

The Great Paradox *Philippians 2:1-11*

Setting The Scene:

Philippians 1:15-16 & Philippians 4:2-3

Today's Passage:

Philippians 2:1-11

- **IF. . .** God has done anything for you (vs 1)
- **THEN . . .**
 - ❶ Get along with one another! (vs 2)
 - ❷ Put others first. (vs 3-4)
- **THE BOTTOM LINE . . .** Follow Jesus' Example (vs 5)
 - ✓ Notice The Cost (vs 6-8)
 - ✓ Notice The Reward (vs 9- 11)

The Great Paradox:

Philippians 2:1-11/ Matthew 20:20-28/ Genesis 13:5-17/ Proverbs 18:12/ 1 Peter 5:5-6

- The path to greatness is found on a road called "Servanthood."

How To Get "THERE" From "HERE":

- ❶ Stop keeping score!
- ❷ Start at home.
- ❸ Do it for Jesus.
- ❹ Remember the gain is in the pain.
- ❺ Practice little acts of servanthood.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of January 22, 2006

QUICK REVIEW: What was your favorite lesson, insight, or “aha” from this weekend’s sermon on *The Great Paradox* of serving others?

MY STORY

1. If you had an unexpected free day with absolutely no responsibilities and could do anything you wanted, what would you do?
2. When you think of someone you know who truly serves others, what words, actions or character qualities would you use to describe them?
3. Pastor Larry gave some steps for *How To Get ‘There’ From ‘Here’*. Which of these steps towards serving others is easiest for you? ...AND which is hardest?

What makes these particularly hard or easy for you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We often don’t mind being a servant as long as we aren’t treated like one! In Luke 17:7-10, Jesus gives some insight into how a true servant is treated. Read the verses and jot down your observations.

Luke 17:7-10

"Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? [8] Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? [9] Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? [10] So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "[NIV]

What was your initial response to this description?

2. A great example of someone putting others first can be found in the Old Testament story of a woman named Ruth. Read Ruth 1:1-22 and jot down some of the costs that Ruth had to pay to stay with and help Naomi.

Ruth 1:1-22

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. [2] The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

[3] Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. [4] They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, [5] both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

[6] When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. [7] With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

[8] Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. [9] May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them and they wept aloud [10] and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

[11] But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? [12] Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me--even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons-- [13] would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has gone out against me!"

[14] At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ruth clung to her.

[15] "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

[16] But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. [17] Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." [18] When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

[19] So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

[20] "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. [21] I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

[22] So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. [NIV]

How do you think you would have responded if you were in Ruth's situation?

What are some possible reasons a person would be willing to do what Ruth did?

3. Paul used Jesus as the supreme example of someone who put others first. At the Last Supper he did something that showed everyone the extent of His love for them. After reading John 13:1-6, 12-17, answer the following questions:

John 13:1-6

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

[2] The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. [3] Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; [4] so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5] After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

[6] He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" [NIV]

John 13:12-17

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. [13] "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. [14] Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. [15] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. [16] I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. [NIV]

What is your response to what Jesus did?

What can we learn about Jesus when we consider that He even washed Judas' feet that night?

What do you think Jesus specifically wanted the disciples to learn from His example?

What insights does John 13:3 give us for why Jesus was able to serve the disciples?

TAKING IT HOME

1. As a result of this weekend's message or homework, is there someone you can or should begin to put first or serve in a greater way?

2. We saw in this weekend's passage (Philippians 2:1-4) that the Apostle Paul points to all that God has done for us as the primary motivation for being willing to take on a humble servant's role in our relationships. What are some things God has done for you that you are particularly thankful for?

Philippians 2:1-4

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, [2] then make my joy complete by being

like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. [3] 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. [NIV]