

Let's Serve together / Equipped to Serve – Bride of Christ

For 11 weeks we have been seeing and hearing God's promise that he has called & equipped us to serve. Today, we end this series with a phrase I believe God is giving us to help us see what He has called & equipped us to.

Servants of MORE II Cor 4:5 (ESV) For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. *I want to challenge us to memorize this vs this advent season as we begin to talk next week about SENT. But what is a servant of more. Jesus said: 1) Servants of more offer love even after a person has hurt them. When Peter asked how often we should forgive the one who sins against me – Jesus said 70x7. More than we can count – give love back.*
2) *Servants of more give to those who could never repay.* In Luke 14:12 Jesus said to a host: "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. 13 Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you." 3) *Servants of more love their enemies* Jesus said, Luke 6:32: *If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? But love your enemies.*

"The love for equal is a human thing. To love what is loving and lovely-the world smiles. The love for the less fortunate or the unlovely is a beautiful thing. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world. The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing - the poor for the rich, the one who fails loving the winner. This bewilders the world. And then there is the love for the enemy - love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain. The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. **And this love, conquers the world.**" Fredrick Buechner: *The Magnificent Defeat* Servants of more, like Jesus, risk love.

Jun 17, 2015, Dylan Roof murdered 9 in hate. 2 days later - 9 families gave mercy – to Dylan, but also to a town of angry people who wanted to start riots. Where there was injustice – 9 lay dead and people were hurting – mercy came and crushed anger and hatred. Their forgiveness was praised by some and ridiculed by others. But it won over a city. Pic, Charleston March 2017

Servants of more don't just risk love for others out there – the risk love in the bride, the body, to the brothers and sisters.
1) *Servants of more, challenge us with love and truth not afraid to lose approval or friendship so we can no more of Jesus.*
2) *Servants of more, challenge us to be open and vulnerable because we see this in them and they know a Jesus we want.*
3) *Servants of more, move me to pray for more servants of more for our kids, our body, our community.*
4) *Servants of more, make me want more of Jesus. Their life is different: Its Full: of rest, repentance, sorrow, joy, peace, hope: more.*

What could happen in our hope-LESS world – if we followed Christ's calling to be servants of MORE?

01. What does a servant of MORE look like? *See lots of stories – Stephanas and others*
02. How do we become this servant of MORE? *What has Jesus done for us to be a servant of more with Him?*
03. What could this mean – if together we lived as servants of MORE? 7

01. What does a servant of MORE look like?

I Cor 16:15-18 (ESV) 15 Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. Same word in Gk for both words.
Stephanas saw all service as ministry. He didn't see just *programmed/organized ministry as "true serving"*. He saw all service as ministry: loving the widow when no one saw and caring for the hurting in his home – was ministry. Understanding that all service is ministry - led him to be devoted to serving in his home, the body, & the community.
* *He is noted in this verse as devoting himself to the **service of the saints.***
* *But we also know Paul baptized his whole family 1 Cor 1:16 and this happened most believe because Stephanas believed and led his whole household to hear of Jesus. In addition, he led his whole house to be servants.*
* *Corinth church was noted for how it served the community. No doubt, the leader of this body of servants led the way.*

16 be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. *(every fellow) implies all of us are workers.*
Stephanas saw all believers as servants of Jesus Christ. Stephanas got this – and lived to serve together with this body and lived to serve the body. This led him to go to Paul and serve him as vs 17 says ...

17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours.

He refreshed the spirit of Paul as well as many in their own church in Corinth. Refreshed= invigorated and energized the life of Jesus in believers. He wasn't just a RedBull of encouragement that wore off in days. But rather this refreshment meant he gave lasting energy to the life of Christ in other believers.

This refreshing of others is the evidence of a **servant of MORE**. **What did this look like?** Sometimes it helps to see what something is not – in order to see what it is. So let's look at what a servant of less is... 11

Servants of less / Around them - we want less, expect less, hope less ... *Marva was, well around her you felt like you were in a prison of NO. Everything couldn't be done – or wouldn't matter. Not only did she squash ideas to love and give and serve – but I usually walked away a little down about why we were doing what we were doing. Others are like Neutral Ned. This was what we called a guy in our Yth Min in Tex. He wasn't critical, down or full of no hope – he just – was neutral and was never a servant who led us to want more of Jesus.*

Servants of less – often lead us to have LESS hope and want LESS of Jesus. Ultimately, servants of less serve -but they expect little results that matter. Why? Servants of less functionally believe the brokenness of this world is greater than the finished work of Christ and all that it gives us. *Holy Spirit – forgiveness, healing, hope, love* Some of us have quit serving in the body & in the community because you don't think it matters. Servants of less have crushed the hope in your soul. I'm sorry – let's be the bride of Christ – the body that is known as servants of more.

Stephanas made others MORE in Christ. He encouraged others and helped others believe that God loved them MORE than they knew. He helped others love God MORE than they did. He led others to give MORE, serve MORE, engage MORE and be bold for Christ MORE. **Ultimately Stephanas & all ...**

Servants of more believe and live this truth: the finished work of Christ is greater than the brokenness of this world. *BOB TAYLOR was a servant more. He was WWII vet with old green navy tats all over his arms. Some were R-rated. Never tried to hide them. Said they were reminders of God's amazing grace. He loved Jesus in a way that was contagious. He was always helping, serving, giving, and listening – always! And, he would always stop anywhere and pray for anyone – middle of the hallway, parking lot, bathroom. Dude prayed and you felt cared for and love and I always left his presence feeling MORE in the presence of Jesus. He was a servant of more.* 15

02. How do we become this servant of MORE?

II Corinthians 4:5 (ESV) For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. In these 3 words are how we become servants of more. They are not just titles or names for Jesus. They are who he was, what he did, and what he is doing to bring us into his life. Jesus was a servant of more. And, he calls us to this life with him. -

A servant of more – is the life and invitation of Jesus.

- *Jesus ... Saved us to MORE.* **Jesus (God saves)** came to rescue us from Holy God's judgment on our rebellion. He took our place of eternal punishment!!! **He risked love in serving us – but this is his how we are redeemed, rescued – saved.** If we faith his work we not only have this punishment removed – we receive the life of Jesus in us and become his son, his servant. ***I want to be very clear here:***

We do not have our punishment removed because we serve. We do not have the life of Christ because we serve. Rather, because Christ served us with His life – we get his life & are called to be servants of more.

1) Have you faithed Jesus' work to make you right with God and remove his punishment from you? Only by faith in Jesus' servant work – do we begin to become a servant of more. Amazing, but this is not all.

- *Christ ... Transforms us for MORE.* The finished work of Christ – thru God's Spirit - is restoring us to be the servant we were intended to be - one who knows and gives perfect love, joy, hope like Christ. *Example: Chris was Mr Positive. Everything he said, did, was positive and fun all through college. Then his parents divorced and tore their family a part. Parents were hateful to each other and to him. Siblings were divided and literally his whole world fell apart. He was never the same.* Positive attitudes do not bear up under the weight of the brokenness of this world. Bob Taylor had way more than a positive attitude. He had hope & peace in the midst of despair and chaos. *I want that.* 2) **The Spirit of God is changing us – to be servants of more.** *Who have hope in Christ when things are awful, the love of Christ when it hurts, and the peace of Christ in chaos.*

- *Lord ... Calls us to MORE with Him.* At this moment – the Word says Jesus our LORD is also serving still. He is intervening before God the Father for you and I – shutting down the accusations of the enemy. At the same time, he is calling your neighbor, family member to Him. He is still serving – even now. *We are called to be fellow workers, laborers, servants with Christ in God's redemption plan. Not optional. It is our call.* I Corinthians 7:22 (ESV) he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. 22

03. What could this mean – if together we lived as servants of MORE?

I Cor 16:15 (ESV) Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—

DR WARE – retired minister in 1st church I served in. I thought he was the janitor because he was up cleaning so much. Found out later he served in retirement homes all over our town. All this was behind the scenes – this is a servant of more and it had a huge impact on me when I saw this retired pastor was a servant – all the time.

1) As we embrace ALL SERVICE as ministry – we will proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord in our body, our homes, and our community.

When we see all service as ministry and all ministry as service – we won't make what we do define service. It is a disease of the church that sucks the life out of God's servants – this idea that ministry is the most important form of service - maybe the only kind of service God is equipping us for. Programmed efforts to serve are needed & good and I'm going to talk about how living as servants of more affect our corporate service efforts. But let's ask the question: If we only serve in these walls, or if we only serve when it is programmed – are we really being servants or are we just being servant-like? Our kids see this, our friends see this and those outside the body see this kind of service and this doesn't smell like –we are really servants.

Even more they are watching us asking the silent question – is your Jesus a servant like you? Did he just come and serve for a moment – pretending to be a servant to gain my service? Was it just a means to an end?

We must repent of this kind of service church. This isn't Jesus or us. We are called to be servants of more: full time, life time, eternity bound – servants of Jesus Christ our Lord. As we begin to see service is ministry we will begin to daily repent when we don't live this way – and declare Jesus Christ as Lord as we do.

NATHAN BARLOW – Med doc, Ethiopia, 60 years, Mossy Foot – debilitating condition found in rural areas on people who work in volcanic soil. Swelling and ulcers in feet & legs, which leads to deformities, swelling, ongoing ulcers, and other infections which make people with mossy foot social outcasts where they live – like lepers in the bible. Once he got a toothache and had to leave his home in Ethiopia. He told the dentist – I don't ever want to leave where I live and serve again because of a tooth. All teeth were pulled & he was given dentures. His daughter brought him home at the end of his life as health was failing. He couldn't handle it – and she took him back to spend his last days there so he could serve and be served.

I Cor 16:16-17 (ESV) be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus,

2) As we embrace we are ALL SERVANTS of Jesus, God will unleash an army of servants of more.

Here we see the body of Christ organized – corporately going to serve – Paul.

We have a good number of servants all across this body in organized service. The numbers are about 60% of the adults in this body serve and a good number of our students and children do as well.

What would happen if we all saw that we are servants of a Jesus? I believe God could unleash an army of servants of more – to our body, our homes, and this community.

1) *Student Ministry – 8 HS & 4 adults work with MS. 3 Adults work with our HS. This is good – but we need more parents and adults discipling our students. Imagine the impact we could have with a bigger core of adults walking along side these students, pouring into these students – calling them to be more in Christ?*

2) *Summit Kids – Imagine us never having to ask again for servants – because we all saw we were servants. Imagine DJ and our leaders being able to focus on discipling adult leaders and kids and do parent ministry and not recruiting.*

3) *Serving our Inner-City Brothers and Sisters – ONE8 Fund and Ministry Together - Imagine the church we could plant if we all served by giving extravagantly. Imagine the impact of the gospel to heal racial divide and brokenness if we served together more. Here is a team down at TBOC church.*

PICS – from our Saturday service.

4) *Serving together at the Sharing Shed Christmas (Sat., Dec 9 8am - 3:30) We have 12 families to serve. We have about ½ the volunteers we need.*

5) *CGs – Imagine us uniting together to serve one another and our community in our CGS.*

- *We would continue to start more and more CGs because some of you who are equipped to lead would get out to lead.*
- *We would see an army of people loving neighbors together because we would be doing this together.*
- *We are baptizing – next week – will you join us in the water. Right now we have 2 – I think if an army of servants get after serving our community to declare Jesus Christ as Lord – we would have to have a whole service just to baptize – imagine that. I can!*

I Cor 16:17-18 (ESV) 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.

Paul – the human author – wrote this letter to the Corinth church from Ephesus at a time when there was much growth in the church across this part of the world – but there was also much persecution and Paul was in it. As well – he received a letter from Corinth telling him of issues in the church - divisions, gross sexual immorality, law suits, abuse of the Lord's supper, doctrinal lies about Christ's return, and more. Paul no doubt – was down and wondering – does it matter?

3) As we embrace that we are completely satisfying to God in Christ – we will live as servants of more and refresh others to be servants of more.

If you are a servant of Jesus, who is trying to be a servant of more & struggling right now, you feel defeated:

- ***God notices you!***

If you are on the sidelines – because of wounds, hope-LESS-ness, - *only one thing is going to bring you back to being a servant of more – being captured by this truth ...*

- ***God is satisfied with you!***

Enduring and thriving as a servant of more isn't about gifts or titles or things going right. It is believing and resting in this truth – God is satisfied with you no matter what the results of your service.

We must be around other servant's or more when we are doing great or feeling – less – hopeless.

We all need to be refreshed – often. Let's live together as servants of more – for Christ's sake.

When I WAS AT MY LOWEST 2008 (depressed, done, overwhelmed) many in this body continued to love, give, listen, challenge – and point me to Jesus Christ as Lord. To this day, there are many things I am thankful for at the Summit – church's planted, lives changed, community affected – but just as much – I live in the midst of many servants of more who continue to refresh my life daily – thank you, thank you, thank you.

MARVA J DAWN has spent her whole life refreshing the body – calling servants to be servants of more – in books (Unfettered Hope: A call to Faithful Living in an Affluent Society), conferences, and friendships. She has 4 masters degrees and a PHD but she gives most of what she makes away to refresh others in word and deed.

Imagine a whole body of servants of more – declaring not themselves but Jesus Christ as Lord – for Christ's sake. Our homes, our body, our community – will never be the same!