

**New Year Necessities – Back to Basics: Witness**  
**Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11;**  
**1 Peter 2:6-10, 4:10-12**

**INTRODUCTION**

Please turn in your Bible to **Acts 2:42-47**. We end our series **Back to Basics today**. We have considered Word (hearing God's voice) and Prayer (enjoying having His ear). **These two foundational truths emphasizing the vertical aspect of our walk with the Lord.**

Last time, we considered the first of the two aspects of our horizontal expression of our walk with the Lord, **namely fellowship**. Fellowship is the enjoyment of common life in Christ (blessings and challenges). **Fellowship points to enjoying being part of His body.**

The last area I want us to consider **is witness**. Life in Christ includes witnessing to others. **Witnessing is sharing with others about Christ and your relationship with Him in word and deed**. We are to model the word so we can share the word. **Witness** points the enjoyment of proclaiming the great deeds of the Lord.

The inner life of the early church in Jerusalem is enviable: **simple, pure and powerful**. The early church had no buildings, budgets, organizational charts, or institutional structures. Yet, the Holy Spirit lived among them in such a way that the whole community of Jerusalem noticed the distinctiveness of their lives and noticed their talk about Jesus as the Christ. The whole church community lived in oneness, enjoying and serving one another.

Likewise, we (you and I) have been called to do our part in being on mission with God. Please turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 28:16-20**. Next, please turn in your Bibles to **Acts 1:1-11**. From these texts, we realize the following: **we are to make disciples and serve as witnesses to God's activity in this world**. We have been called to know God and make Him known.

As followers of Christ, we have been called to be on mission with God. Why should we be committed to this mission?  
**2 REASONS:**

**I. Reason #1: it \_\_\_\_\_ the heart of God**

It's God's desire for His people to join Him in making Him known to others. You see **redemptive history (the salvation story) points to God**. From the first call, "**Adam ... Where are you?**" (Gen. 3:9) to the last call, "**The Spirit and the bride say, Come**" (Rev. 22:17) God longs to redeem sinful man to Himself. God is glorified (lifted up; magnified) when sinners are saved, transformed by His grace and power. God invaded human history and became a man to do that which was the supreme desire of His heart: display His power & love (glorify Himself) by redeeming (transforming) sinful men and women. That is the single greatest act of our holy God. Amazingly, God has appointed the church to serve His purpose. The church is to be used of God to bring people to Christ and see them transformed to His character - **Col 1:28** states: "**Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.**"

*Why should we be committed to God's mission? Reason #1: it reveals the heart of God...*

**II. Reason #2: it's our God-given \_\_\_\_\_**

Apparently, many people do not understand the mission of the church. Some think it's about what they get out of it instead of how God would use them in a faith family to accomplish His purposes, His plans and His desires. Jesus said, "**This is life eternal, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**" (**John 17:3-4**) In **John 17:18**, He says, "**As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.**" "**As**" conveys intention. Believers are an extension of the ministry of God in reaching out to a sinful world with the life-changing, life-transforming, God-glorifying message of Jesus Christ.

You and I are called to serve the Lord, amen? But lest we begin to think that serving is merely an option, let's chisel this into the cornerstone of our Christian life. Please turn in your Bible to **1 Peter 4:10-11**.

*When it comes to serving the Lord, please note the following truths that emerge from the text...*

**I. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ His own to serve Him.**

Serving typically looks as unspectacular as the practical needs it seeks to meet. That's why serving must become a Spiritual Discipline...a habit of grace. **Two of the deadliest of our sins — sloth and pride — loathe serving.** They paint glazes on our eyes and put chains on our hands and feet so that we don't serve as we know we should or even as we want. If we don't discipline ourselves to serve for the sake of Christ and His kingdom and for the purpose of godliness, we'll "**serve**" only occasionally or when it's convenient or self-serving. The result will be a quantity and quality of service we'll regret when we realize that we are accountable to God for serving Him. Those who do discipline themselves to serving will find that serving is one of the most sure and practical means of growth in grace. **Every Christian is expected to serve.**

*Yet, the why we serve is so important, isn't it? This leads us to the second main truth:*

**II. The Lord expects His own to serve Him with proper \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Motives matter in the service we offer to God.** The Bible mentions several motives for serving. I'm indebted to Donald Whitney's book - Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life - for what I share with you now.

**A. Motivated by \_\_\_\_\_**

**B. Motivated by \_\_\_\_\_**

**C. Motivated by \_\_\_\_\_**

**D. Motivated by forgiveness, not \_\_\_\_\_**

**E. Motivated by \_\_\_\_\_**

**III. The Lord expects His own to serve Him with proper motives and \_\_\_\_\_ them to do so.**

**A. The discipline of service begins when you \_\_\_\_\_ that you have a spiritual gift:  
"As each has received a gift..."**

**B. The discipline of service requires that you find a specific place to use your gift: " \_\_\_\_\_ it to serve one another."**

**C. The discipline of service recognizes that the child of God is \_\_\_\_\_ to God for the gift:  
"as good stewards of God's varied grace."**

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? Every Christian needs to ask yourself **today**: ***'What am I doing for the Kingdom of God through my church?'*** What God-given ability do you have and are you using it? **The gospel of Christ creates Christ-like servants.** The gospel of Jesus Christ transforms sinners against God into servants of God. Those who believe the gospel of Jesus receive the Christ-like hearts of servants. One of the clearest indications that people have truly believed the gospel of Jesus is that a new, Christ-like desire to serve begins to overcome their selfish desire to be served. **You are expected to serve and gifted to serve, but are you willing to serve?**

How would you answer this ad: **WANTED: Gifted volunteers for difficult service in the local expression of the kingdom of God. Motivation to serve should be obedience to God, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, and love. Service will rarely be glorious. Temptation to quit place of service will sometimes be strong. Volunteers must be faithful in spite of long hours, little or no visible results, and possibly no recognition — except from God for all eternity.**