

Sermon: October 3, 2010

“Slave?”

I often get confused by some of the passages we read on Sunday morning. Maybe it's because the lessons are set in a different world. Like the gospel ----- coming from a time when having slaves was the norm.

We don't have slaves today ... but we can be “slaves” ----

*slaves to our work*

*slaves to our prejudices      maybe a slave to a disease you fight everyday*

*we can be slaves to negativity ... to our religion ... to our emotions ----- especially anger & jealousy*

*you can be a slave to not feeling very good about yourself*

*slaves to our schedules and habits ...*

There comes a time when we need to BE SET FREE from this.

There are times, too .... when we expect others to be “slaves” to us. Sometimes we put the “kabash” on the hopes and dreams of others ... we don't allow others to grow.

Let's talk about the gospel for a minute. On the surface it seems to say ----- *your slave comes in after a long day in the field. Now ... don't invite him to sit at the table with you. Rather ... make him serve you first ...*

*and when he has done what he's supposed to do ... then he can have something to drink.*

This sounds a bit cruel. I can't imagine Jesus actually saying this.

And ... how do we take a passage like this and apply it to our world?

We only have one “slave” around the church. A young Italian named Gino ----- freshman in college.

So, in honor of the gospel ... here's what I'll do tomorrow.

I will send Gino out to cut and trim the lawn all day. At the end of the day ... he'll come in and want something to drink ... to which I will respond:

*Hold on, Gino ... first ----- get me a couple beers and a few snacks ...*

*and when I'm finished ... then you can have something to drink.*

This is one of the problems today ... in life ... we often act like we “own” people.

What can you do for me? ... what's in it for me? Me first ... then you.

I know what Jesus would do.

A slave comes in after a long day ... and when he comes in, the table is set ... and the master says:

*Now it's time for me to serve you.*

*The two of us ----- let's sit at the same table together.*

There's lots of barriers in our world ----- racial divisions, politics, religion and culture ...

We still don't “get it.”

Just listen to the political ads ... listen to the words said in the locker room ... talk radio ...

tv religion ...

**WE NEED TO COME TOGETHER.**

**AROUND THE SAME DINNER TABLE.**

**AROUND THE BANQUET TABLE.**

How about this table up here? ... the Lord's table?

No slave or free ... black or white ... rich or poor ... gay or straight ... saved or unsaved ---- NOT UP HERE.

Sometimes I'm the pumpkin ... sometimes the gourd ... but we all come from the same garden.

Sometimes I'm the master ... sometimes the slave ... but we're all from the same creator.

As we worship here this morning ... our prayer list is long.

There are two “kids” (well, not “kids” anymore) who really need our prayers.

You never know what's going on inside a person's soul.

When you walk by a house ... the lights are on ... quiet outside ... but you never know what's going on inside.  
Joy? Pain? Sadness? Dreams?

I remember, years ago ... when Zak's parents called the church ... asking if he could park here ... since he just transferred into Sandburg. One of the best football players ever at Sandburg ... then onto Northwestern ... led them to the Big-10 title and a bowl game.

His younger sister Sarah parked here, too. An amazing athlete ... went on to captain the DePaul women's basketball team ... is a wonderful anchor at Comcast ...  
Zak and Sarah ----- famous, yet grounded.  
Popular ... always humble.  
In the headlines ... never sought it.

Now .... their names are in the headlines for all the wrong reasons.  
A family tragedy invading their lives.  
Most of us don't know them ... but it doesn't matter.  
**THERE ARE NO STRANGERS HERE.**  
No pumpkins or gourds. Just us ----- as we are.

Everyday I wake up ... as the sun rises and the prayer list gets longer ...  
I'm reminded:  
Yes, there is a lot wrong with the world ... and we talk about what's wrong a lot ...  
**BUT ... EVERYDAY ...**  
**THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE IN THE WORLD IS LOVE.**  
**Born of God.**  
**Implanted in us.**  
**Now ... we need to LET IT OUT.**

*And, Zak and Sarah ... this power will hold you up!!*

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