Mission Possible, Week 3, Service

**Monday—“Many Gifts, One Body” Pastor Mandy**

Scripture: 1 Cor. 12 (the chapter)

Paul’s image of the body for the Church is an apt one. All parts of the body are needed for it to function well. What are some gifts God has given you to serve the “body”? Maybe you have a heart for helping, or a gift for writing or numbers, or woodworking. Pray about how God can use your gifts through Glen Mar, as part of the whole body today.

**Tuesday—A New Pecking Order--Pastor Anna**

Luke 22:27 “For who is the greater, one who reclines at the table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Every society has a way of honoring their own. Of deeming someone more worthy, more notable, or assigning the coveted celebrity status. Who wouldn’t want that? After all, the person of honor, the celebrity, gets all the good stuff. They ride in the best cars, eat the best food, get the VIP treatment wherever they go. All the sunshine seems to blow their way. Sounds great, right?

Well, not so fast, Jesus would say. Take a look, a deep look - to whom and why you are bestowing honor and privilege. Curiously, the one with the VIP ticket isn’t the one to look at - in Jesus’ estimation. Instead, Jesus is looking at the doorman, the waiter, the dishwasher, the janitorial staff, the night shift security guard, the one who surprises the person in line behind them with payment for their groceries.

Better yet, look for the one who is serving when they don’t have to - when it’s not connected to a paycheck or some other reward. Look for those persons that have the needs of others in the forefront of their minds and actions. Look for those who teach kids via zoom, sacrifice time to serve as a Friend in Faith to a youth, take a new opportunity to facilitate a small group, staff a pantry-on-the-go, visit the sick, etc., etc. These are Jesus’ VIPs. These are the ones to whom Jesus shows honor.

**Challenge:** As you go about your daily activities, note the ways that we show honor in our society. 1) Who typically gets top billing? 2) How is this shown?

**Prayer:** Jesus, you gave of yourself completely. Teach me how to give to others freely today. Show me where my presence, my gifts can be useful to someone else today. Free me of the need to be important and let me rest my soul in you - in the strength of your love, provision and grace. Amen.

**Wednesday—The Invited Guest--Pastor Melaina**
Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” “And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.” Acts 8:29,31a

When my husband and I were getting married, we had a rehearsal the night before our nuptials. The only people that were supposed to be there were the pastor, my soon-to-be husband, myself, and bridal/grooms’ party. However, an uninvited guest came to our wedding rehearsal. A woman that lived in the area (we think) had been walking alongside the church and heard something was going on inside. We still remain unclear what she had heard that made her want to enter into our wedding rehearsal. Even after discovering that it was a wedding rehearsal she stayed. She decided that she would become the unofficial wedding planner as she jumped right in to “help.” She began to tell the bridal/grooms’ party where they should stand and other suggestions along the way. Despite her best intentions, she began to cause a bit of chaos in our rehearsal. We could see that she was good intentioned and harmless, she just wanted to be a part of the celebration. We nicely thanked her, invited her to come to our actual wedding celebration, and asked her to sit back and watch the rehearsal without input. She did come the following day to our wedding and she seemed to have enjoyed every moment of it. When we think about that day, we always think about our uninvited guest.

When we do service and mission work, we are often like that uninvited guest. We often come to a community and insert ourselves into the situation without being invited. We think we know how to help a community, neighborhood, center, and/or situation better than those experiencing it. Far too often, without community input, we create more chaos and more issues with our resolution than if we had not come at all. This is not the service that God is calling us to do.

Philip is led by the Holy Spirit to go up to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch who is reading the Bible. After Philip is invited into the chariot and the helping assignment was made known by the eunuch, Philip sits beside him. His posture is not of rescue but of relationship. By the end not only was the eunuch helped by learning the good news of Jesus Christ but was also baptized. This is service and mission. It is building relationships that points people to the good news of Jesus Christ. It is being the invited guest that asks questions, listens, and serves alongside another.

Listen – Hear from God, let your Spirit be filled as you listen to the song, “Others” by Israel Houghton.

Challenge: Read Acts 8:26-40. What does service as an invited guest look like? What can we glean from this passage? Has this challenged your thinking of service? Or reiterates your theology of service?

Pray: Loving God, help us to serve others as invited guest. Let us be thankful for our invitation. Give us ears to hear, hearts that are open, hands that are readied, and feet willing to go where you send us and invited. Let the Holy Spirit fill us and guide us in our service of your people. Amen

Thursday- “Write a Love Letter”-Pastor Mandy
Ephesians 4:32: “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
Pray today for ways to be kind, and tender of heart. Is there someone who would be blessed with a word of encouragement today or a word of forgiveness? Email or send them a note to build them up, to encourage them today.

Friday “You First” (Pastor Anna)
Philippians 2:4 “Let each of you look not only to his interests, but to the interests of others.”

When her parents were admitted to a long-term care facility, Laura found herself in the midst of sorting through their life’s possessions, making decisions for what to sell and what to dispose of. Most of these things held no real cash value, only the sentimental kind, and Laura felt pressured to get as much for the estate as possible. After all, her parents' care costs were surprisingly high and their savings were small. It took a couple of months to go through the family home, sorting, cleaning, arranging and lining up a professional to conduct the sale. But there was one item that Laura just couldn’t manage to place on the auction table. It was an original, signed copy of a book that would have held some value. But to Laura’s brother John, it was worth more than gold.

One day, a small FedEx package arrived at John’s door. Now this was a curious, John thought. He hadn’t ordered anything, wasn’t expecting a delivery. Yet, when he opened the package it was the book with a note from Laura. “John, I know you weren’t expecting this. I imagine you thought it sold at the auction last week. But I know that Dad and Mom would want you to have it. Some things are more valuable than money. You and your love for this book are an example of that kind of value.”

Challenge: Ask God today to show you someone who would benefit from your grace-filled action. Where you might best place a smile, a phone call, a listening ear. Where you might best place the interests of someone else a priority. A priority of such value you are willing to make a sacrifice.

Prayer: Loving God, teach me today how to place the interests of those around me a top priority. Help me to identify ways that I can be a help and a blessing. Help me to show your love through my actions. For the sake of your name, Jesus. Amen.

Saturday—“Love Truly” --Pastor Melaina

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another…Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but rather in truth and action. 1 John 3:11,18

A divisive fact about me is that I am a Cowboys fan. This is particularly divisive in areas within the division. It seems that I am always in an area of a division rival. I grew up in Philadelphia that is home to very intense fans. Most of my family are Eagles fans. Then I moved to the DMV where most everyone are Washington Football Team fans. It usually creates us vs. them jokes and banter.
On last Sunday, the Cowboys played the Giants, a division game, and I saw a miraculous thing. There was a point in the game where the rivalry meant nothing and both teams became one. The quarterback Dak Prescott was terribly injured when he was tackled. When tackled his ankle suffered a compound fracture. As soon as it was determined that he was injured, the air left the entire stadium. Giants coaches, players, staff, and Cowboys coaches, players, and staff rallied behind Prescott. You could see people visibly praying for him on both sidelines. The rivalry was put aside because a player was down and in need. People on both teams did not hesitate to show empathy, compassion, care, concern, and love because they no longer saw Prescott as simply a body in a jersey but saw his personhood and quickly sprang into loving action. While I found myself crying (not as a fan) because of the nature of the injury of a person, I saw this moment as an act of loving boldly and cried all the more. It would be wonderful to see more of this type of unrivaled love in our culture; to serve each other without hesitation.

From the beginning, love has been the center of God’s message to us; love God and love each other. The grace of God frees us to love; love God and love each other. Love is not simply a noun but a verb. Love requires action and more than saying we love. Evidence of a love is found in how we care for the needs of others. Not simply loving those in need that we like to help but those who we see as rivals, unlovable, or even an adversary. Love in service is not only shown to those we love but to everyone we can, every time we can, and as often as we can. We are called to love each other boldly and abundantly because we were love so boldly and abundantly. Our service and acts of mercy are out of our thankfulness of Jesus Christ’s love for us that laid his life down for us. We are called to pay it forward through this thankfulness. And because of Christ, we can serve each other in love.

Listen: Hear God through the song, Make Me a Servant by Kelly Willard.

Challenge: Consider what it means to be a servant. If a servant is one that loves boldly and as Jesus loves us, go out this week and love in action.

Pray: Loving God, help us to serve others as invited guest. Let us be thankful for our invitation. Give us ears to hear, hearts that are open, hands that are readied, and feet willing to go where you send us and invited. Let the Holy Spirit fill us and guide us in our service of your people. Amen.