

We are a Ministry Community

Church, A Community on Purpose—part 5

September 5, 2021

A church is a Worship, Outreach, Discipleship, Fellowship and Ministry Community.

DAY 1: Serving: a calling, a way of life, an identity

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

1. This is one of those “summary” passages, a “keystone” passage that highlights the most important elements in walking with God.
2. What does this passage say about serving the Lord?
3. How are we to serve the Lord? What does that mean to you?

1 Peter 2:16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.

4. The gospel breaks the chains of sin in our lives, making it possible not to have to sin. We are free theologically, and becoming freer and freer in real time.
5. As we become freer we will be tempted to curve our lives in on ourselves. Instead, what does Peter tell us to do?

Luke 17:7 Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he comes in from the field, “Come at once and sit down and eat?” (8) Will he not rather say, “Prepare supper, gird yourself, and serve me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink?” (9) Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded him? (10) So you also, when you have done all that is commanded say, “We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty.”

6. What attitudes of a servant strikes you from this passage?
7. Today's passages deal with the call to be a servant, the identity of a servant and serving as a way of life. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Serving, the way of meaning

1. Every person is searching for meaning. We usually look to the “big things, the big accomplishments” to assert and validate our meaning. Though that approach may “seem” to work it rarely lasts for very long. Ask any of the “important people” how long their meaning lasted after “great achievements.”
2. Instead, meaning is given to every person at their conception, and to every Christian when they are born again! It is implanted twice!

We are not caught up with the “search for meaning.”
We are caught up with displaying our meaning!

Psalm 84:10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. ¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

3. Why would the psalmist rather serve the Lord by being an “usher” or door-opener than kick it up with the wicked?

4. This next event occurred just before the Last Supper.

John 13:12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

5. What strikes you from this passage?

6. Twice, some disciples were clamoring to make a name for themselves. Jesus corrected them.

Matt. 20:25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become /great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

7. What strikes you from this passage?

8. What strikes you from today’s passages?

DAY 3: The microscopic way of changing the world

1. Every genuine Christian desires to be used by God to “change the world.” We normally assume that we will do some great achievement for the Lord. Instead, the world actually changes little-by-little, person-by-person.

Matthew 10:40 “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

2. What strikes you from this passage?

3. The incredible plan of reaching the world? Through big city-wide rallies? The Billy Grahams of the world? More often than not God uses Everyday Eddie and simple Clara Christian.

4. Read through the gospels and you will see how often God uses ordinary people. Even the disciples, who were with Jesus for three and a half years stumbled and bumbled all over themselves. And yet, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the disciples set the gospel ball rolling in ways that have continued for over two thousand years and have made the gospel relevant in nearly every nation.

5. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians of what we were all about.

2 Cor. 4:5 For what we preach is Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants.

6. It is not just the “preaching” role that makes a difference but also the servant role!

7. Jesus compared the kingdom of God and its growth to the smallest of elements.

Luke 13:18 Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.”

²⁰ Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

8. Perhaps you wonder, what small thing can I do? What difference can I make? We often disqualify ourselves from doing anything because we can’t do the big thing. Do you do this?

9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: Serving as a community

1. The church puts flesh to the invisible Christ. We make Christ visible to those around you.
2. The church is also called the body of Christ. All of the different people make up a portrait of what Jesus Christ is like and what He does through His people.
3. In our church we have people from many different cultures, nations, social strata, some with religious background of some kind and some with no religious background of any kind. And yet, there is both unity and diversity!

The church is to portray what our culture wants to portray
but keeps screwing it up: Unity and Diversity

4. As you read this passage, underline words and phrases that emphasize unity. Circle words and phrases that emphasize diversity.

1 Corinthians 12:12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

5. How is our unity seen and described in this passage?

6. How is diversity seen and described in this passage?

DAY 5: Our destiny

1. The following passage is an excerpt from Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats. The event is the Great White Throne Judgment, by which everyone will one day stand. This excerpt is Jesus' message to the sheep, His people.

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right (the sheep), 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left (the goats), 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

2. Imagine yourself a participant at the Great White Throne Judgment.

a. You claim to be a Christian. You know Jesus died for your sins. However, as you looked back on your life here on Earth, you realize that your primary purpose was wrapped around your health, "me and my family," and "the good life" (convenience, and comfort).

b. What would go through your mind as you heard Jesus tell this parable?

c. What would you wish you had realized back on earth? What would you have wished you had done?

3. As we wrap up our week of looking at serving and ministry, read back through the five colored headings of each days' devotion. Which of the five headings strikes you the most? What would you like to do?