

Theme: The local church community is where we are taught humble servanthood as a virtue, where we practice acts of servanthood, and where our souls are shaped so that our whole life becomes characterized by the attitude and practices of servanthood.

I. TBS School & Community To Form Marines

- A. TBS - starting school for Marine Officers
- B. Teaches you how to be an Officer - classes
- C. Also, a community & culture to teach and form you
- D. The Church is also a school & community to teach and form us in servanthood
- E. Question 71: Are Christians only called to be part of the universal Church?
No, all Christians are called to be part of local churches where they are led and cared for by elders, worship God, learn the Scripture, receive the sacraments, pray together, **serve one another**, and carry out the Great Commission together.

II. A Community of Free Servants

- A. Christians have been set free by Christ
You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13
 - 1. The essence of the Gospel is true freedom!
 - 2. The Christ and His Gospel we are free from the slavery of fear because of the penalty of sin!
 - 3. Through Christ and His Gospel we are free of the slavery to popular opinion!
 - 4. Through Christ and His Gospel we are free from the slavery of our own desires and the power of sin!

You, my brothers, were called to be free. **But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature;** rather, serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13

- a. Our culture thinks freedom is doing whatever I want and following my own desires - but this is the worst form of slavery! Don't indulge the sinful nature!
 - b. No matter how much we think our self-identity and desires should be followed, this is actually slavery!
 - c. True freedom is the ability to choose to follow God's moral law, not the simple ability to choose what we want to do. Choosing sin is the worst and most degrading form of slavery!
5. As God's image-bearers, freedom is becoming more like God, not choosing to indulge sin and become less like God. Sin is ALWAYS slavery!
- B. Christians use our freedom to become servants!
You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; **rather, serve one another in love.** Galatians 5:13
 - 1. We use our freedom to become servants of others!
 - 2. True freedom leads not to radical independence but to the expression of love by being the servant of others.
 - 3. We were created to serve one another in love
The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
 - a. God's Law is a description of how we show love to one another
 - b. God's Law is the definition and description of love because God is love. And because we are made in God's image we are made to love - which is expressed in serving our neighbors.

c. True freedom is the fulfillment of God's Law and our creation as God's image-bearers. Consequently, to violate God's Law, including the call to serve one another in love, is the ultimate slavery!

4. For a Christian to use their freedom to indulge in sin rather than in serving others is to voluntarily choose to return to slavery!

III. The Community (And School) of Servanthood

A. We are called to serve others with our gifts

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:7–11

1. Each of us is gifted by God's grace in ways we can use to serve others.
2. We serve others with the strength given by God, not our own strength.
3. We serve so that God receives praise and glory.
4. Once again, this is an expression of love (v8), and works out in practical ways such as showing hospitality to others (v9).

B. We are called to humble servanthood modeled on Christ
Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Philippians 2:3–7

1. The culture operates out of selfish ambition and empty conceit - but we are to operate out of humility.
2. Our sinful tendency is to be narcissistic, looking out for number 1 - but we are to look out for the needs of others.
3. We are to be molded to have the attitude and mind of Christ, Who forsook His Divine prerogatives and became a humble servant - even to the point of death.
4. The Christian life is not modeled on the world or its ways, but rather on the life and ways of Jesus Christ, Who came not to be served but to serve and to lay down His life for others.

C. The Church is the community and school where we are taught and shaped into servanthood

1. Note that most of these instructions are aimed at how people within the church treat one another.
2. If we can't learn to practice servanthood with our brothers and sisters within our congregation, there is little hope we will ever act as servants to our unbelieving family, neighbors, and friends.

3. But we are called to be servants not only to believers but also to unbelievers
Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:10
 - a. We are to do good - letting love produce acts of service - towards others.
 - b. The first priority is our fellow believers within the church, but we must practice the good of servanthood with all people, whether or not they are believers.
 - c. This is how we fulfill the second commandment to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.
4. The local church community is where we are taught humble servanthood as a virtue, where we practice acts of servanthood, and where our souls are shaped so that our whole life becomes characterized by the attitude and practices of servanthood.

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I understand true freedom?
 1. Our culture defines itself by 'freedom'
 2. But the cultural view of 'freedom' is actually slavery!
 3. Freedom is not the ability to choose what I want, but the ability and desire to choose the true, the beautiful, and the good for which humans were created.
 4. Freedom is ultimately the ability to align my desires and behaviors with the way God has created me.
 5. Don't let the constant message from our culture deceive you!

- B. Am I growing in humble servanthood?
 1. The Holy Trinity eternally exists as a fountain overflowing in a love that gives and serves.
 2. Thus, the fundamental nature of the universe is built on giving more than receiving, and a life built on taking without giving and serving is therefore out of step with reality as it exists in creation.
 3. Booker T. Washington quote in *Up From Slavery*
It was hard for me to understand how anyone could be happy working for others. Before the end of the year, I think I began learning that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others. (Chapter 4, 4 minutes 20 seconds Audible version)
 4. The church is the perfect community and school to practice and be formed in this orientation of service rather than being a consumer.
 5. How am I serving at BRCC? In what ways can I serve?
 - a. Perhaps coming early to help set up
 - b. Perhaps Children's ministry
 - c. Perhaps pop-up pantry, Lighthouse lunches or dinners
 - d. Even if you can't come on Sundays due to COVID, perhaps you can serve others by calling them, making masks, writing notes of encouragement
 6. How am I serving others in the rest of my life?
 - a. Serving others is the fulfillment of God's Law and a great testimony to the Gospel
 - b. Look for opportunities to serve family, neighbors, and friends - they are always there

C. The Lord's Supper - Served By Christ

1. Here we see and experience Christ's Servanthood
2. Come receive Christ's blessings and then serve others as He has served you!

The Church - The Community of Servanthood

Galatians 5:13-15

November 15, 2020

Communion

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Teaching keywords: Church; catechism; service; humility and pride

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴ The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. Galatians 5:13–15