

MORE 2017 (1 Cor. 9:19-27)

Intro

Today we look with anticipation at the year ahead. You are not here at this location, at this time, and in this year by accident. You are here today because the Lord in His holy purposes put you here today. I pray that this message from 1 Cor 9 will challenge your heart, question the status quo, and put actions to your Spirit to do MORE for the kingdom of Christ this year.

The heartbeat and DNA of Bethel is to bring the whole Gospel to the whole person to the whole world. Are you joining in this mission? Are you bringing the good news with you to your house, neighborhood, marketplace, gym, and ball field.

I doubt anyone wants to do less for the Kingdom this year. Let's do MORE and let's do MORE together!

Read Isaiah 1 Cor 9:19-27 and Pray

Commit to Serve (1 Cor. 9:19)

Scripture teaches us this truth: servants are made and you are made to serve. Paul echoes this theme when he declared that he made himself a servant to all.

The truth is we all serve someone or something. Often, the object of our service

is ME. This is why most of our lives our build around our comforts. **This is why we invented the heating blanket with dual controls.** So I can have my half just the way I like it! But the spiritual reality is that we cannot serve more than two masters at a time. **Matt. 6:24** “No one can be a slave of **two masters**, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves of God and of money. **Matt. 6:25** “This is why I tell you: Don’t worry about **your life**, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Who is your master today? Who are you serving? The Lord Jesus calls us much deeper than a self-serving existence. Jesus is our Model and he is the model servant **who did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many** (Mark 10:45). So to serve Christ = to serve others.

This is the heart of the message of Paul. Paul understood that the core of the Gospel message is self-sacrifice. It is the King who became a servant that many might be saved. If this is a central tenant of the gospel then the mark of servanthood must be imprinted upon our lives.

So how can I serve more in 2017? First, a servant must have a master first **perspective**. The eyes of a servant are constantly on the master and not himself. This forces to ask then what freedom, taste, preference, comfort am I willing to lay down to serve my Lord this year? What do I currently have my eyes on that keep me from gazing on the majesty of Jesus? A servant perspective says Lord let me SEE the needs around me in your church to serve not Lord let the church see ME that they may serve me.

Second, a servant cannot serve two + servants. So what are you willing to stop today that competes for your heart. There is no comparison for our Lord, Savior and Master. This does not mean that there is no competition.

Servants chose to take a lower posture. To serve naturally signifies you are bending, working, in a way that elevates another over yourself. Service to others is an answer to pride.

Third, to serve Christ = to serve others. To serve Christ means to serve the world in a way that they will see your master. How are you serving? **Is your faith and worship characterized more by serving or being served?** Are you merely consuming?

Lastly there is great joy in serving. We do not serve out of obligation, necessity, or pity. We serve because we CAN. And we have strength to serve because the JOY of the Lord gives us strength.

Will you commit to serve Christ more in 2017? How are you willing to serve in this body of Faith this year? How are you willing to serve your family this year? How are you willing to serve your community?

May you do More in 2017. May you live a missional life that is marked by service. A life that is so marked that others will see your service and be moved to worship your KING!

Commit to Serve

Commit to Pursue (9:19-23)

Paul demonstrates the motivation the manner in which he serves: that He (though the grace and leading of the Spirit) might win the MORE.

God's Word challenges us to pursue those who do not know Him. Are you willing to commit to pursue those far from the Lord this year? You don't have to pursue the entire world at the same time. Who is your ONE? Pray for one daily. Serve one person. Commit ONE to the Lord that Jesus Christ might win ONE through you.

The commitment to pursue will require effort. It requires that we not ask a person to change to our ways before they seek the Lord. Rather, we are tasked to become like them! Paul doesn't ask them to change their ways, he meets them where they are. This is how Christ offers salvation. He was incarnated (coming to earth where we are) to live a life that we live (yet without sin) to offer us redemption, payment for our sins. "Everywhere the Savior becomes "all things to all men." To the hungry bread; to the thirsty, water; to the dead, resurrection; to the sick, a physician; to sinners, redemption (Cyril of Jerusalem)

He did not ask you to change your ways. He said believe, confess me as Lord and I will change you and give new birth. How can you change to reach/win others for the sake of Christ this year? It will require change, it requires pursuit

How the do we change? Here Scripture again offers us life and insight. We must know our neighbors to reach them. We must know others to serve them. The oft repeated proverb: they must know how much you care before they care how much you know. Commit to study, listen, and learn others in order to pursue them for Christ.

Ask yourself today: AM I ready to do all things to all men that some might be saved? Oh that our lives, homes, and church would be open to all persons that they might see the grace of Jesus Christ! Look at the empty seat near you... God is preparing a place for someone else.

Commit to Run (9:24-27)

It is not enough to simply puruse. We do not run with uncertainty or fight against the air. What a picture. If we live in our own strength we are someone who is fighting against the air. The air always wins! This is why you wear yourself out. You have no purpose. You are exerting energy but with no purpose! This was evidence in our last mission trip to Louisaiana. **The first day felt like fighting the air.** Although we were on a mission trip we had not dedicate that day, those hands, to Christ!

What are you running for today? Paul challenges us to run in a way that we may obtain a prize. Now some of you just perked up! What Prize? See we often strive for prizes and crowns. But the Lord desires for you to run and live in a way that you strive for an invisible crown. **So run in this world as to obtain in the next (Jerome)**

Its not one of silver. You cant sell it to the pawn store for cash. But this invisible crown (the world would call it worthless) is eternal and eternally worthwhile. So what are you striving for today? What would others say you are running for? What are your goals, dreams, and hopes? Are they man made or God shaped? Are you longing for a crown on your head that you made? Run so that the world will see your finish line! IT is Christ.

Remember to run with intentionality. Its not how you start its how you finish. Often we start the new year with our hearts ablaze for the Gospel and yet pitter

out by February. Run well! Run with certainty. **Ussain Bolt once said: "There are better starters than me but I am a strong finisher"** Finish well!

Run into the arms of the Father

Ask yourself today: AM I ready to do all things to all men that some might be saved? Oh that our lives, homes, and church would be open to all persons that they might see the grace of Jesus Christ!

How will I respond?

God calls us to do more! It is the Lord that does exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask, or think, according to the power that works in us.

How will you serve? Who will you pursue? Who is your ONE? How are you running?

Is He YOUR Savior this morning?

Have you lost the Wonder of the Savior? Find it today.

Notes

1Cor. 9:19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

- Any translation needs to signal the emphatic position of the first word in Greek the adjective free. Free is what I am – no slave to any human person- yet I put myself into slavery to every human person (NIGTC)
- The background of winning souls is found in Jesus words in Matt 18:15.
- In the ancient world, a slave had little freedom. Masters directed most of what their slaves did (HNTC)
- Paul's desire to see people draw near to Christ superseded his personal rights and preferences.

20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; 21 to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

- Under the law = Paul's technical terminology for people under the curse of the law because they sought justification before God through obedience to the law of Moses (TNTC).
- Paul's chief concern was to build the kingdom of Christ through the conversion of the lost. He refused to allow his freedoms to prevent others from following the ways of Christ (TNTC).
- Paul was not pretending to be what he is not but showing compassion (Augustine)

- “everywhere the Savior becomes “all things to all men.” To the hungry bread; to the thirsty, water; to the dead, resurrection; to the sick, a physician; to sinners, redemption (Cyril of Jerusalem)

23 Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

1Cor. 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*.

- Paul appeals to an sample drawn from the Greco-Roman Isthmian games. What is clear is that the prestige and commercial benefit of the Isthmian games to which the analogies doubtless allude would be very familiar to the readers at Corinth (NIGTC).
- Race - σταδίων - stadium and alludes to the pan-hellenic Isthmian games. The games were one of the 4 great festivals ranking second onto to the Olympic games and above those of Delphi and Nemea (NIGTC). They took place every 2 years.
 - Paul could have been in Corinth in the spring of AD 49 and 51 at the time of the games.
- Can the Corinthians not then exercise due self control or abstinence when what is at stake is not a garland made from vegetation for the brother or sister for whom Christ died (NIGTC).
- Christians must be eager to do what is good.
- So then my brothers, let us strive, knowing that the contest is close at hand and that many make voyages for corruptible contests, but not all are crowned – only those who have labored much and striven well. (2nd letter of clement)

- So run in this world as to obtain in the next (Jerome)

25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for an imperishable crown*.

- Crown there is strong evidence the garland or crown at the Isthmian games given to the winner was made first from plastered pine leaves although later perhaps celery (NIGTC).

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.

- Its difficult to know whether the words means shadow boxing or flinging punches in a genuine fight which find no target (NIGTC).

27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- Body – on the whole Paul uses body especially in theological contexts to denote day to day life as a whole in the public domain, the life of the whole person without reduction (NIGTC).

Thoughts

- His name/identity/character is Peace
- Peace increases with Christ
 - With Christ peace is constantly increasing
 - Is my life more peaceful today than yesterday?
- There is no end to His Peace
 - Peace that begins with Jesus has no end
 - Peace that does not begin with Jesus will end
 - In the end we all look for peace
- He is Prince
 - A prince is a ruler
 - Satan = prince of darkness
 - **11** Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. **12** For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers (principalities) , against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. (Eph 6:12)
 - **principality** = from the latin meaning "region or state ruled by a prince" attested by c1400.
 - **Rev. 2:12** "Write to the angel of the church in Pergamum:
 - "The One who has the sharp, double-edged sword says: **13** I know where you live—**where Satan's throne is!** And you are holding on to My name and did not deny your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness who was killed among you, where Satan lives.
 - Only one prince can rule at a time
 - When he rules and reigns my life/heart/soul is at peace
- Peace is a construct Prince-Peace
 - His hyphen name (think southern mary-sue, bobby-rae)
 - You cant separate Jesus from peace
 - You cant separate peace from Jesus
 - A longing for peace = a longing for Christ
- I need peace when at war

- My soul is at war against God
- Jesus brings reconciliation
- Some have seen and will never discuss the horrors they have experience in the battlefield.
 - How much darker is the war for my soul?
- Peace/Shalom = wholeness and right order
 - He puts my life in order
 - Do you ever get nervous at a new restaurant?
 - We don't have to order something new daily
 - If Christ is over us and in us then he orders. We taste and see that He is good.
 - Let him order for you
 - It is Jesus Christ that puts me in right standing before God. (Justification)
- Peace is intentional
 - He was not just born. He was born FOR/TO us. To you! To me!
 - This metaphysical abstract idea of "world peace" is impossible. We wont just all get along. You cant even get along with yourself!
 - Rather peace is deliberate and Advent was an intentional peace bomb in a world filled with chaos.

Illustration

Only one king/prince can rule at a time. King of the mountain. Am I trying to run back up the hill and claim a spot that is no longer mine?

Prince = the son of a monarch. Christ is not only the Son of the King He is also the King. Jesus is not a king in waiting. He is the King and he is ready to rule in your life.

Am I like prince john the phony king of England?

We have a debt of gratitude for those who have served for our freedom especially those in war. They have seen things in war that no man or woman should ever have to experience, all in the name of Peace. How much greater is the war for our soul and eternal destiny. This war is eternal. This war is at the core of our being. We don't need peace unless we are at war. Beloved we are at war!

If Christ is over us and in us then he orders. We taste and see that He is good. Let him order for you. My personal philosophy when at a new eatery is to order the chef special. I am not sure if I will like what is offered by I am trusting the expert. Give me your best. It is the same way with the Lord. We effecting say by making Him Lord "I need your peace and I trust you to order my life in a way that brings peace."