

## To Serve

5-5-2013

Matthew 23:1-12  
Matthew 28:16-20

*1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' 8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

*16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Sitting in my office last Monday morning, knowing Richard was going to do a presentation this morning on his Nicaragua trip I began to reflect on what type of short message to deliver. I wanted to do something that would mesh with his presentation. It didn't take long to come up with the idea of service to others. Isn't that what a mission trip is all about anyway, service to others. Ok, not a problem, I've got my topic. Now all I have to do is find a scripture to relate to the message. Easy, just Google service or to serve. First site: twelve famous scriptures on service. Second site: eight scriptures on service. Third site: fifteen best scriptures on service. The list went on and on. Obviously I didn't choose all fifteen of those scriptures to read this morning. I did however run across the two that I just read. They resonated with me. In our first scripture, Jesus is talking to his disciples about the Scribes and Pharisees. He tells the disciples you have to listen and obey them because of the offices or positions they hold. However, do not act like them. The scribes and Pharisees know how to talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk. He tells them that everything they are doing is for show. What they are doing is for their own self gratification; they are self-important. They are saying one thing and doing something else. This scripture may have resonated with me because of something my mother used to tell us kids when we weren't doing as we should: Your actions are so loud, I can't hear a word you're saying. We understood what momma was telling us and we would straighten up. I think Jesus was saying the same thing about the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus goes on in the scripture and tells the disciples what not to be called, Rabbi, master, and teacher. He gave his reasons for this and then closes out with these statements: listen to verses eleven and twelve: **The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.** How do you humble yourself? Is that a fair question? Christ is telling not only the disciples, but us as well, to humble ourselves. Just how do we go about doing that? What type of actions and more especially what type of attitudes would we need to exhibit in order to humble ourselves. How about through service to others, especially service to those who are less fortunate than we are. That is part of what mission work is about, humbling ourselves to gladly perform service to others, especially service to those less fortunate than us. The other part of mission work comes from those verses we call the Great Commission: **Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.** Listen to that line one more time, **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.** I think a key word in that statement is **GO**. To me, the main difference between service work and mission work is where you do it. It's not always easy to perform service work. It takes our time, our money and our strength. Service can be done right here in our own town, our own county. Now don't get me wrong,

there are plenty of local people who need our help. But to do mission work, in my humble opinion, you need to leave. You need to go; go from your own town; leave your home; get out of your comfort zone. There is plenty of service work to be done right here. You can work at the homeless shelter or the soup kitchen. You can work with the Angel Cops. You can work with the Salvation Army or the Red Cross. You can prepare meals for The Ronald McDonald House. Each of those organizations are very worthy and worthwhile. But at the end of the day, you get to go home and eat your food at your kitchen table. You sit in your recliner and watch your TV. You go to sleep in your own bed. When you go home every night, it's easy to forget where you just worked. You were only on the edges of it. You want to remember? Do you want the memories of your service work to stay with you a while longer? Then you need to get a little closer to the people. In order to do that, you need to go somewhere else. Get out of the area. Eat the same food from the same tables of the ones you are helping. Sleep where they sleep. Live among them; walk in their shoes. Do all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Now you are doing mission work. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**