

June 17, 2007

**The Heart of the Gospel**  
**Mark 10:32-45**

**Mark 10:45** – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

This is the heart of the Gospel.

If you are a Christ-follower you were called to serve, not to be served – you were called to give when everyone else is taking. At the heart of the Gospel is a Savior who gave what was His to keep.

The Church is called to be a servant community – I know that this is a difficult thing at times – it is easier to live in a safe community in which we feel insulated and untouched by the ills of a broken world – but that just isn’t what Christ has called the Church to be.

We call this ‘entering into the wounds’ of the world – that is what Jesus did and this is what we are called to do – to embrace a broken world as Christ did when He came for us.

A little Doctrine:

When we speak of the work of Christ we are talking about a particular act in which He substituted His own life for ours in payment of our sins – it is an utterly unselfish act that defines our faith.

In Old Testament times this was done through the blood of animals and through money. It was called a ‘Ransom’ or ‘Atonement’.

These were sort of foreshadows of what Jesus would do, once and for.

**Isaiah 53:12** – “... he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** – “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men...”

And what this means is if... Christ, we are called into His example – and it is in this that our lives are to be patterned:

- **Philippians 2:3** – “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but with humility consider others better than yourselves.”

Servanthood is the observable manifestation of the love of the Gospel in the Church... home... world.

And what Jesus says is that this is the antithesis of what we see in the world – In a lost and insecure world, strength and greatness are defined by power and rule, whereas the Gospel calls us to the complete opposite – that with Christ greatness is defined by what one writer calls “Appropriate Smallness” – a willingness to be less for the sake of others.

So what do we do with our freedom? The Gospel demands that we give it away – we use it to serve – this is the difference between living for the Kingdom of God as opposed to living for ourselves. In other words, you are never freer, and you are never more alive to the Gospel than when you are free to serve and give yourself up for others.

- To Really Live is to Serve

Servanthood is the one activity that makes sense of all of life – in joy and suffering, sacrifice and sorrow. When we serve we live and when we serve we give and when we give we give life...

- Life to a family
- Life to a marriage
- Life to a community
- Life to a city
- Life to an individual

- Servanthood is the Key to Locked Lives and Closed Hearts

Servants enter places that the proud never see. The one who serves is the one that broken people are attracted to. There is a respect and value that a servant puts on individuals that is sometimes lost when we are caught up in telling others what to do.

You want to win your wife over? Serve her rather than dominate her. You want to impact your child's school? Find a place to serve rather than to complain and whine. You want to change the culture of your workplace? Be a servant rather than a climber.

- Serving Makes Christ Visible in your Life

Servanthood is the life-giving force the world desperately needs. Servanthood is the one true countercultural activity that Christianity brings to the public arena – the one true demonstration that you have been freed from self by the love of Christ.

So what will you do with what Christ has given to you by giving Himself? Will you live for yourself or will you give yourself? What will you do with what Christ has given you – do you see it as yours or yours to give away? Have you ever considered the impact of someone who takes seriously Jesus' act of giving His life away?

After all, this really is all about Jesus. When we give... in service to the One who washed the feet... friends and then gave His life for us. We take on the spirit of the One who could have taken but instead gave. We become the likeness of Jesus to a world that wonders if God truly exists. We become His scarred hands and feet.