

Resolved to Reach Others

1 Corinthians 9: 19-23

By now we are all getting settled in to the New Year, and hopefully we are getting use to writing 2015 on our documents and checks. A new year is an exciting time as we look forward to new opportunities and strive to reach new heights. It is also a challenging time. We tend to consider the past year and the struggles we faced or the goals left unachieved. These emotions are beneficial because they tend to motivate us into action. I hope we all enjoy a measure of success as we approach the coming opportunities and challenges.

For the past couple weeks we have been considering our obligations as believers. There is a work for each of us to do. We are not saved to sit on the sidelines. There are far too many spectators within the church and not enough participators. I hope we will get involved this year and seek to make a difference for the cause of Christ.

We have already looked at our obligation to love others and to serve them as well. This morning I want to continue that line of thought. We also have an obligation to reach others with the Gospel. I pray we will see folks come to Christ is salvation this year. Each of us can have a part in that if we will determine to be used of the Lord. I want to consider the [insights](#) Paul offers as we think on the thought: [Resolved to Reach Others](#).

I. The Attitude in Ministry (19) – [For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more](#). If we are to be successful in reaching others, we must first develop a proper attitude. Paul reveals this will be:

A. A Submissive Attitude (19a) – [For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all](#). We must keep in mind the position Paul held. He was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He was a well known evangelist and church planter. Prior to being converted, he was a prominent Pharisee. Paul had been set free from the bondage of the law and was being used mightily of the Lord, but as we will see, Paul was willing to assume whatever role necessary to reach those who needed to be saved. Paul developed an attitude that was submissive to the Lord and submissive to the ministry he was called to perform.

- In order for us to be successful in reaching others, we too must develop a submissive attitude. This is contrary to our nature, but we must be willing to put the needs of others above our own wants and desires. Apart from being surrendered to the will of God, seeking to serve Him with a devoted heart, we will not achieve much spiritually.

- We might as well expect being led outside our comfort zone. The Lord will stretch our limits and increase our faith, if we will follow His lead. We cannot begin to imagine the harvest we could see if we were only willing to submit to the Lord and His purpose for our lives. [1 Cor.10:33 – Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.](#)

B. An Aggressive Attitude (19b) – [For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.](#) I do not imply that Paul approached his work with a negative attitude or was harsh in his presentation of the Gospel. I do believe though that Paul was very aggressive in sharing his faith. He had experienced great heights with the Lord. Countless souls had come to faith in Christ. Churches had been started and were growing. Everywhere he went, there were opportunities to preach and fellowship with fellow believers, but Paul was never satisfied. He continually sought those who needed to be saved. His goal was simple: reach all I can for the Lord. Though many have come, there is still room for more!

- Our culture has changed much in the past several decades. The time when folks attended church because they felt compelled to do so are gone. Lost people no longer show up at our services, seeking to learn of the Lord. They have to be reached by those who have heard and believed. Our numbers continue to decline, and yet we have developed a passive approach to ministry. We need to do as the Lord commanded: go into the highways and hedges, compelling them to come in so that His house might be filled. If we don't reach them, who will?

- It is time for us to develop an aggressive attitude in ministry. I am thankful for what the Lord has done, but I am in no way satisfied with where we are. We must reach those around us for the Lord! May we be submissive and aggressive in order to gain the more!

II. The Approach in Ministry (20-22a) – Here Paul reveals his approach for ministry. He was determined to reach those he encountered, regardless of their background or standing. None were exempt from hearing the Gospel. As we reach out, we must:

A. Witness to the Religious (20) – [And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.](#) In Paul's day there were still many Jews who sought to hold the traditions and rituals of the law. He did not live contrary to God's law, but living under grace he was no more bound by the law. However, if keeping a ritual or tradition that wasn't contrary to Scripture would help him reach a Jew, he became as a Jew. He wasn't afraid to submit to their demands to reach them.

- There is an important lesson for us here. Our churches are filled with tradition. Tradition is fine, but tradition isn't Bible. Just because others choose to do things a little differently is no sign they are out of God's will. We may have to lay aside some of our religious tradition in order to reach some religious people who have never trusted the Lord in salvation. We must not condemn others because their approach is different than ours. If we offend because of tradition, we may lose an opportunity to witness.

B. Witness to the Rebellious (21) – *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.* The text is clear that Paul didn't live without the law. He lived under the law of Christ. He did not indulge in sin to reach the sinner, but he made himself available to them. He gained their respect and earned their friendship. Rather than approach them with condemnation, he approached them in love.

- We have a tendency to categorize people and judge them based on our perception. We sometimes feel that certain people are beyond the reach of God. The Lord doesn't expect or want us to live as they do or participate in their sin, but He does desire and expect us to present ourselves and the Gospel to them in a manner that isn't intimidating. Jesus ate with sinners and reached out to many who were ungodly. That is who He came to save. It is possible to bridge gaps and earn a friendship to become an effective witness. Judging won't do it, but love will.

C. Witness to the Reluctant (22b) – *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.* There were many in Paul's day that were steeped in tradition. The Jews couldn't let go of the law; the Gentiles couldn't release their false gods and immorality. Many had a hard time grasping the truths of the Gospel. Paul never gave up. He continued to share the gospel and presented it in a way they could understand. He made himself weak to reach the weak.

- This particularly spoke to me. I was raised in church. The truths of the Gospel are dear to my heart. I have no trouble embracing them, but there are those around us who were not blessed to have been raised in church. We must not condemn them for their lack of understanding. We must present the Gospel, over and over again if necessary, and not give up on them.

III. The Appreciation for Ministry (22b-23) – As we conclude our thoughts, we discover that Paul had a deep appreciation for the ministry. It motivated him to press on for the cause of Christ, seeking to reach those who needed salvation. Consider:

A. The Conviction (22b) – *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* Paul did the things he did for one purpose: that he might win souls to Christ. That was his desire; that was his goal for living.

- Is that our hearts desire? Do we really care if the lost are saved? Are we willing to inconvenience ourselves and submit to God for the souls of men?

B. The Consideration (22b) – *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

There is a key word in this passage. Paul was made all things to all men that he might save **some**. Paul knew that everyone he shared the Gospel with would not receive it. Everyone would not believe in Christ. There would be those who chose to reject the grace of God.

- This is a truth that we often don't want to consider. It is sad, but it is true. *Mat.7:14 – Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* This brings me to our last point.

C. The Commitment (23) – *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Paul was already looking ahead to his next convert. He knew everyone wouldn't believe, but some would. He had no way of knowing who the next one would be. All he knew to do was keep sharing the Gospel and leave the results to the Lord. He was not discouraged or defeated because some rejected his message.

- Some are going to refuse our witness. Not everyone we share the Gospel with will be saved, but that can't stop us from telling all we can of Christ our Lord. How can we know whether the next person we share the Gospel with will reject or receive Christ? There is too much at stake! The next one just might receive the offer. We must continue to tell of the grace and mercy of our Lord. We too must be committed to reaching the lost and perishing.

Conclusion: I have personally been challenged by the passages we have considered the past few weeks. Surely we all could love others more than we do. I know we can do better in service to others. This morning's passage really spoke to me. Our world is filled with those who do not know Christ as their Savior. In fact, our communities and families have those who have never been saved. Are we going to reach out to them in an effort to see them come to Christ in salvation? If we don't who will? It is simply too important to leave for someone else to do. We must reach out with the Gospel.

If you need help, seek the Lord. If you are unsaved, He wants to save you as well!