

## Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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1 Corinthians 9:7-12, 19-23

October 22, 2017

### At your service for the sake of the gospel

*I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.*

- Some make this their motto. Anything, everything to save a soul!
- Other Christians struggle to not hate these words - sensing misuse
  - ♦ Unable to put their finger on Paul's intended limit to **all things**
- Since both want to be servants of Jesus, but what does that mean?
- That's exactly Paul's point in this context. Showing how we say,...

### At your service for the sake of the gospel

❖ Jesus set us free to serve.

- Jesus set us free from slavery to sin, death, and Satan
  - ♦ Sin is not only open wickedness.
  - ♦ All sin rejects God's lordship. *I am my own decider, my own master.*
  - ♦ **For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God's law, and in fact, it cannot.** Romans 8:7 EHV
  - ♦ Sinners can't choose not to sin, only which sin. That's hard. Sin rules.
  - ♦ Jesus paid for sin, removed its death sentence and its accusations.
    - This gospel message creates faith, gives birth to a new self full of life (not death). Faith hates sin, loves God, and longs to serve our Savior.
  - ♦ It's not just what Jesus saved you **from**. See what he saved you **for**.
    - God wants you back. He created humans to be his children.
    - **"If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** John 8:31,32 EHV
    - **... "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Everyone who keeps committing sin is a slave to sin. But a slave does not remain in the family forever. A son does remain forever. So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free."** John 8:34-36 EHV
    - Free **from** serving sin. Freed **for** serving God in righteousness.
    - **Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.** Romans 6:19 NIV
    - Serving God is pure good. He is kind and loving. Serving him is for our ultimate good - our own best interest. It's a high honor.
    - We serve God actively loving him and loving/serving our neighbor.

❖ Christians serve for the sake of the gospel.

- Gospel: God made me his child through Jesus. It's a free gift.
  - ♦ This is my new identity, my motivation, the lenses through which I see God, people, life, vocation, roles (child, sibling, spouse, parent, citizen)
  - ♦ It's not **I must, I have to**. It's **I get to, I can, I want to, I'm called to...**
  - ♦ All my life serves to pave the way for the gospel, not to obstruct it.
- Paul's example: meet people where they are. Respect them as people.
  - ♦ Don't exercise your freedom in Christ in a way that offends their sensitivities. Wisely exercise your freedom to serve the gospel.
  - ♦ It's a misuse of Paul's words when:
    - *Freedom* used to sin is freedom surrendered. It's slavery to sin.
    - Idolatry is given a Christian facade. That does not serve the gospel!
    - Christians demand or guilt other Christians into surrendering their freedom *"so you don't offend me."* The strong can't claim to be treated like the weak brother or sister. In such a case it is not a matter of *giving offense*. It's a matter of them **taking offense**.
  - ♦ Weigh the **all things**. The goal is not mere conversions, but **teachable hearts** eager to submit to Jesus' word. That's the gospel's goal!
- All infected by Jesus' saving service catch the bug to serve him.
  - ♦ A servant heart is liberated from bitterness and negativity.
    - When **you have to** or **feel guilty** if you don't - the law robs you of **joy**
    - Invitation to Caregivers: Don't martyr yourself with guilt. Let others serve you, so you are rested and equipped to serve.
  - ♦ If you're defensive **guarding your freedom** and rights = guarded, bitter
    - How can you reach people with the gospel when your quills are out?
    - Focus is on you. Other-oriented love suffers. Hard to even love self.
- Serving for the sake of the gospel calls for a diet of gospel.
  - ♦ **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.** 2 Pt 3:18
  - ♦ The more you focus on how Jesus serves you, the more you'll love serving
  - ♦ **I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.** v. 23
    - Blessed: seeing the gospel work in others, connect God's word to live
    - Tasting just how good and right righteousness is - God's wisdom.

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