What Qualifies a Person to Serve?

II Corinthians 11:16-33

Introduction

The Inn of the Sixth Happiness – Gladys Aylward

What is it that qualifies a person to serve?

I. IT ISN’T POWER OR CONTROL THAT QUALIFIES US TO SERVE.

VERSES 16-21A

This passage introduces Paul’s “Fools Speech”.

Paul uses 5 words to describe what the false teachers were doing. They...

• Enslaved – put people under the law.
• Exploited – swallowed up by their greed.
• Took advantage of others – for personal gain.
• Pushed themselves forward – to promote themselves.
• Even slapped others in the face – to maintain their control.

If tyranny, greed, falsity, arrogance and violence are the marks of authentic Christian leadership, then Paul would say, “I am a weakling.”

Paul came to them with the “meekness and gentleness of Christ.” II Corinthians 10:1

Isn’t that what Jesus said we should do?

“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:25-28
If you want to be great in God’s kingdom, you must learn to **serve**.

II. It isn’t our background or family tree or credentials that qualify us to serve.

**Verses 218-22**

These false teachers boasted about their connections and training.

They didn’t know Paul very well. Paul’s credentials were impeccable. He just didn’t go around bragging about it. Philippians 3:4-6

This is not an anti-education message. God deserves our best and we need to be well trained as Christians in whatever our vocation is.

But we need to remember that it isn’t our training or the initials behind our name that qualifies us to **serve**.

III. What qualifies us to serve is our relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Verses 23-33**

It is God who makes us able to serve. II Corinthians 3:5

Paul’s opponents expected Paul to say something like this.

“*I have established more churches; I have preached the gospel in more lands and to more ethnic groups; I have traveled more miles; I have won more converts; I have written more books; I have raised more money; I have dominated more councils; I have walked with God more fervently and seen more visions; I have commanded the greatest crowds and performed the most spectacular miracles.*” From D. A. Carson
Instead, Paul chose to talk about his suffering. In Paul’s weakness, we see the power of God and we see his likeness to Jesus Christ.

Look at what Paul suffered for their sake and for our sake.
- As a servant of Christ – Verses 23
- Floggings – “Five times I received from the Jews the 40 lashes minus one.”
- Beaten with rods – Three times by the Romans – Acts 16:22-23
- Stoning – Acts 14:19 at Lystra
- Shipwrecked – “A day and a night in the open sea.”

- Specific dangers from people and places – The worst from false teachers.
- Voluntary sufferings – Privations – Verse 27
- Pastoral heartache – his greatest daily pressure. Verses 28-29

All this happened by Acts 20:1-6. Chrysostom observed, “We don’t know the half of what Paul suffered.”

“I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” Galatians 6:17

Why did Paul keep going?
- Because of God’s call on his life. Romans 1:1
- Because of who Jesus is – He is Lord. II Corinthians 5:14-15
- Because there is salvation in no one else. Acts 4:12

“Isn’t ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” Romans 1:16
On the road to Damascus, Paul met the risen living Christ and his life was forever changed.

If I am going to boast about anything, it will be my weakness, for there God's glory and power is clearly shown.

**Conclusion**

What matters most to God is not our background, or power or credentials. What matters most is our relationship with Christ.

Do we know him?
Do we love him?
Do we serve him?

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