

Week 4.

- Have you recently noticed someone in need, either from personal experience or via the media?
- Read Isaiah 58:6-12
- Who in our community are 'the oppressed....the hungry....the homeless poor...the naked'?
- What does it mean in v12 to be 'restorer of streets to live in'? How might it be relevant to where you live?

The promises in this passage are conditional; they will be fulfilled when God's people obey him.

- Is obedience optional for a Christian?
- Is 'serving others' optional?
- What form might that take for you?
- Have you been surprised / blessed as a consequence of obeying God in an act of service?
- Charles Swindoll in his book, 'Improving Your Serve' writes that serving others requires - transparent humanity, genuine humility & absolute honesty. Do you agree?
- Serving God & others demands personal involvement & Christlike unselfishness. What other personal costs or consequences might there be (both positive and negative)?
- Spend a few moments in prayer together. You might like to read the words of the song overleaf to focus on.



A Personal Rule of Life

Serving in God's World

Below is a tongue in cheek version of the Beatitudes written to challenge us to consider others rather than ourselves.

'Happy are the "pushers": for they get on in the world.

Happy are the hard-boiled: for they never let life hurt them.

Happy are they who complain: for they get their own way in the end.

Happy are the blasé: for they never worry over their sins.

Happy are the slave drivers: for they get results.
Happy are the knowledgeable men of the world: for they know their way around.

Happy are the troublemakers: for they make people take notice of them'

[J. B. Phillips, When God Was Man (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 26-27]

Recommended Reading :

Improving Your Serve : Charles R Swindoll :
Thomas Nelson : 1981

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'The Summons'

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

Iona Community John Bell and Graham Maule.