

Papapostolou, Jenny

Sacred Smallness

9. The Servant Preacher

This chapter argues that a preacher or minister is, at root, a servant — the Greek 'diakonos.' It calls those in ministry to follow Jesus' example of humility, gentleness, and character, and then applies this to missionary life, where serving a nation (not correcting it) is how you save it.

Key takeaways

- The biblical word 'minister' means servant — lowly, foot-washing, there to give not gain. That should be the picture we have of a preacher.
- Jesus had every right to be served but chose to serve. He led from a low place, sat beside the outcast, and washed His disciples' feet as the pattern for all leaders.
- Gentleness is not weakness but a quiet, enduring strength. In God's Kingdom, humility is greatness.
- Character matters more than gifts. Gifts are given freely; character is what we steward and offer back to God. Paul's list of elder qualifications is all character, not talent.

- Character is who you are when no one sees. Hidden sin destroys ministries; no position is worth your integrity — expose it to the light and repent.
- A missionary's call is to me but not for me — it is for God's glory, requiring surrender of your own picture of your life.
- Serve a nation to save it. Come in humility, not superiority; don't confuse Kingdom culture (non-negotiable, from Scripture) with your own western culture.
- Empower others and step back. Trust the gifts God placed in your team; the work is about His presence, not your presence. The author's orphan home ran better while she was away.
- Revival looks different in every nation — the Kingdom infusing local culture, not erasing it.

Passages worth keeping

"I did not come to be served. I am here to serve."

Jesus' own words (Matt. 20:28) — the model for all ministry.

"Character is doing the right thing when nobody sees you."

The chapter's core definition of the integrity a minister must steward.

How it connects

The chapter ties servant leadership back to Philippians 2 and John 13, then stretches the same humility outward to the mission field, landing on Revelation 7:9 — every tribe and tongue worshiping in its own culture as the picture of true revival.

Scripture referenced

- **Matthew 20:28** -- Jesus came to serve, not be served — the theme verse.
- **Philippians 2:7-8** -- Jesus made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself to death.
- **John 13:2-15** -- Washing the disciples' feet as the example leaders must follow.
- **Romans 5:1-4** -- Suffering produces perseverance, character, then hope.
- **Hebrews 4:13** -- Nothing is hidden from God — the basis for living with integrity.
- **Acts 2:41-42** -- The early church devoted to fellowship and breaking bread — a model for revival through community.