

Serving in the Valley (Finding God in Silicon Valley Part 3)

Scripture used: Psalms 23:4-5 (NKJV)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

Pastor Hurmon continued the series about finding God in the Silicon Valley. The Silicon Valley is like the valley of the shadow of death in some ways, but we have to let God guide us along the right path, do the heavy lifting for us, and take pressure off us. We can all identify with walking through the valley as the psalmist does - and regardless of our background, education, or socio-economic status, God brought us here for a purpose. We achieve greatness in Silicon Valley, not through our own personal accomplishments or trophies, but through our willingness to serve God and others. In this way, we follow Jesus' own example of greatness through service.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **The greatest dangers in Silicon Valley are sometimes hidden in its greatest blessings.** Some of the big employers here (Google, Facebook) have shuttle buses and amusement park-like corporate campuses with employee perks for everything: laundry to yoga; pet grooming to automotive oil changes; financial planning to concierge medicine. Employees never have to leave the workplace as all these services are free and available on-demand at all times. Some employees have no life outside of work; they stay in their bubble, never meet anyone different, and neglect family and friends. Their lives seem so full, and yet can be so hollow. Pastor Hurmon used the example of Jaida Im, founder (in 2009) of Freedom House in San Francisco, which fights modern-day sexual slavery "in our backyard." When Jaida's career in the corporate world took off, she started experiencing terrible migraines. The pain was debilitating and she had to take an indefinite leave from work. Her suffering led to doubt, depression, and ultimately suicidal thoughts. After she was miraculously healed by prayer, she had a vision & heard a call to learn, get involved, and become an activist. It was through encountering great pain in Silicon Valley that God led her to great purpose.
- 2) **As the Valley belongs to God, the Valley's produce comes from God.** This valley was blessed with natural and agricultural resources (the ocean, timber, fruit trees, orchards...). It had mining resources (Almaden's quicksilver). It's long been at the center of technology innovation. As we move around our daily lives, we can sense that the work of our hands are a part of God's desire for us to be fruitful, to be a part of the produce of Silicon Valley. No matter what our daily work involves (including those who are students, retired, or caring for others at home), we can experience God's presence in our lives as we work.
- 3) **We must be servants in order to be great (Mark 10:43-44).** Financial success and vocational achievement as chief paradigms will fail us. We have to model service to God and others for our children, friends, and co-workers. In John 13:4-5, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. Dr King said that service is within reach when your heart is full of grace and your soul is full of love. The late Barbara Bush called our service to others the "greatest yardstick" - the one thing that matters, and that one thing we will all be judged and remembered by.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What are the greatest "dangers" of Silicon Valley for you? What aspects of Silicon Valley culture make you struggle? How might the "danger" you experience also reflect a potential blessing?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - How might Mark 10:43-44 apply to your life, whether as a student, at work, with family, or as a friend. What is challenging about serving? Do you want to become more of a servant toward God and others?
- 3) **DO** - What is one practical way you can grow in greatness by taking a next step of serving God and others? What can you do to take a concrete step to actually serving, rather than merely having a good intention?