

Feb. 9th Sermon notes

I begin with a question: "What would our world look like if serving others was at the heart of everything we did?"

- Strong, supportive communities.
- Money would not be king or the bottom line.
- There wouldn't be any such thing as a marginalized community. No need for policies for or against inclusiveness.
- Technology and science would be driven by the desire to improve the quality of life for all and products would be marketed with a view towards how they can be used to benefit others.
- In education, schools would teach kindness, empathy, and social responsibility alongside academics.
- Crime would disappear. Prisons would shut down.
- In our day-to-day experience, the beauty of human interconnectedness would shine through and peace would reign.
- We would truly enjoy a slice of heaven on earth.

Main Idea: Serving Reflects the Culture of Heaven

1. Jesus as the Perfect Model

John 13:12-17 - Jesus exemplified the culture of heaven through his acts of service, demonstrating that true greatness in heaven's culture is found in serving others.

- Hebrews 1:14 tells us the angels are ministering spirits sent out to serve those who will inherit. They don't serve because they are a reflection of the culture of heaven.

2. The Heart of Serving

Philippians 2:3-4: "... in humility value others above yourselves..."

- It's not about devaluing self as much as it is elevating others.
- It's about being inspired by Christ's love to selflessly love and serve those around us.

- We are to be fueled by God's love for us and realizing our unsearchable riches. We are to give from the overflow.

How would I define spiritual growth in one sentence? When I consider all my years of study and experience as a pastor, I have come up with this: "The expanding and deepening realization of how much I matter to God."

For me, that is the root of all other spiritual virtues. From that root comes love for others with no strings attached..." Thus, Paul prayed for an expanding and deepening realization of it for the Ephesians and, by extension, for us.

"For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father... I ask that out of the riches of His glory He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being... Then you, being rooted and grounded in [His] love, will have power, together with all the saints, to comprehend the length and width and height and depth of the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-19).

3. The Status of Servants

Mark 10:42-45 (NIV) ...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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."

- There was nothing wrong with them wanting to be great. But greatness has a different look in God's kingdom. It's not a look of superiority but of service.

4. The Transformation of Service

- Discuss how serving others transforms our hearts and aligns us with the values of the kingdom of God.
- He who refreshes others will Himself be refreshed – Proverbs 11:25; If you give yourself to the hungry your light will rise in darkness – Isaiah 58:10; It is more blessed to give than to receive. – Acts 20:35
- As we focus on serving others, we often feel better about ourselves and some of the self-defeating behaviors and habits that we rely on to feel better recede.
- Sometimes the best way to get out of a funk is to serve your way out. Sometimes the inconvenience is exactly the elixir we need to experience relief from whatever is bringing us down.

- **John 17:13 “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”**
 - **When it comes to heaven-based service, it is not ok to expect something in return from those whom we serve, but it is perfectly fine to trust God to bless your service.**
- 5. Practical ways to cultivate a servant’s heart.**
- **We need who God has made you to be. The warmth of Valley Brook is a product of every burning log.**
 - **Just like the Super Bowl consists of thousands of individual parts, so does Valley Brook.**

We have been given directions for how to enjoy a slice of heaven on earth and how to adorn ourselves in heavenly greatness.