

Servant Evangelism

Scripture Reading — Matthew 18:1-14

“I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.”

1 Corinthians 9:19 —

Paul does not invite us to do whatever people around us do. As many Bible teachers have said, we are to be “in the world but not of the world.” Paul did not embrace anything false. He did not condone immorality. He was faithful to Jesus and the gospel. Paul did not needlessly offend. But he did embrace what was beautiful in people’s culture and style. He began with people where they were.

One of the hazards of the church in the Western world having a dominant cultural position for so long is that we think spiritual seekers must adapt to our cultural styles rather than that we should adapt to theirs.

One Sunday before worship one of our faithful members asked what the service and message would be like the following Sunday. She had a friend whom she intended to invite to our church, and she was concerned that the music, worship, and message should make sense to her friend. She was being a “servant” to this friend.

There are many ways to be a “slave to everyone.” Through careful listening, spending time together, and praying for discernment, we discover each person’s point of need. Then we respond, being all that we can for them through Jesus’ love and grace. To whom are you willing to be a servant/slave today?

Prayer

Lord, give us your wisdom and discernment. Help us to be faithful to you while letting go of our unhelpful customs and cultural styles for the sake of the gospel. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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Printed on July 19, 2018

