



### “Changes the Way I Serve”

**Idea:** When you are confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus, it changes the way you serve.

**Intro:** On April 3, 1860, the Pony Express sent out its first rider. This was a private company that carried mail from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California by an organized relay of horseback riders. The service was expensive for its time. The cost of sending a letter by Pony Express riders was \$2.50 an ounce, but if the weather and horses held out and the Indians held off, that letter would complete the entire 2,000-mile journey in a speedy ten days.

The Pony Express was only in existence for seventeen months. When the telegraph line was completed between two cities, the service was no longer needed. However, the life of a Pony Express rider during that short time was tough. He was expected to ride seventy-five to one hundred miles a day, changing horses every fifteen to twenty-five miles. Other than the mail, the only baggage the rider carried was a small pouch of food and a small medical kit. In order to travel light and fast, the men always rode in shirtsleeves, even during the fierce winter weather.

This was a difficult and dangerous job as the ad in the San Francisco paper made clear. In 1860 the ad read, “WANTED: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk daily. Orphans preferred.”

Despite the danger of the job, the Pony Express never had a shortage of riders. The young men signed up with images of excitement, camaraderie, and the thrill of adventure swirling through their heads. Yet few of them envisioned that excitement would only occasionally punctuate the routine of the long, hard hours and loneliness of being in the saddle.

The discipline of service in many ways is like a Pony Express rider. It can have the appearance of glamour but is often better described as monotony. I am not saying the summons of our Lord to service is not the most spiritually grand and noble way to live a life because it is. I am saying that the call is typically as pedestrian as washing someone’s feet. Richard Foster described it perfectly:

“In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus’ call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel, than His word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance of martyrdom. But in service we are banished to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial.”

You see the ministry of serving may be as public as preaching and teaching, but more often it will be sequestered as nursery duty. It may be as visible as singing a solo, but usually it will be as unnoticed as operating the sound equipment. Serving may be as appreciated as a good testimony in a worship service, but typically it’s as thankless as washing dishes after a church social. Most service, even that which seems the most glamorous, is like an iceberg. Only the eye of God ever sees the larger, hidden part of it.

Service takes many shapes. It is baby-sitting for neighbors, taking meals to families in flux, running errands for the

homebound, providing transportation for the one whose car broke down, feeding pets and watering plants for vacationers, and hardest of all serving at home. You see serving is as commonplace as the practical needs it seeks to meet. So, as Christ-followers, why do we do it? Why do we serve? The answer is found in the question? We are followers of Jesus Christ.

**Inquiry:** In Matthew 20 and Mark 10 we find an interesting story. One day the sons of Zebedee (James and John) came with their mother to Jesus and asked Him for a favor. They asked Jesus to grant that they could set on His right and left side in the Kingdom. They requested a high position of leadership. I am not sure what their intentions were. I want to believe they were noble and not self-seeking, for I think we should ask great things of God. Nevertheless, Jesus used this request as an opportunity to teach His disciples how greatness was measured in the Kingdom.

Read Mark 10:42-45.

Jesus' point was that the proper perspective is to put others first and not even consider yourself. Jesus, the King of Kings, came not to be served but to serve. John the Baptist understood this principle. When people began to be attracted to Jesus' ministry rather than his own, John said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease*" (John 3:30). John knew that his ministry and service was not about himself; it was about Jesus. He served because of the work of Jesus in his life. Therefore, he desired to put the spotlight on Christ in his service. Likewise, the apostle Paul was convinced that when you are confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus it changes the way you live. He was also convinced that it changes the way you serve.

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul is defending his right as an apostle to receive support from the church. In doing so, he also defends his right to give up his privileges in service of all. The Corinthian church had many problems. One of their quandaries was a misunderstanding and misuse of spiritual

gifts. They exercised the gifts as if they were given for the building up of themselves rather than for the service and help of others. Paul used the testimony of his life to show the Corinthians that when Jesus changes your life, He changes the way you serve.

Read 1 Cor 9:15-23.

Worship and service are closely connected in the Bible. In fact the Greek word λατρεύω is used interchangeably to describe worship and service in the NT. The reality is all humans are worshippers. We either worship God or something else. And all humans are servants. We either serve God, we serve ourselves, or we serve someone else.

The worship of God is nowhere defined in Scripture. When we consider how these terms are used we learn that worship is not confined to praise. It also involves deeds done in acknowledgement of God's attributes. Our service is an expression of our worship of God. When we serve others in the name of Jesus, we are declaring that Jesus is worthy of our service. We are declaring His worthship. Therefore, we dare not neglect serving the Lord in His church. Serving is just as important in our spiritual growth as reading the Bible, prayer, and singing praise with the church. Service is a vital component of our discipleship.

When confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus, it changes the way we serve in three ways.

### **1. I set aside my rights. (1 Cor 9:15)**

Paul was an apostle. The position and authority Jesus had given Paul gave him the right to demand or require certain things from the church. Paul, however, made no use of those rights. Like the Lord Jesus, he surrendered his rights. Jesus set aside His right to be served as King and came to serve humanity (Mark 10). The way up is down.

Paul set aside his rights. There was no sense of entitlement in his life and ministry. He was not concerned about things always being to his liking and preference. He didn't expect anyone to serve him. Likewise, we must set aside our rights. We must eradicate any sense of entitlement from our lives. Instead, we must make our service about others.

Appl: When you gather with the church do you come to be served or to serve? Spectators expect to be served. Participants expect to serve.

## **2. I give myself for the sake of others. (1 Cor 9:19)**

The fact that Jesus had sacrificed Himself for Paul was something the apostle never got over. Jesus served Paul with the gospel, so Paul gave himself in service to others because of the gospel. He was compelled to serve.

If I am not careful my service can become all about me. You too, if you are not careful your service can become fixated upon you. The ministry of Paul was never about Paul. It was always about others hearing the gospel, coming into relationship with Jesus, and growing into a mature follower of Christ. Paul gave himself for the sake of others. He spent himself for the sake of others. He worked long, hard hours as a tent maker during the day to pay the bills. Then, in the evenings and on the weekends, he spent his time preaching, teaching, discipling, and serving the church.

Appl: In your service are you giving yourself away for the sake of others? Some of you may not serve at all. Perhaps you think that you have *put your time in*. So you've retired from service like people retire from a career. Please show me where that is found in Scripture. You won't find it in the Bible. Instead, what

you will find are men and women serving God till their final breath. Paul preached, wrote, disciplined, and evangelized until his life was taken. He could have easily decided in the Roman prison that he had put his time in, but that is not what he did. While chained to a Roman guard he continued to witness, write Scripture, and encourage the church. He gave himself for the sake of others. Why?

### **3. I serve others for the sake of the gospel. (1 Cor 9:23)**

The gospel was Paul's motivation for service. The same is true for you and me. The number one motivation and the only thing that will continue to energize you is the gospel. You won't serve long from:

- Pity
- Guilt
- Desire to feel good
- Praise from others
- Desire to see social change

We serve for one reason...the gospel. Jesus has apprehended us; thus, we desire to see others apprehended by Jesus. Therefore, everything we do in service within the church, we do for the sake of the gospel.

- Parking lot greeter
- Welcome tent
- Choir
- Musician
- Small group leader
- Kids Church
- Kitchen team
- Finance committee

We serve because we desire to see the gospel change people's lives. We serve because each area of our ministry labors together in the work of the gospel.

**Conclusion:** What was your motivation, as you got ready to come to church this morning? Was it to be served or to serve? Were you hopeful that the music would be to your liking and that the preacher would have a good message? Were you looking forward to be blessed in your small group time? Now, none of those desires are necessarily wrong. They, however, shouldn't be your focus because they weren't the focus of Jesus or Paul. They desired to serve rather than be served. The same will be true of you when you catch a glimpse of the glory and grace of Jesus. It'll change the way you serve because it will change you.

The truth is the Lord expects you to serve in His church. He has gifted you to serve in His church. And He empowers you to serve in His church.

So how can you serve at RLBC?

- Ministry Teams (see brochure available in the hallway racks)
- Adult Small Groups
  - Leader/Teacher
  - Assistant Leader
  - Care-group Leader
  - Outreach Leader
- Children's Ministry
  - Co-Leader (Pre-K – K, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> small groups)
  - 2 helpers needed in infant room during small groups
  - Pre-K Kids Church Leader
  - Game Leader for TeamKid
  - 2 helpers needed for TeamKid
  - 3 nursery helpers during worship
  - 1 nursery helper during TeamKid
  - Nursery Coordinator
  - 3-4 helpers for Good News Club
- Hospitality Team
  - 2 Greeters (parking lot, doors, tent)

- Committees
- Worship
  - Choir
  - Musicians
  - Media Team
- Evangelism
  - Following up with guests
  - Personally sharing gospel with others
  - Inviting people

Our church will only be as strong as our weakest servant. Lets improve our serve.