

The background features a large white circle in the center. Surrounding it are various abstract shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and pink. Dark green foliage with small pink flowers is scattered around the edges. The text is centered within the white circle.

From the 2017 ESM Retreat

Serving IS LIVING

REV. IN KEE KIM

LECTURE
ONE



Welcome!

Welcome to the ESM Retreat.

Thank you all for working so hard to make this retreat. We set the record turnout this year. I hope that you all have a great time with each other and also a meaningful time.

This year's theme is SERVING
IS LIVING.





Serving Is Living

Serving Is Living. That is a great slogan for your life. In fact it is the key to the happiness of life because if serving is missing in life, that life becomes empty.

In my opinion, the image of serving others is the most beautiful image of a human being. Albert Einstein once said: "Only a life lived in the service of others is worth living." Also, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that "Life's most urgent and persistent question is 'What are you doing for others?'" These 2 quotes from these incredible men show us that there is no more important question than the question: How Can I Serve Others?





Serving is Living and Living is Serving

When we discover that life is about serving we experience a spiritual discovery, a spiritual awakening. This is because when you truly meet God you will have the desire to serve.

A good way to express this is through an excerpt by Bob Dylan, who won a Nobel prize in Literature. In Bob Dylan's spiritual awakening he wrote this:

You may be an ambassador, to England or France
You may like to gamble, you might like to dance.
You may be the heavyweight Champion of the world.
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody.
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord.
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Another example of this spiritual awakening and desire to serve is seen after St. Paul meets Christ. In his confession he says: "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me."

Here is a question for all of you: Why does one have the desire to serve when he/she meets Christ in a meaningful way?

When we meet Christ we first discover the essence of life. Then through our discovery we try to follow the image of Christ. When we do both of those things, we become filled with humility and gratitude and thankfulness becomes our response. That is why we serve.

Going back to the life of St. Paul, when you meet Christ in a meaningful way, your eyes are opened. You begin to see life in a new way, your perspective on life changes. You discover that the life of serving is wonderful, that It's like finding the treasure of life.

Therefore, when we meet God movement happens in our life. We move from being self-serving to serving others. Now this is a good movement because it is where we find the essence of life, where we find the greatness of ourselves.

Here is a great quote by Martin Luther King Jr. that addresses the greatness of serving:

Everybody can be great...
Because anybody can serve.
You don't have to have a college degree to serve.
You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.
You only need a heart full of grace.
A Soul generated by love.





Thankful Serving

We get the desire to serve when we are thankful. We all owe a lot to so many things and to so many people. Our parents, friends, community, the earth, the sky and all those who helped us and served us. But most of all, we should be thankful to God.

This thankfulness is what makes us want to serve, because we owe others a lot, we are indebted to them.

Muhammed Ali said it best when he said:

"Service to others is the Rent you pay for your room here on earth."





Serving Brings Change Within Us

People think prayer is spiritual action but serving is physical action but this is a misconception. Serving is in fact a very spiritual thing. There is sacredness in serving, a certain spiritual wisdom that can be understood only in serving.

An example of the spiritual nature of serving can be seen in Brother Lawrence, the subject of the famous christian text: The Practice of the Presence of God. Brother Lawrence's main job was working in a kitchen and doing dishes. In the book Brother Lawrence said that "Our actions should unite us with God when we are involved in our daily activities, just as our prayers unite us with him in our quiet devotions." Brother Lawrence is trying to show us that you don't do specific "spiritual things" but rather when you are spiritual, everything you do becomes spiritual. In fact, Brother Lawrence received tremendous spiritual insights by serving and doing dishes because to him, doing dishes was spiritual.




Life of Serving is a Quiet Spiritual Journey

A life of servitude is not a loud and glittering journey. It is instead often a humble journey. But, within that seemingly uneventful journey, there is power to bring about tremendous spiritual transformation. This is because serving is not what you do but your inner attitude.

Richard Foster, in his book "Celebration of Discipline", said that "When we set out on a consciously chosen course of action that accents the good of others and is, for the most part, a hidden work, a deep change occurs in our spirits."

There is power in hidden service. Service is much easier when it is recognized, but many times authentic serving is hidden. It shouldn't matter whether your service is recognized or not. If you are recognized and praised, be thankful for it, but don't let that become the motivation for your service.

Using Richard Foster again, he said that "Hidden service does not fear the lights and blare of attention, but it does not seek them either."





Confidence in Serving

A life of serving leads to Calm Confidence. Not a confidence that comes from being somebody, or proving yourself but confidence that comes from the joy of serving others.

Richard Foster said that

"In the discipline of service there is also great liberty. Service enables us to say "NO!" to the world's game of promotion and authority. It abolishes our need (and desire) for a "pecking order."

Instead of being absorbed in our own lives, now we see the opportunities to serve. Once your eyes are open, you will see many things you can do, many ways you can serve. The world will look different because the reality is that there are people who need our physical help. There are people who are sad, people who are alone, people who need love, the list goes on.

Mother Teresa is a great example of this new perspective on the world. She once said that "I see Jesus in the eyes of the hungry children." She saw the Divine Image in the suffering children. Her story shows us that unless we find the hidden image of God in the faces of those who are suffering, we cannot serve people in a meaningful way.



Service is Empowerment

Service is not just handing out our pity. No, true service is empowering the powerless. It is giving voice to the voiceless and giving honor to those who feel worthless. True service is not just doing the work but about **restoring one's dignity**.

Through our actions, our words and our attitudes, we restore one's dignity. That's why self-centred service cannot be true service. Self-centered service only serves our need to be a good person, It does not restore the dignity of the person we serve.

Discussion

1. Try to identify the difference between the true service and self-centred service.
2. How can we move from self-centred service to true service?
3. What does it mean to find the hidden image of God in those whom we are serving?



Matthew 25

3 Parables:

1-13: Parable of 10 Bridesmaids

14-30: Parable of 10 Talents

31-46: Parable of Sheep and Goats



Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

1. What was the difference between the foolish and the wise bridesmaids?
2. Why didn't the foolish bridesmaids prepare the oil?
3. Why didn't the wise bridesmaids share the oil?



Matthew 25:14-30

"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one



with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

1. What was the difference between the servant who received 2 and 5 talents and the servant who received only one talent?
2. Why didn't the person who received one talent do anything with it?
3. What does it tell us about the mentality of the person who had one talent?



Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."



1. What was the difference between sheep and goats?
2. Both sheep and goats thought that what they did or did not do had nothing to do with the king. What does this tell us?
3. The king said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." What does this mean?

Matthew 25 tells us a lot about service. All 3 parables are connected. The oil, lamp, talents; What do they mean?

The Bridesmaids had no Oil to light the lamp because they did not see the need for it. Similarly, the Talent parable represents the absence of desire to do anything, viewing things as insignificant and unimportant. Both the oil and the talents point to serving. The oil kept the light burning, and they had just enough to get by. The talents keep business going, they provide opportunity.

In these 2 parables, the subjects' fates were decided based upon their actions. The 5 foolish bridesmaids could not enter the wedding banquet because they had no oil to light the lamps. On the other hand, the servant who had one talent and didn't do anything was thrown into the outer darkness. The people who did not do anything were sent into eternal punishment.

This ultimately has to do with the whole life of serving, the lifestyle of serving. A life of serving has eternal consequence. When we see the needs around us and do nothing, it tells us who we are. Our service is directly connected with our spirituality. Our spirituality can be found in our daily activities. We have to open our eyes and search for the opportunities to serve that are present in our daily life.

