

For the Gospel's Sake

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Date: 30 May 2019

[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians 9 and verse 19 says, For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

Under the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, is under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.

That I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

And this I do, for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Father in heaven, I ask you to work tonight. I pray God for Miss Rebecca.

I pray God that you would touch her and strengthen her. You have called her husband. You have chosen her husband. We don't believe that he simply made a decision.

[1 : 07] That he made a choice. We believe that you spoke to his heart. He believes that you spoke to his heart. Therefore, Lord, there's a lot here for his wife. There's a lot for him.

God, we know that it's your work. We know that you're the Lord of the harvest. We know that you send forth laborers to your harvest. We know, dear God, that some of us will stay here and hold the ropes and help send others and send money and pray for them.

And some will go to places that are hard to live and hard to work. And God, we would ask you to work. And I pray to God that tonight that this might bless Ty just a little bit.

Might help him just a little bit. That might be something that he'll remember a year from now when he's in the middle of language school and cultural frustration.

Culture shock and aggravation and all that will come with it. And I pray, God, that you would just do a work. And I'll give you praise for it all. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

[2 : 10] If you have your Bible open there, Brother Ty, you can underline in your Bible, This I do for the gospel's sake. I'm calling this for the gospel's sake. And this is what I would just like to show you.

I think this fits a missionary as well as any message that we could have. The first thing in this passage of Scripture is be a servant. Look if you would at verse 19.

I'm free. I don't have to do this. I have every right not to do this. I don't owe anybody. I'm free from all men. But that doesn't matter.

I made myself servant unto all that I might gain them more. When you go to the mission field, it's pretty easy to feel like I'm free. Boy, an American really thinks that.

It doesn't take very long when you get into another country and another culture and another language for American patriotism to rise up in your gut and make you feel like you're better than other people.

[3 : 08] I know that nobody in this room would agree with that, but I've worked with a lot of people. I'm free. But I made myself a servant. So I just want to say some things to you real quickly.

Be careful to be a learner. Needy people get help. Missionaries that arrive on the field knowing everything. And it's pretty hard not to know everything when you're an American.

Because if you don't know it, you think you do. You know? We can't even spell American without saying I can. I'm here. I can. Yeah. We're big on ourselves, and it's pretty hard to be needy and admit you need help.

So don't let American arrogance destroy your ministry. Don't let American arrogance destroy your ministry. Being a servant is more about attitude than action.

So to be honest, it won't take long when you get there for things to start shocking you.

[4 : 0 9] They're all cute when you're on a two-week trip. They're cute when you're on a six-month trip. Some people can make it two weeks and have no problems, and some can make it a month and have no problems.

Some can make it six months and have no problems. But you know what? The first sign of culture shock is in any culture shock book is you deny you have it. Has everybody ever talked to you and said, I ain't got it?

And I'm like, okay. Step one. Let's move for step two now if we could. So it's an attitude. It's an attitude. It is in your heart, really believe in your servant.

As Americans, we're trained how to do that. I mean, Americans are the nicest people you ever go meet on the planet. If you're in Peru and you're driving down a road and it's a two-lane road, we can make it a four-lane road, five-lane road.

As long as there's grass, we can still drive. I've driven on many a sidewalk. And I get back to America, and you know, I was on the way to church tonight this afternoon.

[5 : 0 6] I was on the way to church, and I pull up to a red light that is notoriously a long red light. And the guy in front of me lets a person out of the bank in front of him. And I'm like, now if that makes me miss that light there, I'm going to blow my horn.

I'm going to Christian cuss. Because in America, we are nice. We let people out. In Peru, we would have said, you're never getting out. If you die in that parking lot, it's okay with all of us.

You may not believe that's true, but believe me, if you go to South America, you could learn that. It's an attitude. And here in America, it's pretty easy to have that attitude.

It's a lot easier to serve people. David Gates just told us all how that lady was so abrupt. And he said, that's just Egyptian. Do your actions, your attitudes, your facial gestures, your tone of voice build trust or undermine trust?

I've known people that had real nice voice. And they said the right thing, but their face said, I don't mean it. And I've watched a lot of that happen.

[6 : 1 0] So actions, attitudes, facial gestures, tone of voice. How does that, is that building trust or undermining trust? Be a servant.

Be a servant. Be positive about learning the language. I know you are right now. Everybody always is here. It's always thrilled me when I would hear a new missionary.

He says, I love the people of my country. And I'm like, you ain't never met any of them. How do you know you do? You love a picture of them. You love the idea of them. You haven't smelled them yet. You haven't had them burping and everything else they might do.

So, but would the language be positive? Language is not as much about aptitude as it is attitude. I didn't say that myself. I read that somewhere.

And it's motivation. It will determine how well you do. Are you motivated? The guy was here this past week. He's the reason I shaved my beard. He told me I should.

[7 : 1 2] And so I said, good night. He taught me Spanish. I'll shave. So I went home and shaved. We were in a car. And he drove me out into the country.

And there were no cell phones yet. And we were way out in Mexico. And I thought to myself while I was in the car with him, I can barely talk to him. He knows a few words of English. I know a few words of Spanish. And we're barely getting along here.

And I said, if he leaves me on the side of the road here, I could never find my way home. It's dark. I can't find my way home. I was scared to death. I was scared to death. 250 pounds, six foot one, big old farm boy from Tennessee.

And I was terrified. And he asked me in some kind of broken English, broken Spanish stuff. He said, what do you want while you're in Mexico? And I said, I want to preach.

And if I can't preach, I'll quit. And he turned and looked at me and said, I'll teach you. And he never gave me a break. He rode me hard. And it's motivation.

[8 : 11] If you really want to preach to those people, you can preach. If you really want to learn the language, you can learn the language. And you don't have to worry about being compared to anybody. And I don't care how well Mark Tolson speaks.

I don't care how well Austin Till speaks. I don't care how well any of these guys can speak. You just learn to get the message across. Build relationships with people. Don't isolate yourself.

I'm talking to you about being a servant because it's very normal for most missionaries to hide out. They go silent on email. So they hide out from America.

They go silent on email. But they also go silent in the country. They don't talk to anybody because they don't have anything to talk about. They're scared. They isolate. This is all on being a servant. I'll give you the next thing. Remember, fear breeds fear.

You can't listen to fear. You can't be around fear. Fear breeds fear. Look at the second thing. 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 20. Adapt to the culture and the people. It's amazing what it says here.

[9 : 08] It's just like it was written for a missionary classroom. And unto the Jews, I became a Jew. I became just like a Jew. That I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, I acted like I was under the law.

That I might gain them under the law. To them that are without the law, as without the law. Being not without law to God. I'm not trying to say I'm not obeying Jesus. I'm just saying those Jews, they got their funny rules.

I'm really trying to be nice about it. I'm going to respect it. It would be good for all you guys on deputation. Read this passage. You go to churches. Now, you act and what you put on Facebook. That I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak.

That I might gain the weak. I love his students. I am made all things to all men. That I might by all means save some. As a servant, you will become like the people to the best of your ability.

You will not see them as different, but rather you are the one that's different. You need to remember this. As soon as you hit China, they're not foreign. You are. There's a heap more of them than there even are of us.

[10 : 14] But that's what it talks about adapting. It feels strange adapting to their way of doing things. We feel like what we do is right. But you got to remember it's just our way. A fellow was just down in Argentina.

And when it came time to greet Argentine men, kiss on the cheek. Oh, you just lay your cheek to their cheek and make the kissing sound. And this guy said, nope, you ain't doing that with me. That's wrong.

He's from America. That's wrong. That's not adapting. And Paul would have said, I became Argentine so I could reach Argentines. It means limiting your freedom to win them to Christ.

It started off in the passage of scripture, I am free. But we don't live by our freedom. We live by reaching people, serving people, adapting to culture.

We try to identify with people. Ask questions. Don't make statements. Be a learner. As old as we are, lumping you in there with me.

[11 : 17] I mean, you're going to be a granddaddy. I'm a granddaddy. You're a granddaddy. Same difference. It's hard not to know. And even if you ask questions in your heart, you know.

I'd like to remind you of this. Jesus spent 30 years becoming Jewish. And Jesus came to the earth as a vulnerable, dependent, helpless human infant. He experienced all we experience so he could be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

Jesus humbled himself. And this place isn't near as great as heaven. And you're not near as great as Jesus. And you're certainly not God. And if Jesus could do that, then I ought to do that. And why do I do all of it?

1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 23. For the gospel's sake. And this I do. For the gospel's sake. That I might be partaker thereof with you.

Number one, we're not seeking our prophet, but their prophet. In 1 Corinthians 10.33, the Bible said, Not seeking my own prophet.

[12 : 19] That's our goal. Not seeking our own prophet. So you eat their food with no questions asked. That's hard. You don't have to do it when Mark Tolson offers it to you.

Because he might just be picking on you. But when a Chinese guy offers it, we eat it. You say, well, they don't like our food. That's different. I'm the servant. Eat asking no question.

1 Corinthians 10.27. Luke chapter 10 and verse 7. Eating and drinking such things as they give. I would remind you that you're going to the mission field to be used, mistreated, and not appreciated.

Paul said, I will very gladly spend and be spent. We serve for their edification. We're going for them, not for us.

This isn't so we can have a ministry. In all blunt honesty, I have lived on both sides. I'd choose this side any day of the year. I mean, you ain't going to live in a house like Americans live in. Might not be as big.

[13 : 17] It's a nice place to live, glory to God. It's a nice place. And Amazon, two days, it's at my house. They sent me something today. I said, too big. Send it back and bring me another one. And in Peru, you go in and buy it.

And they say, you cross the threshold of that door, it's yours. This is broken. You must have broke it. America, man, America.

But we're going for them. We serve for their edification. Romans 15, two, we please our neighbor for his good to edification. The last verse.

Time is way gone. We endure. We put up with a lot for their sake, for the gospel's sake. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2, 10, I endure all things for the elect's sake.

God's got people in China. He's going to save them. He's going to put them in his church. He's going to do a work in their lives. And Paul says, I'll put up with anything I've got to for God's people. You have given up your life for theirs.

[14 : 23] You're going out, carrying a cross to lose your life. I wish I could say to you, this is going to be pretty, going to be sweet. But I don't think it's going to be. And I'd be a liar if I told you it was.

As good as we can live and as good as you can take care of your wife, it still won't be home. But we're not going because it's a better life. We're going to serve Jesus for the gospel's sake.