

Servant QUARTERS

Valleys High, Mountains Low

Though sung beautifully and heard annually in Handel's "Messiah," this powerful Scripture from Isaiah 40:3-4 remains obscure in our memory and understanding:

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain."

Simply put, verse four informs us that everything exalted (by culture or self) will be humbled and everything humble (also by culture or self) will be exalted. At some point on the physical plane and already on the spiritual plane, everything and everyone will be brought to the same level. Keep in mind the following positions:

1. God loves everyone.
2. If he loves everyone, it means he loves more poor people than anyone else.
3. The Gospels tell us that the poor people heard him gladly.
4. The elite of the world rule the world and represent less than five percent of the world. They are the mountains.
5. The common people are the valleys.

Nothing in our nature or culture agrees with that scripture or interpretation. Men in business, politics, entertainment and, yes, even in the church seek status or mastery over others. If nothing else, this passage gives me pause.

So, what is the level ground that is our ultimate future? Amazingly, it is the same level ground as from the beginning—God loves people!

The offer and broadness of mercy so permeates the Old Testament, that to deny the availability of God's mercy to the masses seems ridiculous. So, if we can't deny mercy, what can we do with it? We modify mercy. Tampering with the Law through the centuries, rabbis pushed people into spiritual prisons that easily could have hung signs over the cells stating, "Judgment accepted, Mercy banned."

The sad truth hovering over all of this? Simple! No one could keep the law, much less the additional rules the rabbis had developed. This prompted Jesus to complain that they taught the rules of men as if they were the laws of God. Pharisees never complimented Jesus except by accident. All they did was to criticize Jesus and oppose him and seek to kill him. At a moment of pharisaical judgmentalism, Jesus reminds us that God desires mercy rather than sacrifice.

However, the commandment for us that preceded the prophecy about valleys and mountains describes the nature of mercy: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."

Our assumption is that Jesus needed such a highway, but I see it differently. Straight and level highways describes the condition Jesus wants for his people. Straight so that no one need ever

get confused or lost. Level so that even the weakest feet need not stumble. What a beautiful view of mercy. The weary, the burdened, the child will find the highway inviting and restful.

Here is my concern: With too many rules and expectations and performance demands, I bent the highway and filled it with pot holes and bumps. I repent of that and wish only to repair the places I created that cause tender feet to falter. I want to study mercy. When I pray "Thy will be done," I want that will to spread his mercy to a world that God loves but who doesn't know him or of his mercy. It's easiest when the ground is level.

My next concern? Am I a mountain, hill or valley?

-Gayle Erwin

Servant Quarters, Vol. 29, #2
Available on request by email
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Very Important Pages

The next issue of *Servant Quarters* marks 30 years that we have been sending it free of charge. During this time, we kept all deliverable names on the list, even paying for hundreds of returns with new addresses, never knowing for sure whether your desire for it to continue coming was active.

Here is what we ask of you as we approach year 30

Mail

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please assist our stewardship by removing your name from the list. Simply call 1-888-321-0077, or email gayle@servant.org or mail the back page of this newsletter to PO Box 219, Cathedral City, CA 92235.

Email

Email is the way to go. Email us with your request, or go to our website and follow instructions. You get all the same material but in simpler form so you can copy or forward. We are working on sending it in the same format as the mailed edition.

We will send two issues by mail in 2010 but will send bonus issues to the email list.

Website

At www.servant.org, you can always read the latest issue and go all the way back to 1995.

With this issue we will begin posting on our website a formatted replica of the actual mailed newsletter.

ISRAEL

My second final Israel tour (smile) will be right after Thanksgiving in 2010. Details will appear on my website as exact times, itineraries and costs are calculated. Call us or email us to receive updates quickly.

Home Going

You may remember the story I tell that includes God giving me a step-dad named Raymond, whom I considered a symbol of reconciliation in my life. On October 19, 2009, quietly in his sleep and at home in Pascagoula, Mississippi, he completed his journey at age 95.

Bumper Stickers and Prints

In addition to the popular "Others" sticker (more than 15,000 distributed) we now have the following: **Grace, Mercy, Faith, Hope, Love**. We will gladly send you one of each free of charge. If you want a lot of them, just inquire about the costs at 1-888-321-0077.

At this Christmas...

We, at Servant Quarters, earnestly pray that your welfare in these difficult times will be miraculous and that your joy will be unbounded. We are honored by your friendship.

Gospel for Asia

Many of you know that for decades I have been on the board of Gospel for Asia (GFA), led by K. P. Yohannan. I cannot speak highly enough of their ministry, especially to the Dalits, the 300 million untouchables at the bottom of the Hindu ladder. The following description by Kris Davis, a staff member, expresses other areas of their work.

GFA native missionaries are responding to the massive flooding in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, even though many have lost their own homes and churches in the cyclone-produced flooding. Having missionaries already on the field allows us to go in quickly and stay longer to bring aid and God's hope through Jesus. Other areas where our "Compassion Services" teams are continuing to help are West Bengal from flooding in May, Orissa from massive Christian persecution last August, in Sri Lankan relief camps

for people displaced from their civil war, in Myanmar from Cyclone Nargis, and in many other places.

As we hear news of earthquakes, flooding, wars, terrorist attacks, famine and other calamities, our hearts hurt for those who suffer, and we look a little more expectantly for our Lord's return.

Aaron Ironside is a radio personality in New Zealand who recently visited some of GFA's ministry in Asia. He was blogging during this trip and I was struck by this comment from him, posted mid-trip.

"Despite my delusions of humility, I am confronted by a seemingly endless line of believers who are much more advanced on the road to a self-less life than I. There is no talk of what Jesus can do for me, my dreams, my destiny, nothing. None of these people talk about what God can do for them. They talk about the poor and the lost, about prayer and being faithful. Don't they realize that Jesus is waiting to unleash an unlimited life, of wealth, blessing and influence? Apparently they didn't get the memo, it's almost as if Jesus is enough."

LETTERS

Years ago I became acquainted with your ministry through the work of the Christian Action Council/CareNet. In fact I was able to introduce you a couple of times when you spoke at the conferences. It was wonderful for me to revisit your website recently and also discover the MP3 downloads. Thanks so much!

I am teaching a course on Biblical Leadership and I certainly gravitated to some of your thoughts years ago. In fact, next week is the start of servant leadership teaching and I would like to have students listen to *The Jesus Style of Leadership* as a discussion starter.

I just wanted to thank you for the years of playing the same strings on your guitar and even after all this time, I am remembering the notes and songs!
Charles

My name is Michael Daly and I live in Bexhill on Sea in East Sussex, UK. I (try to) write a blog <http://scjesus.co.uk/b2evolution> and wonder if I may quote some of your writing? My eldest son and I have found your books and videos to be full of grace and truth. Very much Jesus' style! I am just reading your **Handbook for Servants** which is both chal-

lenging and encouraging. I pray that you will continue to listen attentively to the Lord and follow His lead.

Michael

I am pulling together a study on humility and you have been my mentor on being others-centered (a core value of humility, I believe). Which of your resources (I have almost all of them) is the best reference I may use to glean the others-centered discussion?

Michael W. Pelphrey

*The most powerful item in my resources is the book, **The Jesus Style**, especially the newest revision which we think powerfully improves it and makes further comment about being others centered. I think my DVDs of *Jesus the Great Hunter* or *Humanity at Poolside* or *Jesus vs. the Pharisees* present the concept from varying angles.*

An excerpt from a report by a Greek Orthodox Priest

A friend of mine recently responded to someone's idea to "list at least five books that have influenced your reading of the Bible, whether scholarly, patristic, devotional, or otherwise." Well, it sounded like a good idea to me, so I have put together the following list:

1) **The Jesus Style**, by Gayle Erwin (Cathedral City, CA: Yahshua Publishing, 1983). Gayle Erwin was a former pastor of my parents and an old family friend, whom I grew up thinking of as a warm, playful uncle. I vividly recall my father discussing and recommending this book to various people when I was a child, and I also remember Erwin himself giving talks based on it, although I was so young I didn't pay much attention!

Well, I finally read the book when I was about 13, and it had a profound effect. It is very simply written, not at all scholarly, and does nothing more than elucidate Christ's example of humble service to others. Previously I suppose I had had some vague moralistic idea about how we Christians were supposed to be "good" or something, but I had almost no understanding of the radical nature and implications of what it meant to be a "servant of all," to love others "as oneself," etc. It was my first glimpse of the kenotic Christ, and I would never forget it. It certainly remained something to which I was highly attuned in the Scriptures.

I should add that Erwin is an Evangelical of the non-denominational variety, though I believe he grew up in the Assemblies of God. Although it's been years since I last read **The Jesus Style**, I can't recall anything I would call un-Or-

thodox. There is a casual tone and frequent humor throughout that may be a bit jarring to many Orthodox readers, but I think the ideas are pretty solid.

Aaron

I bought your CD on *Communion* and was blessed to get the message Part 1 of *The Lord's Prayer* (guessing maybe God wanted me to hear something different). It really has been a blessing to me. It caused me to visit your web site and find not only the "communion" message, but a number of others I look forward to listening to. The message you gave on *Communion* is a completely different and eye-opening view from how I have ever looked at it before. I will be meditating on it and seeking the Lord's transformation of my heart toward the body of believers.

Christen Hardee

Whoops! We do make mistakes—if you get a defective product from us, call us and we will immediately replace it.

Please know that I don't have you on a pedestal. I really don't involve myself in spiritual hero worship except for when it comes to Christ. Human hero worship does tend to get people off track. However, I am grateful for the simplicity with which you share the truth

of the gospel. It is so clear and easy to understand.

For years now, I have been in a state of unrest trying to make what I have been taught line up with what I read in the Word. The clarity of your message has given me the confidence I needed to dig in deeper and allow the Holy Spirit to do what he came to earth to do. That is why I feel so strongly about you and your efforts for the kingdom. Lord knows it is not because of your good looks.

God has been dealing with me for some time to simplify my life. Things have gotten extremely complicated and I don't need that. If you ever want to do another bumper sticker, perhaps the word "Simplify" would be in order. I think that is what He is calling us all to at this time in history.

A Friend

After 30 years, your "style" of presentation is still enlightening and enjoyable. I can hear you say in my spirit, "It must be Jesus, huh." Since you introduced me to the concept of a personal savior I have spent years trying to reach your level of living a simple life and sharing the gospel.

I still struggle with the Sabbath concept as being set aside as a "Holy" day of the week by religious organizations.

Gary

The Sabbath (which means "rest" and was made for man, as Jesus put it) changed forever at the coming of Jesus. He invited us to come to him and he would give us rest. Sabbath as a day is now replaced with Sabbath as a person-Jesus. If you want to declare a designated day of physical rest, choose any that you want, but in the meantime, walk in perpetual Sabbath. Don't let anyone lay a trip on you.

Even though my heart sometimes seems heavy, I am filled with happiness knowing that "others" are among me and those around me to bring strength to the weak with the word. Ever since hearing your exciting and humorous presentation of the word, I have looked at the word in a new way that makes more sense than I have given it credit for my 42 years in his presence. For all my life I have hidden my feelings behind a curtain, trying to always project strength, not letting "others" see my need. Today I embrace the help from friends, and comfort upon the true strength in the word, and I credit Brett Meador and you, Gayle Erwin, for providing the tools to me at a time when I really needed to change directions in my life!

Stephen

My car has become a classroom. I listen to your teachings almost everyday on my way to work and on my way back home. From your teachings, I know I am loved, forgiven, blessed, and filled with the Holy Spirit of God whether I feel it or not. I know that I can't and don't have to earn these promises and blessings and as you would say, "I like that." I get so excited about the revelation of the Word of God when I listen to your teachings, I can't wait to share it. Thank you for sharing your gift with us, Gayle. By the way, I have a son named Marion. He is quite a man!

Carol Vereen

Your ministry to my family and me is still bearing fruit even into a third generation now. Thank you for planting the seed of God's mercy so deeply in my heart, I am eternally grateful. God bless you with good health and long life, we still need to be reminded that His grace is the message of the gospel.

Steve Carr

Just a short note to say "Thank you" for your teaching at our camp in Island Lake, (Lethbridge) Alberta. Learned things that changed my view on things that have bothered my heart for years. Shared with you my rejection issues and that I have a kind heart, often in translation means "abuse me." You addressed this matter so

effectively and simply. I do not have to change my "servant heart"—just be wise, know who is manipulating me (I always figure that out usually when it is too late. Smile.) However, you taught that I can say, "no" and when questioned simply say, "that is my choice." How simple and how true! These simple tools will be used well.

A Friend

As the year has been drawing closer to the end of my time as a student here at Gospel for Asia, I have been asking myself, "Who (here in the ministry) has impacted me the most this year?" Everyone at GFA is so normal though, so I couldn't put my finger on any individual person. Each person portrays different wonderful characteristics of Jesus, each of which have impacted my life. I finally realized that when you put all of these characteristics together, you have Jesus! He has been here in such a real way that I would think there should be an extra body walking around this building. This has given me great comfort as I transition to go to college again next year. I know this Jesus, the same portrayed in **The Jesus Style**, will lead the way and be with me wherever I go.

I am so glad I can see this reality. This reality has only been opened because of the unique opportunity I had to study through your book. This reality of Jesus is

true for all of us. May you know the Lord Jesus more fully and intimately all the rest of your days.

Carly McClung

I can think of no higher compliment than telling someone that they brought you closer to Jesus Christ. And that is what you did, so thank you and praise the Lord!

Shawn Psarris

The Lord put Romans 8:29 on my heart, all about the process of being conformed into the likeness of His son. After reading your book, **The Jesus Style**, not only did I stand amazed, but also so excited to know that these are the characteristics He is working in my life.

Tonight, we were graduated from the School of Discipleship program (GFA). Our class discussed what we could possibly do to “shine” before the staff, and the Lord brought to mind what you shared with just our class after sharing with the staff. You brought up washing one another’s feet. You explained today’s understanding of that, but we felt that the Lord wanted to use this time for Himself, so we washed our leader’s feet. It was really powerful, just like serving is.

Danny Potter

It has been years since I have attended a church on a regular basis and in 2007 my wife was diag-

nosed with brain cancer. She dropped from 130 pounds down to 86, then I was handed a CD by this teacher named Gayle Erwin. Let me tell you I have had to make copies of that CD because it plays in my truck every day and every time my truck is started. I sometimes find myself going out to the truck to listen. I have it on my computer. During this very trying time your teachings have got me through and without you knowing your prayers have helped even my wife. She is back up to 140 and doing much better. You will always be a true brother in my life here and beyond.

Mark

I am a hospice CNA and have been blessed to care for a wonderful elderly woman whose sister is also caring for her. She has Alzheimer’s. They are both in their 80s and are very, very religiously Catholic. They have all the statues, pictures, rosaries and incense in all their rooms. They practice faithfully in their worship of these things. They are wonderful, kind women who do love the Lord. It makes me sad when I see how hard people think they have to work to get God to love them. If they only knew....

Years ago, I bought the tapes from Billy Graham’s Cove of Gayle telling the simple story of the Gospel through **The Jesus Style**. I have read the book a few

times and always end up giving it away to someone. It changed my life and I now have a beautiful relationship with my Jesus who has loved me just the way I am.

Anyway, I am writing to tell you how the sister saw your bumper sticker on my car. (I got it at the pastors conference in Tucson.) The Lord used it to open a door for me to tell her a little bit about you and your ministry—how you love the Lord and tell others about Jesus. She wanted a bumper sticker and how kind of you to send one free. I've never been good at explaining the Gospel to others. I fumble my words a lot. I smile when I think a simple bumper sticker could open a door to tell someone about Jesus—the blessed, relentless love of Jesus!

Ellen

I watched your DVD set on *Home Fellowships* over the weekend. I was truly blessed. Home Fellowships are a passion of mine and I have been involved in them for many years, and am now the overseer for our groups at our fellowship. My question is this, how do I go about spreading the passion for small groups in such a way as to raise up more people with shepherd hearts to start more groups?

We are a church of around 1000 people and only have 10 groups. My desire is to see everyone have an opportunity to be blessed by being part of one, and I realize 40 %

is all I can hope for, but that would take around 30 groups. Help?

Matt

The best way to grow small groups is organically. By that, I mean to start one composed of people from different areas, you be the leader and show how it is done. Let the people profit from the benefits and then after about three to six months, tell them to go out and start one in their area now that they know how. I did this while at a church for a year as an assistant and started two groups that I led. One was composed of people I had in counseling. The other was composed of leaders and their wives. Both were classical successes, but were the only two in existence when I left after one year. Out of them, within another year, 23 groups had formed.

Instead of going to a summer camp this year, we felt the Lord leading to go to an orphanage in Mexico for a week. We are teaming up with a few youth groups. It will be half the cost of the normal youth camp, and will teach the youth that this Christian walk is about OTHERS. You inspired us to name it Camp OTHERS. It won't be a camp of the usual entertainment. It will be a camp of serving others. Oh Yeah, the kid's are excited about the idea; none have complained.

Gary Malkus, Jr

**For teaching
resources, check our
web site**

www.servant.org

or call us at

1-888-321-0077.

**Our books and video
sets make Christmas
gifts that live on and
on.**

**Funny laws that
guide us**

Law of Mechanical Repair

After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.

Law of Gravity

Any tool, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.

Law of Probability

The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

Law of Random Numbers

If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal and someone always answers.

Law of the Alibi

If you tell the boss you were late for work because you had a flat tire, the very next morning you will have a flat tire.

Variation Law

If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now (works every time).

Law of the Bath

When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone rings.

Law of the Result

When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.

Law of Biomechanics

The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

Law of the Theater

At any event, the people whose seats are furthest from the aisle arrive last.

The Starbucks Law

As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

Murphy's Law of Lockers

If there are only two people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers.

Law of Physical Surfaces

The chances of an open-faced jelly sandwich landing face down on a floor covering are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet/rug.

Law of Logical Argument

Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about.

Brown's Law of Physical Appearance

If the shoe fits, it's ugly.

Oliver's Law of Public Speaking

A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Wilson's Law of Commercial

Marketing Strategy

As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it, or improve it.