

The Church – Part 4 – Serving Others | 8/12/18

- Introduction
 - We have been in a series of lessons looking at the church and all of its various functions.
 - This week we are going to focus on an important function of the church which is serving.
 - To serve others is a vital and core function of the church (Christian).
 - To proclaim to be a Christian, yet to discount or ignore our call to serve goes against what it means to actually be a Christian.
- **God has called the church, the Christians into a ministry of service unto others.**
 - When we think of the purpose of the church and what God has called us to do, one of the foundational purposes is service.
 - **When we think of the life of Christ and what He did while He was here, we find that His life was one of service unto others.**
 - Jesus did not come here in His earthly body to have Himself pampered, served or put on a pedestal.
 - The earthly example of Jesus was quite the opposite, it was one of service.
 - Matthew 20:28
 - “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve**, and to **give His life-a ransom for many.**”
 - **All of the spiritual gifts that God bestows have to do with service.**
 - Regardless of what spiritual gift God gave you, its purpose is to raise up the body of Christ through service.
 - 1 Peter 4:10
 - “As each **has received a gift, use it to serve one another**, as good stewards of God’s varied grace:”
 - **Name several spiritual gifts, do any of them serve the purpose of self-glorification? Or do they all point to serving others?**
 - The result of our service will be the glorification of God.
 - 1 Peter 4:11:b
 - “...whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...”
 - **We must truly consider this truth: The spiritual gifts that God has given you are not to bring glory to yourself, but to bring glory to God through serving others.**
 - **This service that Christ demonstrated is what He has called His church, the Christian to imitate.**
 - By Jesus’s example we know that He has called us to service.
 - But at times Christians we miss this, and we instead focus on “**what can God do for me?**”.
 - While God obviously does take care of His children and blesses them, we are not to take this that we are only to be served ourselves.

- That once we are saved that we don't do anything to help show God's love to others.
 - **Instead the Christian should say, what can I do for God? What can I do to further His kingdom?**
 - But how often do we do this? How often is this a question that we ask?
- While God will certainly bless us and wants us to enjoy what He has given us, one thing for certain is that we **will never be "fulfilled" unless we serve others.**
 - When we serve others **as God has called us to**, there is a wonderful feeling of joy and fulfillment that we receive.
 - **Which is the opposite of what one might think.** "If I sacrifice my time/money/energy for someone else how does that help me?" But God rewards this.
 - When we obey God and serve others as He has called us to, there is a feeling of joy and a reward that we cannot quite explain.
 - When we serve others with our hearts, God gives us a joy and a passion to keep doing it again and again.
 - **There truly is a reward for those who selflessly serve others for Christ.**
 - Hebrews 6:10
 - i. "For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do."
 - **But our service must be for the right reasons.**
 - If our service ultimately is for our own uplifting, then God will not bless this.
 - Example: Giving money or serving so others will give you praise, not because of your obedience to God.
 - Godly service must come from a heart that is being obedient to God and does it for His glory.
 - When done in this way, the Christian will feel the true fulfillment provided by God to those whom obey Him and do His work.
 - **Why is serving and helping others sometimes difficult for us? What causes us to focus on ourselves instead of others?**
 - **Why else do you think that "service unto others" is so important to God? What are the results when Christians obediently do this this?**
 - **Explain what it feels like when you have obediently served others (as you were led by God to do) as opposed to serving others only to seek a reward out of selfishness?**
- **Our service (or ministry) to others, makes up a portion of the "good works" that Christians are called to do.**
 - The Scriptures are clear that we are called to do "good works".
 - Serving others makes up a key function of the Christian especially when it comes to our "good works".
 - Ephesians 2:10

- “For we are his creation, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time so that **we should walk in them**.
- **These good works are the fruit and results of a Christian who has true faith and is obediently following Christ’s example.**
 - John 15:8
 - “By this my Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit** and so **prove to be my disciples.**”
 - A true Christian will bear good fruit.
 - James 2:17-18
 - “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “you have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”
 - This passage does not state that works are required for salvation, but that good works will be the result of one who is saved.
- **What then does our service or “good works” look like?**
 - This can look differently of course, and it depends on what God has uniquely called us to do.
 - **A good work at the core is anything that is a result (or fruit) of God’s Word in the heart of a Christian.**
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, **equipped for every good work.**”
 - **Anything that we do that is a result of God’s Word impacting our hearts will always be a good work.**
 - **The early church showed their good works in helping those in need.**
 - Acts 2:44-45
 - “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.
 - Acts 4:34-35
 - “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostle’s feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”
 - **Several times in Scripture we see examples where one puts faith into action through good works of helping those in need.**
 - James 2:15-16
 - “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?”
 - 1 John 3:17

- “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”
 - **In almost all examples of good works we see that it involves serving others.**
 - **What are examples of “good works” that you have done that were a result of the impact of God’s Word upon your heart?**
- **God uses obedient Christians as a conduit to dispense His grace and mercy.**
 - People are always praying and asking for Gods intervention, for His grace, for His mercy.
 - **What we don’t always remember, is that the conduit in which God often uses to dispense His grace, mercy and blessings is through the church (Christians).**
 - The church being the body of Christ are His hand and feet, God uses the church (Christians) to deliver his grace and mercy.
 - **Obedient Christians who are listening to God will respond and be the conduit to deliver His answered prayers.**
 - Examples:
 - A family is having hard financial times and has a lack of food. They pray to God for help. Another Christian or church is felt called to speak with this family and is led to help with food or even monetarily.
 - Someone is going through a difficult circumstance in life and prays to God asking for help. Another Christian is felt called to speak and provide guidance and wisdom to the one who prayed.
 - **Christians are stewards of God’s grace.**
 - 1 Peter 4:10
 - “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good **stewards of God’s varied grace:**”
 - Think about that, we are “stewards” which means one his is responsible for taking care of a resource for the owner.
 - **Christians are charged with taking care of God’s grace that is in the form of a spiritual gift.**
 - God will use the Christians who give of their time to help someone in need, to be the listening ear and provide words of wisdom to those who need it.
 - God will use the Christians to help others financially, to take care of the sick, to feed the hungry and to bring the Gospel to those who need it.
 - Christians are part of the body of Christ, He uses us as extensions of Himself.
 - **Have you ever been called by God to be His conduit of grace?**
 - **Have you ever had a feeling that you were being led by God to do something for someone but you didn’t know the “why”?**
 - **Have you ever passed up or refused your calling to be His conduit of grace?**
- Final Thoughts
 - **What can we do to make “service unto others” a greater priority in our lives?**