

I. Five Points 4: Service Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor May 10, 2009

A. Series on the Commitments we make as members of CrossRoad:

1. Prayers, Presence, Giving, Service, and Witness

B. Recap last week.

1. Loaves and fishes is no doubt one of the miracles that Jesus performed, but I wanted to emphasize again that I think it would be easier for Jesus to multiply the fish and loaves, than it actually is to get humans to share generously.
2. As I rewound some of the words I said about brokenness being a blackhole, I was concerned that I may have said that without the Grace I intended.
 - a. At CrossRoad we are *imperfect (use logo)*. We acknowledge our brokenness, but we also have hope for wholeness through Jesus Christ.
 - b. A giving heart is a heart that is transformed by the love of Jesus.
3. I thought more about my challenge about giving.
 - a. I hope the online giving will take away anyone's excuse for not giving regularly.
 - b. I hope it did challenge people who give nothing to see the power of giving and to honor a commitment that we all share.
 - c. I will be casting that vision to raise the level of giving for all people at CrossRoad, so we can continue to grow as followers of Christ gathered here on Gate Parkway.

II. Service

A. I am like so many people who would be classified as a Boomer.

B. I was in church as a child, largely because there weren't a lot of alternatives.

C. My experience as a child was positive and overall my family was probably considered committed.

D. It was the summer between 7th and 8th grade where something in me changed.

1. Our youth group was invited to help provide leadership for a city recreation program just a little to the north of Orlando.
2. I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, but most 13 year old boys are pretty clueless.
3. The program provided summer activities for kids whose families had at one time been migrant workers, but had made their home in an area where the citrus industry was still strong.
4. The fathers traveled around the south, but the families lived at or below the poverty level.
5. About twenty of us went that first day crammed into the church van and a couple of station wagons.
6. When we got out of the van, this bunch of white kids from the Burbs were surrounded by African American kids from about 3 years old to 18.
7. Keep in mind this is 1966. Racial tension was still high. The Civil Rights movement was gaining momentum.
8. The County had hired two summer workers to lead about 150 kids in this morning recreation program.
9. We did what kids do. We got balls and organized Dodge Ball. We found crayons and drew pictures. We helped serve the multitudes at snack time.
10. At 1:00 we got in our vehicles and prepared to go back to our air conditioned homes and color TVs, they gathered around our cars and asked when we were coming back.
11. We had planned to come every Monday for 8 weeks.
12. They begged us to come back the next day.

13. On the way home, one of the leaders asked if anyone wanted to come back the next day. Just about everyone wanted to.
14. We met the next day at 7:30 and went back and pretty much repeated the previous day's activities.
15. We ended up going 4 days a week for the length of the program.
16. That was the first time that I had ever known the Joy of Serving.
17. It came at the right time in my life.
 - a. I would never be able to listen to a racial joke or slur.
 - b. I would never be able to take for granted the privileged lifestyle that I had been given and to this day I experience great conviction when I lean into the self absorbed lifestyle to which I really aspire.
 - c. I would always know that Faith in Jesus Christ was evidenced by the quality of how I was called to serve.

E. The Words of Jesus that I had heard in Sunday School Classes and pieces of message, and what little bit of the Bible I had read for myself, began to come alive.

F. *(Mark 9:35 NRSV) He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."*

G. *(Luke 9:46-48 NRSV) An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. {47} But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, {48} and said to them, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest."*

H. *(Mat 20:25-28 NRSV) But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. {26} It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, {27} and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

I. *(John 13:12-15 NRSV) After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? {13} You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. {14} So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. {15} For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."*

J. These were no longer words of some dead prophet or religious icon, they were truth.

K. Service led me to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that I would come to know *(John 14:6-7 NRSV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. {7} If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

L. Even today, some 43 years later, I am closer to God in service than in prayer, in worship, when I preach.

III. To be known for Serving!

- A. The church that was birthed in Jerusalem just after the resurrection of Jesus was a church that was filled with the love of Jesus.
- B. It modeled his servant hood.
- C. *(Acts 2:38-47 NRSV) Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." {40} And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." {41} So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about*

three thousand persons were added. {42} They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. {43} Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. {44} All who believed were together and had all things in common; {45} they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. {46} Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, {47} praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

D. The church was known for Serving!

E. Last week we talked about giving, and as you can see there is a great correlation between giving and serving.

F. It is the natural outgrowth out of a transformed heart.

G. Sadly, if you were to do a person on the street interview about what it means to be a follower of Jesus, I can almost guarantee that most of the responses would express a lot of the things that Christians are known for being against.

H. Why aren't we ever talked about for the things that we are for.

I. Why aren't we known for serving.

J. It is at the heart of Jesus.

K. The Church is known for being inward, but the Church of the New Testament was known for being outward.

L. *(Acts 17:6 NRSV) When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also,*

M. We need a revolution of outward focused people.

N. People who are willing to lay down their lives, their time, their talents, their possessions, so people can see the love of Jesus Christ at work.

O. *Experiencing God Day-by-Day* The Devotional and Journal Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby P. 87 Mark 14:41 "Like the disciples, you receive unique opportunities to serve your Lord. There are times when Jesus will ask you to join Him as He is at work in the life of your friend, family, or coworker. If you are preoccupied with your own needs, you will miss the blessing of sharing in His divine activity.

P. *The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody* Bill Hybels P. 71 "So here's what we recommend to potential volunteers these days. Embrace wholeheartedly your fundamental identity as a servant of Jesus Christ. Use whatever understanding you have of your personality, passions, areas of interests, talents, and preferences to guide you in a general serving direction. Look at the needs in your church and community. Then jump in with a willing heart and an open mind. Drape the servant's towel over your arm and get busy."

Q. *Dallas Willard, Spirit of the Disciplines* p. 160 "For the redeemed individual, saved by faith in Jesus Christ, service becomes a discipline when I serve another to train myself away from arrogance, possessiveness, envy, resentment, or covetousness.

R. "His (Jesus) meaning was clear: 'As my disciples, you are to be people who resist the very human yearnings for applause, for approval, for ease and pleasant circumstances in order to perform the lowly, unseen, and unrewarded acts of service. You are to be people who don't insist on ascending the dais (elevated platform) to the sound of applause. You are to be people who choose to descend to your knees with a basin and a towel.'" P. 162

IV. Choose to be a Servant!

A. Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*: Right here we must see the difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant. When we choose to serve, we are still in charge. We decide whom we will serve and when we will serve. And if we are in charge, we will worry a great deal about anyone stepping on us, that is, taking charge over us.

But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. There is great freedom in this.

If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable.

B. *(Phil 2:1-11 NRSV) If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, {2} make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. {3} Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. {4} Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. {5} Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, {6} who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, {7} but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, {8} he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. {9} Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, {10} so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, {11} and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

C. Don Bloch posed a question to me this week that really started me thinking. What is the difference between commitment and surrender.

1. As I thought about it, it seemed to be the same as the difference between serving and being a servant.
2. I may commit to something, because it is the right thing to do, or I feel better about myself, I feel less guilty, or perhaps I even begin to find purpose.
3. Surrender is different. I have given up living my life, doing my thing, I am under the control of someone else.
4. You can be committed to something without being surrendered.
5. You can't, however, be surrendered to something without also being committed.

D. We talk about committing to these 5 points, when in reality it should be surrender.

E. Laurie Beth Jones, Jesus CEO: Most religions teach that we are put here to serve God; yet, in Jesus, God is offering to serve us.

Picture the shift in thinking. Old Testament mentality looked at humanity as being indebted to God, trying to find countless ways to please Him. Then along comes a man claiming to be the very son of God, who asks people, "What would you like me to do for you?"

F. *(1 Pet 4:10 NIV) Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

V. Thanks to all the behind the scenes people. Set builders, Production, Greeters, Parking lot, Concessions, Nursery!

VI. **Servant hood is a Dance!**

A. One of the great benefits of my summer of servant hood in the recreation program is that I learned to dance.

B. At the close of every day, we gathered in the library where the kids had brought their LPs and 45s and for about 45 minutes we celebrated the day.

C. What little rhythm and ability that I have to move with the music I trace back to that library.

D. There is no greater joy that I know, no greater celebration is known that when my heart is surrendered to Jesus, and pick up the servant towel and serve.

VII. Surrender Time