

The Means Of Glorifying God

by Frank Cox

TITLE:	The Means Of Glorifying God
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SERIES:	Enlarging Our Borders
OBJECTIVE:	In this message, Dr. Frank Cox continues his series entitled "Enlarging Our Borders" by encouraging servanthood among believers.

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Introduction

As a church we are in an exciting time with Enlarging Our Borders. God is doing some neat things and my prayer is that you haven't been an ostrich with your head stuck in a hole somewhere and have missed out on what God is up to. My hope is you haven't gotten sidetracked. Let me tell you what God is doing. He is moving people to understand that the way to be blessed by God is to put everything in your life in the very hands of God.

This morning I want to focus on an aspect of Christian living that glorifies God. So many Christians walk around with no joy in the Christian life. They knit pick everything they can, but there is no joy. They come sit through worship but have no joy. They even sit through Bible study on Sunday morning but have no joy! I have discovered that the secret to the Christian life is to glorify God in everything we do. Listen, the secret is to show up for duty! Be one who is willing to volunteer and serve.

Recently I heard about two brothers who rushed into a dentist's office. The bigger boy impatiently announced "I need a tooth pulled and I don't want any gas or Novocain because we're in a hurry." The dentist said, "You're quite brave. Which tooth is it?" The boy turned to his little brother and said, "Show him your tooth, Albert!"

You see, the world is full of volunteers like that. We're quick to volunteer others, but we're slow to step up to the plate ourselves. Church, it is important for us to gather and worship. It's important for us to go to Bible study on Sunday morning-listen-but it is also equally as important for us to step up and serve in some capacity as well in this church.

When it comes to serving Jesus, He set the example for us. The Bible describes Jesus by saying, Who being in the very nature of God. So when Jesus came to the earth in the form of a servant, He was not disguising who God is, He was revealing who God is. He reveals to us the very lifestyle of glorifying the Father. Remember, it was Christ who said if you want to be great, then you need to be a servant. If you wish to be first, then you should become a slave. Then He said.....just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)

In other words, you want to know what the example of living the Christ life is? Here it is: serve!

T.S. Let's examine this...

I. The Inquiries About Servanthood

A. The Penetrating Examination

The most often asked question is: Why do we serve?

Think just for a moment about the reality of most churches. At times churches can be characterized as sleeping giants. They say they believe...they say they obey the Word...but when they read the Word and look at their lives, they do not match up. The result is they never commit their lives by serving and the church becomes an audience of spectators rather than a congregation of servants.

Have you ever thought about the priesthood of believers? The Scripture teaches us that we're all part of the priesthood of the believers if we're saved. Therefore, every member is a minister and every member is instructed to serve.

You cannot have a penetrating examination without...

B. The Powerful Explanation

Let me explain why it's important that you serve as a Christian and therefore glorify God. You are needed. What you are is God's gift to you. What you become is your gift to God. The Word of God tells us He has a great ministry to perform in this world but He is relying upon your obedience and mine in servanthood. Remember, God is all sufficient. He's not wringing His hands. He can get it done without you. But in order for this church to function at the best of her ability, God has placed within you giftedness to help.

Illustration

Use your mind just for a moment. Could you imagine what our church would be like without people serving? No ushers. No choir members. No Sunday School teachers. No care group leaders. No outreach leaders. No nursery volunteers. No Awana teachers. No discipleship leaders. No encouragers. No baptismal assistants. No welcome center personnel. Could you imagine how loud it would be in this sanctuary if we didn't have people volunteering in the nursery and the children's department? No youth workers. No singles volunteers. No outreachers. No orchestra. No class prayer leaders. No youth chaperones or camp Bible study leaders. No mission volunteers; decision-time counselors. No VBS teachers or Mission Friends teachers, etc. Could you imagine how ineffective this church would really be? When you don't volunteer, it hurts the ministry of this church.

If I understand the Scripture, it takes every person committed to Christ serving to make this church effective. Just listen to the Word of God:

"If one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (I Cor. 12:6).

"Serve wholeheartedly as you were serving the Lord not men" (Eph. 6:7).

The church member who is waiting to be asked to serve is like a family member waiting to be invited close the front door when you come inside. It should be second nature if you're part of the family. The question should not be "if I should serve" but "where should I serve?" But if you need to be asked-listen-your Pastor is asking you today to serve. We need you to serve. You are instructed to serve. (Matt. 20:25-28)

Don't look to be a power broker in the church, look to be a priest in the fellowship. You want to be great? Then serve! You want to be first? Then be a slave! Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and said, "I've set you an example." Jesus also said, "If you love Me you'll keep My commandments." If you've committed your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then servanthood is not optional. It will be a natural desire. You are witnesses. Every time you serve, you're being a witness for Jesus Christ.

Illustration

I heard about someone down at Starbucks who bought ten people he did not know cups of coffee

and a bagel. When asked why, he said "I just want to be a servant to people." The next question was "Why?" The answer was "Let me tell you what Jesus did in my life." And two or three of those people gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

You are fulfilled by serving. Your faith is not a personal matter, it is a public matter. The Kingdom of God depends on you taking your faith and putting it into ministry. Satan would have you believe that your faith is only a personal matter. Keep it to yourself and whatever you do, don't reach out to others with it. But let the Word of God speak to your heart and show you how fulfilled you can become. (Romans 12:3-11) God knows when you serve you get fulfillment and He is honored.

Illustration

Debbie's father changed the oil in my car. This would irritate me until one day he said, "Frank, I can't do anything else to help you do what you do. I can't preach. I can't help you study. But I can keep your oil changed in your car."

He had the gift of service. He was being fulfilled by serving me through changing the oil in my car.

Church, write it down! "Whatever you do for the least of these brothers of mine, you do unto Jesus Christ." (Matt. 25:40)

T.S. But there's a second thing I want you to see about servanthood.

II. The Instructions About Servanthood

A. The Wisdom Of Servanthood

The Scripture is packed with the wisdom of God. Proverbs tells you, Acquire wisdom. It tells you that the teaching of God should be the apple of your eye. (Proverbs 7:2) So what is the wisdom of God when it comes to servanthood in the church? Serve with the proper motive and attitude.

Illustration

Richard Foster writes, "More than any other single way, the grace of humility is worked into our lives through the discipline of service." Jesus puts it another way: "Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23:10-12)

Christ says if you're arrogant, then your service is a waste. If it is a chore, then the church doesn't benefit and neither do you. The right motive of service is because you love the Lord and you want to. The psalmist says Serve the Lord with gladness.

Illustration

There's nothing more catching than someone who is enthused about their serving in the church. I have a friend named Dario Perla who helps me with clothes from time to time. One day he came to see me and I was asking about his walk with the Lord. Dario began to tell me about how Jesus had changed his life. I asked, "Where do you go to church?" He shared that he was a member of a church in Atlanta and then he took off telling me about how this single man works with preschoolers in that church. There was a glow about him. He was enthused. He said, "I live for Sunday to be with my kids!"

Serve the Lord with gladness! Serve on a consistent basis. Serve here at church. Could you imagine the impact if every member served at least one hour a week in some ministry capacity? You've been asking God to enlarge your borders. Where in the opportunities for service and ministry in church will you plug in?

Would you rise up and say, "I want to be a care group leader, or put me in the welcome center taking visitors to their class." Would you be willing to say, "I'll rise up and work with young people." Would you rise up and say, "I will teach in the preschool area." Serve here at church. Serve outside the church.

Just because you serve here at church though, doesn't mean that your servanthood is done. You ought to serve in church, but you also look for ways outside the fellowship to serve and be a witness for Jesus Christ. Remember the goal is for the Lord to get the glory. Jesus said Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven. Are you focused on the needs of people around you?

Illustration

John Cerqueira and Michael Benfante both worked at Network Plus on the 81st floor of the World Trade Center. The blast hit four floors above their sales strategy meeting and immediately the two men ran for the stairwell. John and Michael, as they were on their way down the stairs, found a panicked 40-year-old disabled woman trapped. So they strapped her to a chair and carried her through the heavy black smoke down 68 flights of stairs. Cerqueira told USA Today, "In the back of my head, I could hear my mother telling me to get out of there, but I had to help." When the two men finally reached the lobby, they stumbled outside and placed the woman in an emergency van. They turned to look at the building only to watch it collapse.

Later they said they never dreamed the World Trade Center would crumble to the ground. You see, they didn't intend to be heroes, they simply chose to be servants. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be the greatest must be the servant."

Illustration

Don Cousins says that a biblical definition for serving the Lord would be "I chose to live my life to His glory and not my own." Serve in the Name of Christ.

Listen, when you serve through those acts of kindness, Jesus always prepares you for greater responsibility.

Conclusion

Several businessmen were in a leadership training conference at Disney World. Part of one day the business men were walking through the Magic Kingdom and they were commenting on how clean the park was. One said, "See that guy? He doesn't look like a custodian but he just walked 20 feet out of the way, picked up a piece of paper and backtracked to put it in the trash can."

One of the businessmen asked the man, "Excuse me, sir, are you part of the custodial staff?" "Yes I am" the man replied. As the businessman was walking away, he stopped turned and called out. "How many people are on the custodial staff?" The man attempted to shout over the noise of the crowd, "45,000!" But that couldn't be right! The businessman started to ask again but the man was already moving away.

The next day the businessman was in a classroom where about 30 other people were already seated. The group's guide turned in his chair and said, "I think you'll like this. Michael Eisner, the Chairman and CEO of Walt Disney's company is in the park today. He's going to stop by for a few minutes to share some thoughts and answer your questions. Here he comes now!" All eyes turned to a side door where an energetic man in a Polo shirt and Mickey Mouse ears was smiling, shaking hands, and slapping people on the shoulder as he entered the room. One businessman whispered to another, "Isn't that the custodian we saw yesterday, the one I talked to?" "It sure looks like him. It is him!" (Source: Disney book)

They immediately recognized him as the custodian. Listen, if Michael Eisner went to such great lengths to serve for the sake of Mickey Mouse, shouldn't we be as diligent as we serve in the Name of Jesus Christ?

Many of you take risks every single day with tens of thousands of dollars in your work, but when it comes to church you're scared to death to take a step of faith and say "Okay, I'll serve. I'll try something big for God."

"Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, My servant also will be; My Father will honor the one who serves Me." (John 12:26)

Will you make a decision to say "Yes, I'll serve Jesus"? This is your church and as you serve through

it, you glorify Jesus.