

# Serving

## Sowing Seeds, Growing Gardens—part 5

October 8, 2017

### **DAY 1: How Jesus saw role of serving and fulfilling our purpose**

1. We are to be engaged with lost people, seeking to lead them to the Lord for salvation. Let's review what we've studied:

**Care** for someone has the potential to soften hard hearts.

**Words:** build relationships thru conversations. Get to know them; listen; share gospel tidbits

**Kindness:** Kindness is a verb and a noun. It is mostly felt/seen as an attitude in you.

**Friends:** We give lost people a taste of what relationship with God is like (He calls us "friends") by involving them in our friendships.

2. This week we add the word, **Serving**.

*Matthew 20:26 (RSV) It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant,<sup>27</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;<sup>28</sup> even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

3. According to Jesus, what is the real measure of greatness?

4. When Jesus came to earth He was King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Yet, how did He look at Himself?

5. What was His purpose?

6. Serving God and serving people begins with a right attitude about serving. All too often serving becomes about us—what we're going to get out of it; if it's "in our skill set" or "in my areas of gifting," etc. Let's look at how Jesus looked at serving ...

*Luke 17:7 (RSV) "Will any one of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down at table'?*

*<sup>8</sup> Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and gird yourself and serve me, till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink'?*

*<sup>9</sup> Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?*

*<sup>10</sup> So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"*

7. Jesus uses an analogy from farming to drive home a spiritual point ...

*John 12:24 (RSV) Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

8. What point is He making about our serving? When convenient? Dabbling in it? Sacrificial?

## **DAY 2: How Paul saw the role of serving and fulfilling our purpose**

*2 Corinthians 4:5 (RSV) For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*

1. What was the content of Paul's main message?

2. How did Paul see his role?

3. Why did Paul serve?

*Galatians 6:9 (RSV) And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

4. Paul tells us that we are very likely to become "weary" in serving. If you feel that you're in good company!

5. What promise does he give to us, as a reason to endure in our serving?

6. How are we to see or view our serving? (v. 10)

7. What reasons can you think of as the importance of serving our Christian family?

*Titus 3:14 (RSV) And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.*

8. All through our series, Sowing Seeds, Growing Gardens, being fruitful has been the prime metaphor. What connections does Paul make between serving and being fruitful?

### **DAY 3: The apostle Paul, a case study in sowing seeds—part 1**

1. During the next three days we'll do a case study of how Paul “sowed seeds and grew gardens.” He traveled to the city of Thessalonica and started a church from scratch. In his first letter to them, he recounts what he did and why he did what he did.

*1 Thessalonians 2:1 (RSV) For you yourselves know, brethren, that our visit to you was not in vain;*

*<sup>2</sup> but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition.*

*<sup>3</sup> For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile;*

*<sup>4</sup> but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts.*

2. Just before Paul went to Thessalonica, his little mission team experienced severe persecution, including being whipped and incarcerated. How did that suffering affect Paul as he arrived in Thessalonica? (v. 2)

3. What kind of reception did Paul first receive in the city of Thessalonica? (v. 2)

4. Did Paul use any kind of manipulation or shady tricks in the ministry? (v. 3)

5. What motivated Paul? (v. 4)

6. What kept Paul honest regarding his methods? (v. 4)

7. As you engage with lost people to sow seeds, what stands out to you from Paul's example?

## DAY 4: The apostle Paul, a case study in sowing seeds—part 2

1. We continue with Paul recounting his methods of “sowing seeds.”

*1 Thessalonians 2:5 For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness;*

*<sup>6</sup> nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.*

*<sup>7</sup> But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children.*

*<sup>8</sup> So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

2. What does Paul recount about the ethics of his ministry? (v. 5)

3. What does Paul recount about his real motivations behind and driving the ministry? (v. 6)

4. What does Paul recount about how he treated people? (v. 7)

5. Paul compares and illustrates his gentleness with the people to be “like a nurse taking care of her children.” Which of the words below do you think “fit” what he’s trying to say?

Tenderness

Kindness

Warmth

Sincerity

Sweetness

Other? \_\_\_\_\_

6. As you think about having a ministry with lost people around you, how does Paul’s example shape how you’d like to relate to some of the lost people in your life?

## DAY 5: The apostle Paul, a case study in sowing seeds—part 3

1. Let's finish with how Paul recounted how he sowed seeds in Thessalonica.

*1 Thessalonians 5:9 For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God.*

*<sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behavior to you believers;*

*<sup>11</sup> for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you*

*<sup>12</sup> to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.*

2. How does Paul describe his work ethic while he did the ministry there? (v. 9)

3. Why did he work so hard? (v. 9)

4. How does Paul recount the integrity of his ministry in Thessalonica? (v. 10)

5. How does Paul recount how he thought about the people, and how he treated them? (v. 11)

6. What strikes you about the imagery of his being “like a father with his children?” (v. 11)

7. Paul was not just “gushy” toward them. He also gave them direction. He:

a. Exhorted them: to direct them toward what ought to be done, giving helpful “how to’s”

b. Encouraged them: giving the appropriate “atta boys” when he sensed they were timid in doing what was right.

c. Charged them: challenged them to “step up to the plate” and do what ought to be done.

8. He was leading them down two great roads in v. 12. What were they?

9. This week we looked at the key word, **serv~~ing~~**. We saw how Jesus thought of serving, how Paul thought of serving, and did a case study of Paul serving in Thessalonica. What is the most important thought or idea you take away from this week's devotions on serving?