

“Selfless”  
John 1

2/14/10

9 & 10:45 am

Series: “*Beyond Compare*”

## **INTRODUCTION**

Some of you have viewed the video series, “*In the Dust of the Rabbi.*”

The series title is based on an ancient Jewish proverb, “*Follow a Rabbi, drink in his words, and be covered with the dust of his feet.*”

For the next few weeks we want to walk very closely behind Jesus, so that we are covered with the dust of His character; key qualities that characterized Jesus Himself so that we can be covered not only with His dust, but inspired to follow hard after God’s ultimate plan for our lives, that we become more like Jesus.

Today we’re going to focus on the characteristic of being “selfless.”

**OPEN** to John 1 (**PAGE** 1645)

**READ** John 1:1-5, 10-14

To grasp the significance of the selflessness of Jesus, let’s look more closely at the portrait the Holy Spirit has painted in this chapter.

### **I. Jesus is Selfless** (John 1:1-5, 10-14)

*First, let’s examine Who Jesus is:*

John 1:1 “**In the beginning was the Word,**

Jesus is *eternal*

**and the Word was with God,**

Jesus is in a *relationship* with God

**and the Word was God.**

Jesus is *Divine*; He is God

**2 He was with God in the beginning.**

Jesus has *existed in a relationship with God from eternity past. He was not created by God; He has always been, just like God the Father.*

**3 Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.**

Jesus is the One through Whom God created the world.

**4 In Him was life,**

In Jesus is *indestructible life, i.e., eternal life; He is the One Who gives us a relationship with God. (John 17:3)*

**and that life was the light of men.**

Through Jesus' life comes light; the ability to see truth, purity, selflessness; the presence of God Himself.

**5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**

Jesus shines the light of selflessness; those consumed with selfishness cannot understand selflessness.

**\*\*10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.**

The people of the world did not and still do not recognize their Creator.

**11 He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.**

Jesus came to the Jewish people, but was rejected by them.

**12 Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God -**

**13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.**

Jesus holds salvation in His hands; He brings us into the family of God through faith, through receiving Him.

14 The Word **became flesh** and **made His dwelling among us**.

Jesus, Who has always existed in Spirit, became a human being when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit within Mary, and nine months later was born. ***“He pitched His tent among us.”***

**We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Jesus came full of **grace**, the undeserved favor of God; and **truth**, the purity of absolute truth, no lie or deception or error of untruth is present in Him to even the smallest degree.

A core theme that emerges from this passage, and throughout the Gospels is that **Jesus** is **selfless**. He is not focused on Himself, nor does He act selfishly.

*Let's take the truths we have just read, and look at how they reveal the selflessness of Jesus:*

Being God from the very beginning, Jesus becomes human.

He doesn't become human to fulfill a dream He has always had of how cool it would be to become human.

I can still remember, as a child, watching otters at the Phoenix Zoo. They were playful and happy, sliding through water troughs, zipping through pools, holding their breath for what seemed like forever. They seemed so happy and carefree and cool. I as I watched them, I dreamed of what it would be like to become an otter.

We played this game with our children when they were little. We'd sit around the dinner table and, one at a time, share what kind of animal we'd like to be, if we could.

Jesus wasn't sitting in Heaven, looking at how happy and carefree we were, wishing He could become human one day and lay aside the burdens of being God!

Jesus became a human being so that He could restore people's relationship with God. That is noble. That is **selfless**.

It's difficult enough much of the time just to be human but to experience limits when You've been limitless;

to experience tiredness, hunger and weakness when You have known nothing but exercising unlimited power;

to experience temptation, the allure and pull of sin when you have dwelt in a place of absolute purity;

to be tempted by the devil when You are his Lord

To submit to that experience to rescue others ... that is selfless.

Jesus came to rescue God's people from the darkness of sin and separation from God. He threw the rope of rescue to them, the ones who were expecting Messiah to come, who were praying for their Messiah to come. He threw them the rope to pull them out of darkness and into the light.

They grabbed it but then they threw it back at Him and said they didn't know Him, and even called Him a fraud and a partner with the devil. Jesus continued to reach out to them. He healed their sick and fed their hungry, and preached the good news of how to leave the darkness and enter a relationship with God.

*That's selfless.*

He always told the truth and yet was called a liar by those who were the spiritual leaders of the people.

He only did what the Father told Him to do but was accused of being self-willed and a sinner and a partner with the devil himself.

Still He persisted. He spoke the truth in love.

*That's selfless.*

Jesus said, "***I only say what I hear the Father say and I only do what the Father tells me to do.***" (John 12:49-50, 14:10)

Selfless.

When facing a certain and excruciating death by crucifixion, He told Peter, who tried to rescue Him,

**“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than 12 legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matthew 26:53-54)**

Selfless.

*This may make you wonder, where does living a selfless life lead? Is this the kind of dust I want to be covered with?*

## **II. Selflessness Leads to Eternal Rewards** (Philippians 2:6-11, Matthew 16:24-27)

**TURN** to Philippians 2:6 (**PAGE** 1827)

**READ** Philippians 2:6-11

Philippians 2:6-11 **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,**

**7 but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**

**8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!**

**9 Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name,**

**10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the earth,**

**11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

Selflessness leads to amazing rewards ... not just for Jesus but for us.

Matthew 16:24-27 (**PAGE** 1524)

**“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself [*selfless*] and take up his cross [*selfless*] and follow Me [*selfless*].**

**25 For whoever wants to save his life [*selfish*] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me [*selfless*] will find it [*reward*].**

**26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?**

**27 For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father’s glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what he has done.”**

Selfless in action as well as attitude. (Mt. 6: prayer, fasting, giving)

## **ILLUSTRATION**

**Eugenio Monti** was an Italian bobsledder in the 1950s and 60s and was considered a legend of the sport, winning 10 World Championship medals and six Olympic medals. In 1964 his finest moment came when participating in the two-man bobsleigh at the Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria.

He became aware that the British team of Tony Nash and Richard Dixon had broken a bolt on their sled and as a result would be unable to compete. Monti stepped in and lent the Brits a bolt from his sled.

Because of his selflessness, the British team went on to win the gold medal, while Monti and his partner won bronze.

Not only was he a man of great sportsmanship in the heat of battle, he was also very gracious in defeat. As he was berated by the Italian press for his actions, he simply said, “Nash didn’t win because I gave him the bolt. He won because he had the fastest run.”

### **III. How Can I Practice Being *Selfless*?**

- When my free time is interrupted by someone in need and I not only help, but help with a kind attitude.

- When I obey God not just for the blessings that might come in this life, but because that is the proper response to an Almighty God.

Obedience says that we are the servants, He is the Master. Obedience leads us to blessing – God Himself – the greatest blessing of all.

- When I pray for people who cannot do anything for me or benefit me in any way.

- When I give to others, knowing I probably won’t receive anything in return (Jesus: invite people who cannot do anything for you, people for whom you can do something).

- When I am sacrificial, humble, God-centered, other-centered.

- When I lay aside “my right to myself.”

Life isn't all about me. It's about God. It's not about what I want. It's about what He wants. I am here for Him.

“God is not here to do my bidding; I am here to do His.”

- When deep disappointment and hardship strikes, I don't blame God or walk out on Him.

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus' selflessness was ultimately displayed on the cross.

The cross was God's way of saying to us, “*Come near to Me.*”

God said, “*Come near to Me*” to Adam and Eve, but they chose sin.

God said, “*Come near to Me*” to the people of Israel, but they sent Moses.

God says “*Come near to Me*” to you and me. What will we say today. What will we say tomorrow?

Let's draw near and follow, and be covered with the dust of selflessness this week!

*“Holy Spirit, please continue to transform me so that I am more and more like Jesus. Please empower me as I choose to be selfless this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.”*