

Investing: Flesh Vs. Spirit

Part 3: Your Assignments (8/30/26)

- ***Please get out your cell phones and bring up a note taking app.***
- Or your piece of paper to write on.

Please turn to ***Matthew 21:28-32.***

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:

- Whatever we plant, we harvest. Whatever we sow, we reap.
- If we plant Blue Spruce, what do we get at harvest?
- If we plant Fraser Fir, what do we get at harvest?
- If we plant Blue Spruce and expect Fraser, what are we? [Deceived]
- If we plant Blue Spruce and then blame God for harvesting Spruce, accusing Him of punishing us, then we're doing what to God? [Mocking Him.]
- When Jesus returns, He gathers His believers and determine our rewards or lack thereof...sometimes knows as "The Judgement Seat of Christ."
- He's not deciding whether they're Saved or not...that's already been determined.
- He asks "what did you do with the time, energy, and talents I gave you?"
- The time/energy/talents He gave were HIS—we were just "managers" of it while He was away.
- He expects an ROI—Return on Investment.
- He only gives us time/energy/talent based on our ability—He never tells us to do something that's "above our paygrade."
- Let's self-examine and ask: "how am I spending the time/energy/talent I have? For myself or for Jesus?"
- Jesus won't be impressed how many sports games we put our kids into, or how much we doomscrolled, binge-watched, or video gamed. No nods of respect for going to Texas Roadhouse for the prime rib, beers we chugged, or vacations we went on. No kudo's for working 10 hours a day, building a successful business, or the deck we built out front.
- Let's co-labor with Him to build His Kingdom.

Matthew 21:28–32 (NIV): "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he **changed his mind and went.** "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' **but he did not go.** "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered.

What inspires Jesus to say "well done" is when He sends us to do something, and we do it.

TODAY ***I hand out assignments and I'm getting specific.*** For the last two weeks, most of you sat here or watched online and perhaps you said “amen!” to the points I made.

- Attending Church isn't working for Jesus.
- Listening to sermons and Bible Studies, and agreeing with them, isn't making an ROI for the Lord.
- Coming to the Men's Breakfast, eating, and listening to Kim's teaching isn't working for Christ.

Getting an assignment and doing it is.

Quick reminder: **this sermon series is not about being Saved or maintaining one's Salvation.** I am an eternal security guy.

These messages are about taking the investment Jesus made in every one of us and earning Him a return.

Before I give out assignments, I'm going to say 4 things and each of these things could—and have been—an entire sermon each.

#1 There is no service without sacrifice.

[Rom 12:1 ESV] 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

I was surprised at the **translation of the word sacrifice, because it means “victim.”** In proper context to the NT Scriptures, however, it means WILLING victim. Would you take a bullet for your spouse? Jump in front of a charging bear to save your kid? Of course...you're willing to be the victim of a bullet or bear for the sake of those you love.

You're being like Jesus: substituting yourself for them. Jesus died on the Cross FOR us, as a “propitiation” [substitute] for our sins. He died in our place, then gave us His righteousness and everlasting life.

Every time you serve, you make yourself a willing victim for someone else.

You give something up, something that gives you pleasure, something that builds you, something that adds to you... *for the sake of someone else ... and that glorifies God.*

Jesus loves that.

It's what inspires Him to say "well done!"

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Philippians 2:3-7 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant."

I say this because in the past 21 years, I still get **Christians who are flabbergasted by this.**

If I quote the verses about in a sermon, they say "amen!" Yet when myself or someone else asks them to serve, and they get the "deer in the headlights" look then respond with something like: "but I'll miss the sermon! I'll have to get up early on a Sunday and that's my day of rest!" In other words, the "amen!" goes away as soon as they realize that service will cost them something...something they enjoy. **Welcome to being a Christian.**

- If you're one of the Kid's Church volunteers, you sacrifice the hearing the sermon.
- You also give up the energy it takes to teach or help a bunch of energetic children who can get on your nerves.
- If you're on the Gatekeepers Safety Team, you sacrifice worship and the sermon.
- If you're on the Worship Team, you give up a few hours on Friday night to come and practice, then you come to church early to practice some more.
- If you clean the church, you give up a few hours and labor to do so.
- If you come to make the coffee and prepare snacks, you give up some sleep to get here early to prepare.
- If show up early Sunday morning to pray, you're giving up sleep time on a Sunday, your only day of rest.

On the flip side....

- If you're one of the Kid's Church workers, you help disciple the next generation and you give their parents a break.
- If you're a Gatekeeper, you're watching over the flock and to help protect them.
- If you're on the WT, you're leading everyone else into the presence of God.
- Cleaning the Church is you caring about God's house and the people who come here.
- Preparing the coffee/snacks is hospitable to anyone who attends.
- Praying before service helps to cover the flock with the presence and blessing of God.

Every time we serve, we give something up.

When we willingly do so for others' sake, we glorify Jesus.

We inspire Him to say “well done!”

#2 No one is exempt. All Christians are called to serve. Men, women, introverts, extroverts, old, young, working, or retired.

- Working people might be tempted to say *“I’m too busy, the retired people should serve. They have more time.”*
- Retired people might be tempted to say *“I already did my part, let the younger generation take over and do their part.”*

[Rom 12:1 ESV] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12:2 that makes no exceptions and remember what Jesus said:
EVERYONE is given a “talent” and given “according to their ability.”
No one is denied a talent, therefore no one is exempt from serving.

Solomon equated excuses with a man hedging himself in and being unable to move:

Proverbs 15:19: “The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.”

#3: It's better to give than to receive.

Acts 20:35 ESV: “In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Do you know anyone who, when you're around them, **they drain the life from you?** Do you like being around such people? *People like that are always looking to take, and rarely looking to give.*

So let's not be like that. In *Acts 20:35* we see “the weak” and this doesn't mean merely finances or physical strength. Weak in faith, weak in love, weak in joy, weak in spirit. Let's show up in life ready to help the weak.

We're not meant to stay this way. Jesus transforms us to become strong in spirit, faith, and love. Ready to give & work from the overflow of the Holy Spirit.

If you find yourself in a pattern of consistently being needy, year after year, then it's time to repent, grow up, and press into the Lord to fulfill you. You have an ROI for Jesus you need to get moving on, and being perpetually needy isn't doing the trick.

Now it's time for your assignment. If you have a note taking option on your phone, now is the time to use it, or prepare to write on paper.

Every Christian needs a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy in their lives...and today you pick yours.

PAUL *is a person you consider an authority figure, a coach.*

- Someone to teach, correct, encourage, and receive advice from.
- To rebuke you, hold you accountable, prophesy over you, call you out, or call you up.
- This person **isn't** going to become your buddy, their job is to disciple you.
- As the pastor of our church, I'm already in this role corporately.
- I'm willing to spend time with each of you as I can, but your Paul needs to be someone willing to focus on you. Someone to spend one on one time coaching you...so choose someone other than me please.

BARNABAS *is a fellow brother or sister in Christ to stand by your side.* He or she will pray with you, laugh with you, cry with you, help bear your burdens, hang out, do ministry and life with you, your buddy. You can and should have several of these.

TIMOTHY *is a brother or sister in Christ whom YOU are discipling/coaching.* Someone you choose to encourage, hold accountable, teach, correct, advise, rebuke, call them out, or call them up.

- Pick at least 1 person to be your Paul. You can choose more. Write their names down.
- Pick at least 2 people to be your Barnabas, or more...as many as you want of these. Write their names down.
- Pick 1 person to be your Timothy. Write down their name.

After the sermon today, approach your Paul(s) and ASK if they want that role.

If someone approaches you to be their Paul, strongly consider that you should say “YES.” Don’t make it about you under the guise of false humility: *“Me? I’m not qualified, I’m no coach, I don’t know enough Bible, I...”*

We’re going to start working for Jesus here, at Church, and we’re starting on Sunday mornings. Let’s drill down even further:

- If you’ve been coming to Gateway for 1 year or more, please raise your hand.
- If you’ve been coming to Gateway for less than a year, please raise your hand. *Please keep your hands up.*

Everyone whose does not have their hand raised, turn and look at those who do. Here on Sunday mornings....

- My focus is on them and not on you. That’s who I’m choosing to give my time/energy/talent to on Sunday morning. [PUT HANDS DOWN]
- If you’d like time with me then message me, call me, or we can make time not on Sunday morning at church to get together.
- Go to the person who chose you to be their Paul *because it’s more blessed to give than it is to receive.*
- If no one chose you to be their Paul, approach the person you chose as a Timothy and pour into them.
- If someone has selected you to be their Timothy and approaches you, give it a try and allow it.
- If you already have a few Barnabas types, and you’re already spending time with them, *allot time on Sunday morning to be a Paul.* Why? It’s more blessed to give than to receive.
- When we only hang out with our Barnabas types here on Sundays, that’s how “clicks” are formed.
- *It’s better to spend time with Barnabas types after or outside of Sunday service.*
- I don’t want to see anyone in this church sitting alone and ignored...and I’m not enough to get to all of them. I need your help.

MINISTRY FOR INTROVERTS. If you're an introvert, I'll wager your anxiety is rising with every word I say. The classic example of the introvert is this: *dislikes group situations and interaction, but thrives with one-on-one interaction.*

If you're an introvert, don't hedge yourself in with thorns.

Instead, choose one person to be your Paul, one to be a Barnabas, one to be a Tim and *enter into fellowship with them here on Sunday morning.* You can even choose another introvert type who looks and likely is just as anxious as you.

Go to them, introduce yourself if you don't know them, sit with them, and give.

#4 about service: God will have us operate within our own ability, but not within our comfort zone.

I taught TKD for 20 years and my calling was to bring out the true abilities of my students. When most started, they didn't believe they could throw a kick over their heads. They said things like *"I'm not flexible."* I would then teach them stretching techniques as well as how to kick. As time went on, and they allowed me to coach them, their kicks would get higher and higher until the day came when they finally threw a high one.

Working for Jesus STRETCHES you and I; He brings out our full potential according to the talents He's given us. He does not allow us to stay in our comfort zones. Be willing to be stretched.

There are several other ministries here at Church on Sunday mornings...and they all require sacrifice, giving, and stretching:

- Pre-Service Prayer (9:30 AM). [Not for personal prayer.]
- Coffee/Snacks prep.
- Gatekeepers Safety Team.
- Prayer for Offering.
- Testimony MC.
- Worship Team—see Kim (true talent required!)
- Cleaning the Church.
- Kid's Church teachers/volunteers.

What other things get an ROI for Jesus?

- Giving your testimony.
- Bring something to eat or drink on Sundays: bake a pie, make some muffins, some cookies, etc. Bring a pitcher of lemonade or iced tea. No booze.

- Approach someone looking down, scared, alone, or stressed: offer to listen to them, pray for them (be their Paul or Barnabas).
- Give someone a ride who has no transportation, bring them to church.
- Money donations to the church (*Romans 12:13*).

NEXT WEEK is the Grand Opening, and *I will need everyone in full giving mode.*

I will be focused on new faces that I see, making them feel welcome. I'm asking you to do the same.

I would like everyone to act like you're the host. Let the Light of Christ shine brightly within you, so that every newcomer who walks through that door is blown away by the love and truth of God. *Come prepared to serve.*

The Sunday after that, same thing...come to give and serve. The Holy Spirit moves mightily through any church when its members realize that **it's more blessed to give than to receive.**