

# The Rise Of Servant Leaders

Presented by Pastor Scott Walters on 11/01/20  
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This Tuesday, is the day to vote, if you haven't voted already. Until then, the airwaves will be filled with pronouncements by the latest round of candidates. Claims of a desire for humble service will abound.

The United States Senate, that venerated group of 100 elected officials, is often acknowledged to be the world's most exclusive club. Never mind that during their days of electioneering, candidates typically proclaim their desire to serve the people with selfless devotion.

Jesus was not impressed with titles or honors. If the religious leaders would have practiced the humility and service they taught, they would not have been the targets of Jesus' rebuke. As this story continues in Matthew, Jesus goes on to excoriate these false teachers.

As far as Jesus was concerned, the behavior of the religious leaders revealed the falseness of their hearts and any reason for honoring those leaders with customary titles and honors.

Jesus would not be impressed with the titles of our day either. And we have plenty of them. In the courtroom you can find yourself in contempt if you fail to address the bench as "Your Honor." Pastors, humble servants of all, are properly called by the honorific "The Reverend" just as a mayor is called "The Honorable."

We are invested with titles, we seek them, we earn them, and we use them to elevate one another and to create influence and privilege. No matter how humble we may try to be, it is a natural and exhilarating thing to be honored, appreciated, and recognized. Still, Jesus is not impressed with our mutual admiration societies.

What about us in the life of the Church? Over the years, I get the impression that some feel that worship is entertainment. It doesn't help that there are televangelists who argue that they need multiple private jets.

Of course, the Bible at one point does say, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." The problem is that this invitation is from Satan, not Jesus.

Soren Kierkegaard reminds us that the worship of the church is not centered on our likes and preferences. The people in the pew is NOT the intended audience for worship. The audience is God!!

It is not just what the clergy and the musicians and contribute, but what the entire people of God offer in terms of their prayer, their singing, and their openness of heart.

Today, I am making the audacious claim that this concern about honors and social position is not just a word to the clergy. It is a word to all of us. It is a word to the church and how the world perceives "the church."

Today Jesus reminds all of us – not just the religious leaders – that God's blessings are NOT for fame or comfort. In my reading of the Gospels, Jesus does not speak about members or membership.

Jesus does speak about being a disciple – a follower of his. He speaks of being sent out – what we call an apostle.

For us, the implication is that the Church is not a bank or a country club or service club.

And membership should not be marked by any privileges we enjoy. Jesus tells us today that the greatest among us will be our servant.

First and foremost, it is not a matter of sitting back and folding one's arms to receive and then judge the worship and the services the church has to offer – that will always be there. It is the service we in the church can offer our community and the world.

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Churches vary, but the one thing they have in common is doorway. When we actually enter a church building, we enter praying that we will find sanctuary. [the cycle of outrage and apathy]

It is tempting to think that we are leaving the world out there – but we all know that's not true. In some ways what happens in a sanctuary is not all that different than what happens in the world. There is hope in that truth.

If we can better work on bettering human relationships in this space, there might just be hope for the world.

This can still be a place of sanctuary: not from the world, but for the world.

Not for some, but for all.