**The Son of Man Came to Serve, not be served.**

**Humility at its core**

In the run up to the Coronation, The Dean of Westminster, David Hoyle is quoted as saying that “the stress and accent of this service has shifted us slightly from obedience to the monarch to the monarch’s commitment to service and faithfulness” and certainly in the course of the service yesterday, that is something that became very apparent. For me, there was something deeply humbling, if not unsettling, in watching the King, a man who we have known all our lives, in lots of very different situations and outfits, stripping down to almost his underwear, in the course of the Coronation ritual and his anointing.

[It was indeed an odd assortment of robes that adorned the King and an even odder collection of objects brought to him, each with its own Medieval significance even if largely recreated after the Restoration of the Monarch in 1660, Oliver Cromwell having melted down the originals! Less noticed was the taking back of these objects, ie when they were “redeemed”. Some were touched only briefly, the St Edward crown will never be worn by the King again, used only on the occasion of the Crowning of the Monarch and then returned to the Tower along with the robes that he wore. ]

Today, the parameters of our monarchy are a three-way-covenant between God, monarch and the people in which the monarch rules by consent answerable to the people as much as to God. Nowhere is it specifically articulated that kingship is a ministry of public service and yet that “monarch-as-servant” increasingly became an index theme of the late Queen’s reign and has been taken up by the King. Serving others is a feature of Christian discipleship. Being served and serving creates a dynamic of mutuality or affinity and respect which enriches and sustains the organisation of human society and the Coronation service put these two qualities together.

Also of note is the largely silent, passive role the King played in the whole service. Silent throughout the vesting, crowning and enthronement. Becoming King is an accident of birth and the Coronation is something that happens to him as part of that. The wording of the oaths and the inserted prayer give voice to his response: a commitment to serving his people.

This emphasise on serving rather than being served draws strong parallels with that of Christ who provides the model, the blueprint of humble leadership that our King has clearly pledged to follow.

Amen

So perhaps we should briefly look at those qualities of a Servant Leader, our servant KIng.

Leadership wasn’t a new concept; when Jesus came along, but he flipped the narrative of leadership on its head. People didn't expect that — at all. In Matthew 20:25-28 (NLT), this is what Jesus said about leadership:

But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

In Christ, the goal of our leadership is not to grab power but to serve.

We have six different qualities to keep in mind if you want to become a servant leader:

**1. Integrity**

*To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. — Proverbs 21:3 (ESV)*

As a servant leader, perhaps the most important quality is integrity. It is the foundation on which all other leadership qualities are built. Proverbs 21:3 is a reminder that Jesus calls us to walk in the ways of righteousness and justice — our actions should reflect our faith.

If we are true servant leaders, we can’t cheat, lie and manipulate our way to the top. We are called to do something much different and entirely countercultural — to be honest.

Jesus tells us to humble ourselves and live lives with integrity.

The world tells us to do whatever it takes to achieve success and acclaim. Jesus tells us to humble ourselves and live lives with integrity – with honesty and good character. Yes, we will stumble from time to time and fall short but that is because are human. But in acknowledging our wrongdoings and asking God’s guidance we can get up and try again.

Living life with integrity, especially in the face of challenges and temptations, is an incredible way to witness to those who look up to us.

**2. Humility**

*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. — Colossians 3:12 (NLT)*

One of the most difficult things to admit to ourselves and others is that we don’t know it all.

With the internet at the tip of our fingers, it can be very easy to convince ourselves we’re an expert on a subject. It can be so easy to isolate ourselves in a bubble of self-knowledge and self-assurance, kicking out any and every opinion that doesn’t align with what we want.

If we’re not careful, we can become prideful. It’s easy to become addicted to the power and authority attached with being a leader.

**A servant leader is someone who has built in space to learn and grow from the experiences and opinions of others.**

In Christian servant leadership, we have to be willing to learn from and listen to those we lead, because we know that they have value and worth. The truth is that they might actually have better ideas than we do or a perspective we don’t.

A servant leader is someone who has built in space to learn and grow from the experiences and opinions of others.

**3. Flexibility**

*I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. — Philippians 4:12‑13 (NLT)*

Servant leaders practice flexibility — they’re willing to adapt to their situations and surroundings. They recognize that life can throw them into unexpected situations or challenges.

But instead of allowing those unexpected events to cause anger, confusion or panic, servant leaders recognize that God is present in every circumstance. They have the willingness to practice being flexible and actually invite change!

**4. Resilience**

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. — Hebrews 12:1‑2 (ESV)*

Set in the context of running, the first two verses of Hebrews 12 define a life of resilience. It’s a quality that comes from building up spiritual endurance to the point where you’re actually thriving in challenging situations.

If you’ve ever trained for a race or played a sport, you know that endurance doesn’t just happen overnight. Initially, you have to trick your body into liking long distances! You run short distances first and then build up to longer ones. You get blisters and you take water breaks, but eventually you can run farther and longer.

Life will always have challenges: fights we cannot win, mountains we just can’t climb, and dark valleys with no visible way out.

**Resilience in the Christian life can only happen when we look to Jesus.**

But in the midst of life’s challenges, God’s constant presence is our source of comfort. He doesn’t always fix our circumstance, and sometimes the solution isn’t on our timetable, but he will always help us get through it — with love, strength, patience and more.

Resilience in the Christian life can only happen when we look to Jesus. If we rely on ourselves and our own strength, we’ll fail every time — we’ll faceplant in the middle of our race and quit.

Servant leaders recognize that struggles are real and life is difficult, but God is in control. Resilience isn’t an absence of fear, challenges or momentary failures. Resilience is the ability to bounce back, to push through and to press on based on the truth that God has enabled us to persevere because he is our ultimate source of strength.

**5. Stewardship**

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. — 1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)*

God’s given so many different spiritual gifts to his people. Could you imagine what life would be like if everyone thought, looked and acted the same? The world would be so dull!

**So while being good stewards of our finances is definitely something God wants us to do, that’s not the only thing we can steward!**

When you hear the word “stewardship,” your mind probably goes straight to money. One definition of the word is “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.”

So while being good stewards of our finances is definitely something God wants us to do, that’s not the only thing we can steward! It’s just as important to be good stewards of the people God has placed in our lives.

A servant leader sees people as valuable to God and stewards their time and talents well. This kind of leader calls out what is good and true about the people they lead, giving them instruction and encouragement in how to serve God well. A servant leader uses their time for God’s glory, not their own.

**6. Empathy**

*Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. — Romans 12:15 (NLT)*

Think about what it meant for you to have a person truly empathize with you during your struggles, someone willing to hold your hand in those dark moments.

Empathy for a servant leader is simply being able to visualize yourself in someone else's position. It helps you to understand what someone is feeling.

Empathy is a key aspect of leadership. It’s easy to get hyper-focused on tasks and the work that we do. Work is important and accomplishing goals is too! But if we’re not careful, we can begin to see people as problems to be solved instead of human beings to be loved.

**A servant leader can see people through the eyes of Jesus. That’s the kind of leader that others follow!**

When we’re able to take time out of our day to empathize with those around us and put ourselves in their shoes, we become more like Jesus. Whenever Jesus encountered someone who was hurting or in need of encouragement, he looked at them and had compassion for them. Then he acted.

A servant leader can see people through the eyes of Jesus. That’s the kind of leader that others follow!

Leadership might seem intimidating. The King humbling himself before God and before us as our servant King evoked the question from me as to whether I am worthy of that pledge.

And so finally let us say together the prayer at the top of our newssheet:

Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, bless our Sovereign Lord, King Charles, and all who are in authority under him; that they may order all things in wisdom and equity, righteousness and peace, to the honour of your name, and the good of your Church and people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.