

Text of a message delivered by Aidan Wivell at Windsor Park Baptist Church on Sunday 12th July 2026.
The written text may vary from the spoken/video version due to time and flexibility.



Love Like Jesus, Serve Like Jesus

Mānawatia a Matariki

Today as a church on Matariki weekend, we remember the legacies of service left by our spiritual ancestors in this church, and particularly those who have passed away this year for whom grief is still fresh. At the same time, we celebrate and receive with gratitude the good that God is doing in our midst in this present season and everything we have received from Him. We also look forward to the future together and continuing to build stronger communities by putting our faith into action. One thing we know for sure about the future of this local church is that it exists not only for itself, but to serve our wider community.

So, the theme for our one-off message today is “Love like Jesus, Serve like Jesus” and we’re going to look at three requirements of serving like Jesus. Are you ready?

1. Get On Our Knees

The first point is to serve like Jesus, we need to **get on our knees**. I’ve learnt about this since becoming a parent. Mealtimes are a little tidier now, but in those early days of solids the chances of a spoonful of food making it successfully from the bowl to the mouth was extremely low. Baby feeding guides tell you to “embrace the mess” but as each spoonful hit the floor I was more thinking about “limiting the clean-up”!

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When it was time to clean up I tried to reach the bits I could and spot-clean the mess I could see, but as I realised the scale of the situation, I reluctantly got down on my hands and knees, and although uncomfortable, it made the cleaning a lot easier. I was closer to the floor so I could see spots I would have missed, and I didn't have to keep bending down. While scrubbing the floor under the table, a thought came to me... this is a lot like many aspects of the Christian life, you don't have to get down on your hands and knees, but it helps.

Let's look at perhaps the most famous example of Jesus demonstrating humble service from John 13:3-5:

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Although the text doesn't explicitly say that Jesus got on his knees to wash the disciples' feet, you have to imagine he did. Like I said, some things are just easier on your knees. Ultimately though it's not about body posture, it's about heart posture. Kneeling represents humble service, a willingness to take the low road, and put another first. Mark reveals what we might call the philosophy of leadership, behind Jesus' actions:

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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. (Mark 10:42-45)

And after washing their feet he says: ***Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (John 13:14-15)***

Some of you will be relieved to know we're not setting up a foot washing station, but we all have the opportunity to practice humble service. Today through cleaning, planting, cooking, connecting, or crafting you can play a small, humble, role in serving our wider community. If you really want to get on your knees, I reckon the planting or cleaning are your best bets!

And of course this is not just about a one-off act. As we look to the future this Matariki season, our hope is that this will be a catalyst and we can make humble service a habit, cultivating a lifestyle of service as we continue to build stronger communities by putting our faith into action.

So, our first point is that to serve like Jesus we need to get on our knees. Perhaps literally, but definitely spiritually. Getting on our knees means getting over ourselves and serving with love and humility, just like Jesus.

2. Get Our Hands Dirty

Our second point is to serve like Jesus, we need to **get our hands dirty**. If the story of Jesus washing the disciples' dirty feet wasn't enough there's a beautiful story from the gospel of Matthew that shows Jesus' willingness to get his hands dirty in loving service.

When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." (Matthew 8:1-2)

This time it's the man with leprosy on his knees. The word used here for leprosy could actually have been any of a range of skin diseases at the time. But whatever the precise condition, the outcome was clear – social isolation, ritual impurity, and an untouchable life. Lepers were known as unclean, the epitome of dirty in the ancient world. Untouchable.

Imagine how you felt at the height of the covid pandemic when someone sneezed near you – "Unclean!" ... that is nothing compared to how people distanced themselves from lepers. For them this was not just physical; it meant complete social and spiritual cut-off. So of course no

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one got near them, let alone touched them. This man on his knees had long forgotten the warmth of human contact. So he doesn't ask Jesus to touch him - that would be ridiculous - he asks him to clean him.

Perhaps if he's healed, people will come near him again, perhaps if he's clean, people will touch him. So he says in faith, ***"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."***

Jesus was willing to do even more.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (v3)

The man asked Jesus to clean him so people can touch him.

Jesus flips the order.

Jesus touches him so he can heal him.

Jesus is willing to get his hands dirty as he goes about the Father's mission of grace. He touches the leper, eats with sinners, includes the outsider, and associates with all the wrong people, and of course that includes us. We are all beneficiaries of the grace of God. The grace that comes first. The grace that didn't wait for us to clean ourselves up, but that reached out and touched us, as Paul says, while we were still sinners.

And as Jesus said to the disciples after washing their feet. ***"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:15)***

The question is **are you willing?**

That is what the leper asked Jesus. If you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus was willing, not only to heal from a distance, but to reach out and touch. Jesus now asks us the same question, are we willing?

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Are we willing to get on our knees?

Are we willing to get our hands dirty?

And lastly, are we willing to get out there?

Because our final point is to serve like Jesus, we need to **get out there!**

3. Get Out There

The final characteristic of Jesus' service I'm highlighting today is that it crossed all sorts of societal barriers. Jesus seems to go out of his way to break every preconception about who he had come to serve.

Here's a quick list of Jesus' boundary breaking ministry:

- To Gentiles: Healing a demon-possessed man in the region of Gerasenes (Mark 5:1-20)
- To Children: "Let the little children come to me" (Mark 10:14)
- To Women: Healing the woman of chronic bleeding (Luke 8:43-48)
- To Tax-collectors: Inviting himself to Zacchaeus' house (Luke 19:1-10)
- To Oppressors: Healing the Roman Centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13)

These are just a few examples of Jesus getting beyond the expected norms of ministering to well-educated Jewish men.

As we attempt to model our love and service on Jesus', we have to ask **what social, cultural, or geographic barriers may hold us back?**

Of course it is important to serve one another within the church, the New Testament is full of instructions to do that, we should never stop doing that. But we also need to get out there and serve beyond the walls of church.

I can't claim to have done the math myself but some estimates suggest that **over 90% of Jesus' public ministry took place outside the synagogue setting.** Sit with that for a moment!

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What if 90% of our ministry happened outside the church walls?

At Windsor one way we seek to keep an outward focus is through our **Beyond the Walls** ministries. These are amazing local, regional, and global projects doing incredible kingdom work. I love that our church prioritises supporting initiatives that are beyond these walls. But we can't leave all the work to them! And we can't let them have all the fun! We are all called, not just to support beyond the walls projects, but to get out there ourselves!

Whether that's at our local school, volunteer fire-service, university campus, or local bush project – what are the ways we can get integrated into our local community spaces and build serving relationships?

Today we get to have a taster of that as we head out into our various service areas.

Conclusion

Today is all about loving like Jesus and serving like Him. We've seen that serving like Jesus means getting on our knees, getting our hands dirty, and getting out there. Jesus is still asking us the leper's question – are we willing?

As we conclude I want to read you a quote, from someone who was well acquainted with costly service, Mother Teresa. She once famously said:

*The fruit of silence is prayer,
the fruit of prayer is faith,
the fruit of faith is love,
the fruit of love is service,
the fruit of service is peace.*

Mother Teresa, was by all accounts an extremely strong, determined, and disciplined woman, yet she knew that the source of her love and service did not start with her, but was born from

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silence, prayer, and faith. If the prospect of serving like Jesus feels overwhelming, remember it's not about what we can do in our own strength. We are joining in with what God is doing and giving out from the love we have received from Him.

So what we're going to do now is take a minute in silence where you can simply receive God's love for you and ask him in return to give you a sense of His heart for someone or some area of our community.

Let's be silent together, receive God's love, and His heart for those around us.

Aroha Mai, Aroha Atu

There's a Maori Whakatuakī (proverb) that says: "*Aroha mai, aroha atu*" – which means love received, love returned. Waikato based worship group Te Rautini put these lyrics to song in a beautiful song which we're going to play as we close shortly.

The chorus says:

*If love is found in a people,
Then peace will come to the land
Let love be found in this people
Aroha mai, aroha atu*

So as we go today into serve day, and beyond into lives of service continuing to put our faith into action, may we ever increasingly be people who have received the love of God and who seek to give it in return.

People who are willing to get on our knees, get our hands dirty, and get out there because we know that the God of the universe has done all that and more for us.

Let's go.

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Reflecting on Sunday 5th July 2026: Last Sunday Grant highlighted that God the celebration of God when the lost come home. What have you celebrated this week and what does that tell you about what you value?

The following questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

- Which of the three images of serving like Jesus—getting on our knees, getting our hands dirty, or getting out there—challenged or encouraged you the most? Why?
- The sermon suggested that "getting on our knees" is more about heart posture than body posture. What attitudes or obstacles can prevent us from serving others with humility?
- Jesus touched the leper before healing him, demonstrating that grace comes before people have everything together. How has someone shown you that kind of grace, and how might God be inviting you to extend it to someone else?
- The sermon encouraged us not only to serve within the church but also beyond its walls. Where has God already placed you—a neighbourhood, workplace, sports club, school, or community group—where you can be a witness through loving service?

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we're better together** and **no perfect people are allowed**.

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email info@windsorpark.org.nz and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. In this video interview with Rhema Media, Manaakinui Te Kaha explains the significance of **Matariki** and suggests how Matariki can be celebrated in a way that's both culturally rooted and Christ-honouring:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2y7fxNkuh8>
2. Why not take this opportunity to refamiliarise yourself with our **Beyond the Walls** partners, find inspiration, and perhaps ask God to give you a particular heart for one of these projects.
<https://www.windsorpark.org.nz/beyond-the-walls>
3. We all know service is more than a one-off event. To continue to explore what service might look like as a lifestyle, check out the **Service Practice from Practicing the Way**. You could totally benefit from this as an individual but even more so as a life group!
<https://www.practicingtheway.org/service>