

One Another – Serve

Text : Gal. 5: 13 ; John 13: 3-17

INTRODUCTION :

A. We are engaged in a series of lessons studying some “One Another” passages.

1. This is a very important series because God places great emphasis on it.
 - a. There are near 60 “One Another” commands in the N.T.
 - b. The church is always spoken of as an interdependent corporate body.
2. Every member of that corporate body has responsibilities to every other member.

B. The very survival of the church depends upon its ability to function as a unit.

1. We live in a world that is increasingly hostile to Christianity.
 - a. Throughout history times of persecution have arisen.
 - b. Even today, in many countries Christians are being killed at an increasing rate.
2. Right here in our country there is increasing hostility to anything Christian.
 - a. Belief in God is ridiculed.
 - b. Public expressions of faith are often forbidden.
3. Without the support of the group the pressure on the individual can be overwhelming.

C. The church also provides a training ground for a godly character.

1. By nature people’s affections have a narrow scope.
 - a. From birth we instinctively seek to advance our own interest. (*survival instinct*)
 - b. Gradually we expand our scope to include our family.
2. The godly character loves all men because God created all men in His image.
 - a. God so loves the world that He was willing to suffer and die for mankind.
 - b. Thus, one with a godly character loves his neighbor as himself.
3. How does one expand the scope of his caring from me and mine to all mankind ?
 - a. The church is an intermediate step in the learning process.
 - b. We learn to care for those with whom we worship our common love ... God.
 - c. The relationship with the congregations expands the scope of our love.
 - d. As our relationship with the congregation develops,
we come to understand that the church is universal, not just our congregation.
 - e. As our relationship with the body grows, by nature it expands to those outside.

With this lesson we will explore the concept of serving one another.

I. As Christians we owe service to every other Christians.

A. It is a clear empirical command.

1. **Gal. 5: 13-14** For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
2. How do I know that I love my fellow Christians ? I serve them.

B. Service has very easily observed manifestations :

1. **Gal. 6: 2** – Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.
2. **Gal. 6: 10** – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
 - a. The Christian is on the lookout for opportunities to do good.
 - b. Special relationship with fellow Christians.

C. One’s relationship with his brethren corresponds with his relationship with Jesus

1. **Matt. 25: 31-46** ... That which we do for the least of our brethren, we do for Christ.
2. Jesus is aware of all that we do or do not do for others and he takes it personally.

D. Serving one another is more an attitude of heart than any specific action.

1. There are two words commonly translated as serve :
 - a. **diakoneo** : to be a servant, attendant, domestic, to serve, wait upon. (**Deacon**)
I Pet. 4: 10 – As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
 - b. **douleuo** : to be a slave, to serve, ... to obey, submit (**involuntary servitude**)
Gal. 5: 13 – For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
2. Love that motivates service implies humbling one’s own will to that of another.
 - a. **I Cor. 10: 23-24** All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable.
 All things are lawful, but not all things edify.
²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

- b. Why not seek your own welfare ? To do so is unloving conduct.

I Cor. 13: 5-6 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous;
love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,
5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own,

II. In John 13 Jesus demonstrated the attitude He wanted His followers to possess.

A. In our text, the disciples did not display a humble spirit :

1. Jesus is in an upper room with all twelve of His disciples.
 - a. They are observing the most important feast of the Jewish calendar, **the Passover**.
 - b. **Mark 10: 35-45** .. The disciples were concerned about their status in the kingdom.
 - c. None of them had thought to serve the others, especially not to wash their feet.
2. They all walked dusty roads with open sandals so their feet were dirty.
 - a. It was considered polite to offer water for visitors to wash their feet.
 - b. In a wealthy household, the lowliest servant was assigned to wash visitors' feet.
 - c. When they ate each person's feet was beside the next person. (*not use chairs*)
3. Even if they didn't wash each other's feet, one of them should have washed Jesus' feet, but they were all too self-centered. (*Had opportunity to do so, but failed*)

B. Jesus taught them their greatest lesson on humility and service to others.

1. Jesus striped down .., i.e., He took on the appearance of a slave, not the Master.
2. He did the task of the most lowly servant in the household.
3. The rolls were so obviously reversed that Peter was embarrassed by it.

C. Jesus told them that they did not know what He was doing.

1. The outward act was clearly apparent; .. He was washing their feet.
2. The dirty feet were not the point; .. He was teaching them a lesson about their hearts.
3. The lesson was : *Those who will follow Christ must have the heart of Christ.*

III. To have the heart of Jesus is to have the heart of a servant.

A. The Lord of Heaven and earth did not come to be served. (*no official protocol*)

1. **Mark 10: 45** – For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
2. **John 13: 16** – Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master,
nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

3. If the Lord of Heavens seeks to serve, what should our attitude be ?
 - a. If the Lord of glory will do the most lowly of tasks, what should our limit be ?
 - b. If the Only Begotten of the Father will die for others, can we do less ?
 - c. **John 13: 16** – Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master,
nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

B. The Lord's Apostle appeals to every Christians to develop the heart of Jesus.

1. **Phil. 2: 3-8** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
2. Jesus placed a value on others as being more important than Himself.
 - a. Were others more important ? Certainly not !
 - b. Jesus chose to lower Himself by attributing a higher value on man than on Himself
 - c. He condescended to man without being condescending.
3. Jesus served people regardless of their status, *i.e.*, of their sinfulness.
 - a. Jesus washed the feet of Judas knowing that he would betray Him that night.
 - b. No one in the room observed Jesus treating Judas any differently than others.
 - c. **Rom. 5** ... Jesus died for the ungodly, the rebellious, those worthy of wrath.

C. *Jesus established a standard of conduct .. of attitude .. of heart for us to follow.*

IV. The Apostles followed the example of Jesus.

- A. **I Cor. 9: 19** For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. *(This is being crucified w/ Christ.)*

B. Jesus taught us that this is the way one becomes great in the kingdom of God.

1. **Mark 9: 33-37** ... The disciples of Jesus were fond of debating who was greater.
2. Being in the kingdom of God is different from being in the world. (*different values*)
3. Vs. **35** – **Sitting down, He** (Jesus) **called the twelve and said to them,**
“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

V. This is the standard that God has set for His followers.**A. The Apostle gives us a direct command to follow the example of Jesus.**

Phil. 2: 5 – Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

B. In our text, he also gives us a direct command to serve one another.

Gal. 5: 13 – ... but through love serve one another.

C. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given to use in service to one another.

1. **I Pet. 4: 10** – **As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another**
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
2. **I Cor. 14** ... No gift of the Spirit was used to the glory of the one using it.
 - a. One with the gift of languages was forbidden to use it without an interpreter.
 - b. Vs. **26** ... Nothing is permitted in the assembly is permitted that does not edify.

D. Even one of the non-miraculous gifts was the gift of service.

1. **Rom. 12: 6-8** **Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,**
*each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*
2. No one can say, “*Well, I just don’t have the gift of service.*”
 - a. We all give, but we don’t all have the gift of giving.
 - b. Every person has greater ability in some areas than others, but we all function in all areas to the full extent of our abilities.

E. James 2 explains that our faith is reflected by the deeds we do.

1. **Eph. 2** makes it clear that we are not saved by works, but by grace through faith.
2. James explains that the faith that saves (*living faith*) causes us to serve each other.
3. **Therefore, *our salvation depends upon our willingness to serve one another.***

VI. Vs. 8-9 Each Christian has the responsibility to allow others to serve his needs.

A. Like Peter , we live in a culture that emphasizes self-sufficiency.

1. Some are so filled with pride that they will not admit they need help.
2. Some want help, but are ashamed to ask for it.

B. When Christians have the relationship they should, no one should have to ask.

1. From the very first day the church started off helping each other.
 - a. **Acts 2: 44-45** ... They shared everything they had with each other.
(*They were together enough to melded their lives together.*)
 - b. **Acts 4: 32, 36-37** ... This continued as a standard practice.
2. The church didn't ask the government to take care of its widows, it provided for them
 - a. **Acts 6 : 1-7** ... The church took care of the daily needs of its widows.
 - b. **I Tim. 5: 9ff** ... This practice wasn't just in Jerusalem; it was a universal practice.

C. The very reason Christians are industrious is to have the wherewithal to serve.

1. **Eph. 4: 28** ... We work with our hands so we have to share. (*not to accumulate*)
2. Jesus taught all who would follow him to share.
 - a. **Luke 3: 11** – And he would answer and say to them,
“The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none;
and he who has food is to do likewise.”
 - b. This does not teach that everyone has to have equal amounts,
rather that no is left without the necessities of life.

D. However, those who were lazy were not permitted to abuse the service of others.

1. **Gal. 6: 4-5** ... Each person is required to stand on his own when he can.
2. **II Thes. 3: 10-12** ... Those who will not work are not to be fed.

CONCLUSION :

- A. As we seek to be what God wants us to be, we must blend our lives together.
- B. When Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” He established what our relationship should be with our brethren. The church is God's family.
- C. When we serve our brethren we serve Christ. Who are you serving ?

Lessons Texts

Galatians 5: 13

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

John 13: 3-17

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, **4** got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. **6** So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." **8** Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." **9** Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." **10** Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." **11** For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, 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 so I am. **14** "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. **16** "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. **17** "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Galatians 5: 13

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.