

## **THE BIG IDEA: When I serve you, Jesus shows through.**

### The Take-Off

It's really something when you stop and think about all that moms do, isn't it?

It's a job that no one would ever accept in the real world of jobs, and yet one that no mom would ever refuse

Moms are worth more than we could ever pay.

In fact, [salary.com](http://salary.com) found that working mothers work 59 hours/week on top of their regular work week and would earn \$90k in comparable jobs! Stay at home moms work 92 hours/week and would earn just over \$143k.

Priceless, and when I put down the title for this morning's message - How to perfect the heart of service - I thought it couldn't happen on a better day than Mother's Day, because moms are quite possibly the best example of service on the planet!

But, moms aren't the BEST example of service this planet has ever seen. Jesus is, and this morning we're going to see that in Philippians 2:1-11.

Let's read it the first 4 verses, and understand the context before we get to the meat of this passage.

I need you to understand the people who were hearing this.

Here's why this is important: we tend to read those first 4 verses and wonder what that would look like, don't we?

But this wasn't originally read to believers trying to think of someone they aren't like and feeling guilty for not knowing them better; it was read to believers looking at people they once didn't like (and still may not like) and feeling challenged to love them better. Big difference!

There was a wealthy businesswoman in this church quite possibly sitting next to a formerly demon-possessed slave girl and they're both staring at a brute tattooed prison guard. (You can read their stories in Acts 16)

There was no theory involved in this statement! When Paul wrote "consider others better than yourselves" and "look to the interests of others" these believers were looking at people that they once considered themselves better than!

So it was in that context - among people who had been radically changed by the gospel - that Paul said something was missing, something that was - according to verses 5-11 - at the very heart of the gospel.

Paul said, "make my joy complete!"

Can you imagine being one of these three believers (or any of the believers in the church at Philippi) and hearing that?

As great as their testimony was, and as many things as the Spirit had done in them, they weren't quite the full picture of what God wanted.

And that's when Paul pointed them to the greatest servant this world has EVER known - greater than my mom, your mom, or any mom who has ever single-handedly saved a soccer team bake sale!

Paul starts talking about Jesus. (read verses 5-11)

Let me point out 4 game changers that Paul dropped on the Philippian believers, and that God is dropping on us now:

### **1. Serving is an attitude before it's an action**

- a. Most of us are doers because it makes us feel like, well, we've DONE something
- b. I think Paul understood that about mankind, and so he's clear from the outset that serving is an attitude before it's an action
- c. So much of the faith is about attitude, about syncing our minds with God's truth
- d. 2 Corinthians 10:5 / we're to capture thoughts that don't line up with the servant King Jesus
- e. 1 Corinthians 2:16 / we actually have the mind of Christ even if we don't at times realize it
- f. Right up front, Paul is telling us that the coming verses will represent an attitude adjustment
- g. Our attitude has been how can you serve me, but Jesus' attitude was how can I serve you

### **2. Serving doesn't change who we are; it reveals who we are**

- a. Jesus came to this world AS a servant; He didn't come hoping to turn into a servant
- b. This is such a big deal! He didn't serve to become a servant; He served because he WAS a servant
- c. So many times we try to convince people to serve in hopes of them becoming faithful, or of sticking and never leaving, but the opportunity to serve often just reveals who they really are: self-centered, not others-oriented, unreliable, unmoved by the gospel of how Jesus has served them
- d. People will never become what they aren't by convincing them to do more of what they weren't

### 3. Serving is an act of obedience to God, not an act of obligation to men

- a. Look what Jesus did in verse 8 - He humbled Himself and became obedient
- b. A life of servanthood is an obedient response to the heart of the Father before it's anything else!
- c. It's a choice to align our lives with God's will, and it's not always easy
- d. Luke 22:42 / Jesus wished for another way, too, but obeyed
- e. It's not about sucking it up, either, because Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus endured the cross for the JOY set before Him
- f. Serving out of obligation drains us; but serving out of obedience sustains us
- g. Look what Jesus told the disciples in John 13:17 - you know these things (how to serve) and will be blessed ("happy, blessed, supremely blessed") if you do them!!

### 4. Serving empties us so that God can exalt Jesus through us

- a. There's an interesting word in verse 7 - some translations say that Jesus "emptied" Himself
- b. But emptied Himself of what? He never stopped being God even though He became fully man!
- c. He emptied Himself of His rights as God, and as a result He was exalted to the highest place (v. 9)
- d. When we understand the gospel, that a King served us into His kingdom, we'll lay our rights down, too
- e. Very anti-American, I know!
- f. But nothing portrays an impotent God more than His kids demanding their rights because if they don't, no one will protect them or provide for them!
- g. It is in laying our rights down in the service of God and others that Jesus is most exalted through us
- h. John 3:30 / less of me leads to more of Him

#### The Landing

In John 10:10, Jesus said that He came to give us life, and life to the full - abundant life!

Often, we may not seem to be living that full life - the complete life - that Jesus talked about and that Paul writes about here in Philippians 2

[START MONA LISA VIDEO] You could say that the incomplete Christian life looks kind of like a bad artist's attempt at the Mona Lisa: it kind of resembles it, but it's not much of a masterpiece, is it?!

But guess what happens when we serve in response to the gospel? In response to the our Servant King?

We begin to fade away - our rights, our works, our attempts at LOOKING like the example - and the real color of the gospel begins to shine through

Less of me means more of Jesus, and service is how we fade and He shines!

Let me sum it up this way as the Big Idea: When I serve you, Jesus shines through.

People see less of my stick figure attempts and more of the finished work of Jesus - the REAL masterpiece that God wants everyone to see!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Let's pray!