfortunately, it is hard for us with English eyes and ears to see servanthood in worship.

We must know that worship in the German days (the days of Pastor LE Kuss) was "Gottesdienst". Gottesdienst means, quite literally, that God's serves us (just as Jesus said, I have come to serve...). The building and the Word of the Church are to serve us, to build us up, to send us out.

We are stuck with the English word “worship” which is diametrically opposite to “Gottesdienst”. Worship is where we show God his worth. Worship in its true sense is the place where we serve God. Gottesdienst is where God serves us. What did Jesus say?

It is a blessing to celebrate 80 years of a building. It is an opportune time to ask who is serving who? It’s a time to ask where is most of our time spent – focussed on buildings and plant or on the ones Jesus served, the neighbour, the locals, the lost?

The ancient church and Luther did not call worship Gottesdienst by accident. It is a word that encapsulates Jesus words, “I have come to serve”.

Let’s continue another 80 years with those words of Jesus “I have come to serve and not be served”.

When Jesus calls the Church (and wives for that matter) in Ephesians to submit he is calling us to allow him to serve us. When he serves us (Gottesdienst) we then can serve others. The Kingdom is about serving others.

#### Picture for the sermon

