

I. Introduction

- A. Leith Anderson tells of a struggling church who hired a new preacher
1. They expected him to bring them back from the brink to vibrancy
 - a. They expected that without changing anything or costing money
 - b. In his first sermon, he painted a vibrant vision for church could be
 - c. Of course, it was going to take work, sacrifice, money and change
 2. He ended sermon up with a fiery, shake-down-the-thunder promise
With your prayer, patience and support, and with the help of Almighty God, I intend to drag this church, even if kicking-and-screaming, into the 20th century
 - a. One of the deacons was quick to correct “*You mean 21st century*”
 - b. Preacher grinned, “*Brother, let’s just take it one century at a time!*”
- B. Nothing is more unsettling for churches or church members than change
1. God will never change; He is the same yesterday, today and forever
 - a. We are to hold to His hand, to God unchanging hand (bass line)
 - b. That won’t keep us from changing... or mean the church shouldn’t
 2. Think of all the changes that have taken place at Denbigh over years
 - a. Church bulletin was typed on a stencil and run on mimeograph
(I preferred a spirit duplicator; we weren’t sure we believed in the spirit back then)
 - b. We had pews; now we have chairs— a family left over that change
(*Tried not to enjoy it much when church they went to replaced pews with chairs*)
 - c. I remember Brother Ross taking plate food out to Brother Briggs
(*Brother Briggs thought it was wrong to eat in the build until we corrupted him*)
 - d. We once had a young preacher who had no idea what he’s doing
(*Now we have a grizzled veteran preacher... who has no idea what he’s doing*)
 3. The question is never will we change or not— it is always HOW
- C. We continue with “2020 Vision” using vision statement as outline
Living as God’s family under the cross: Loving, Serving, Praising, Proclaiming
1. Last week we reviewed, regained momentum, hit ground running
 2. I think this may be the most important lesson in the whole series
 - a. Maybe if involves the most systemic change we need to make
 - b. Then again, maybe not. But at least I’ve got you listening!

II. Need to See Church as a Service Organization

- A. Wait a minute! Isn't the church supposed to be about worship of God?
1. Worship is very important? In fact, worship is next week's lesson
 - a. I want to say something scandalous about worship.... next week!
 - b. Worship isn't just singing songs, reading text, hearing a sermon
 - 1) You can do all of that on your phone; there's an app for that!
 - 2) You can even do your regular church contribution from phone
 - 3) I'll walk you through it; let's use \$10,000 as a test amount
 2. Someone, "*Can't I worship just as will on golf course as here?*"
 - a. People call on the name of the Lord on golf course, right Mark?
 - b. What you can't do on golf course is.... assemble (**Heb 10:24-25**)
 - 1) Can't encourage one another (nothing encouraging about golf)
 - 2) Point of assembly is to encourage, uplift and serve others
- B. Worship (next week) is more than what we do in assembly (**Rom 12:1**)
1. What is true and proper worship? When we offer ourselves to God?
 - a. Greek word here (*latreía*) is word for priest offering a sacrifice
 - b. It is the word Paul used in the describing the Jews (**Rom 9:4**)
 - c. It's the word the Hebrew writer uses for priest's job (**Heb 9:6**)
 2. OT priest offered sacrifices on altar; all we have is ourselves to offer
 - a. The priest had to go through a purification process to be holy
 - b. And we have to make sure that we are holy as well (**Rom 12:2**)
- C. Paul goes on to describe how we offer our bodies as living sacrifices
1. This is what he calls offering our "*true and pleasing worship*"
 - a. Don't think too highly of yourself but as part of body (**12:3-5**)
 - b. Use your spiritual gifts to build up the church body (**12:6-8**)
 - c. Build up and share with others; associate with all (**12:9-15**)
 - d. Do all you can to get along with all, even enemy (**12:16-21**)
 2. All of that follows directly from command to be "*living sacrifice*"
 - a. All of this shows is how we live out a "*true and proper worship*"
 - b. True and proper worship isn't a song we sing– it's serving others

D. Question: Why is it that we call what we do here a “worship service”

1. Is that confusing? If it’s service, shouldn’t you be able to order?
 - a. **Story:** Kid looking at a plaque in church foyer with brass names
 - 1) He is fascinated by it, and he asked one of the elders about it
 - 2) Elder, “*Those are names of all our boys who died in service*”
 - 3) The kid is shocked, “*Was it first service or second service?*”
 - b. Why do we call it a “service?” *Do we think we’re serving God!*
2. God does expect us to be here and all, but we are NOT serving Him
 - a. God’s isn’t more on throne because we sang “*My God Reigns*”
 - b. God isn’t more blessed when we sing “*Blessed Be Your Name*”
 - c. We’re not giving God anything he needs today (**Psalm 50:9-12**)
 - 1) God doesn’t have brittle ego that needs building up in worship
 - 2) He’s a bit sarcastic here, “*If I was hungry, I wouldn’t tell you*”
 - d. Our worship doesn’t provide God anything that He needs, right?
3. It’s other way around; God serves us in our worship (**Psa 50:23**)
 - a. Worship reminds us there’s a God on the throne... and He’s not us
 - b. Worship gets us ready to be Isaiah, “*Here I am Lord, send me!*”

E. Like Elvis, we need to leave the building and take our service with us!

1. I’m not talking about setting up a tent and doing church on yard
 - a. We need to blow the roof off this place when we praise God
 - b. The we need to take it to the streets in service and wash some feet
2. Jesus was clear what will be on the final exam! (**Matt 25:34-36**)
 - a. **Disturbing:** There’s none is the churchy stuff we like to major in
 - 1) No questions on the millennium (*a little late for that, right?*)
 - 2) No questions about using praise teams or musical instruments
 - 3) No backgrounds-checks on complementarian vs egalitarian
 - b. Only questions were, “*Did you treat people like they were Jesus?*”
3. John version of the Last Supper is the one with no bread and a towel
 - a. Jesus grabs a wash basin and a towel and begins to wash feet
 - b. Peter goes from “*You’ll not wash mine*” to “*give me whole bath*”
 - c. The point of that exercise is to stress our service (**John 13:12-17**)

III. Concluding Thoughts

A. **First**, we must ALL use ALL our gifts to serve others (**1 Peter 4:10**)

1. **Question:** Who is it who gets to sit on the bench during the game?
 - a. Only those who are wondering, worn-out or who are wounded
 - b. Those get a special dispensation and time to get feet under them
 - c. Everyone else is expected to tighten chinstrap and get in game
2. You know number one reason people leave one church for another?
 - a. This church isn't meeting needs. *What if we turned that around?*
 - 1) Elders call you for a meeting, "You need to find a new church"
 - 2) "You're not meeting our needs; we're trying a new family..."
 - b. OK, that's never going to happen (there's a demented side of me)
 - c. Peter says we're all to use your gifts to serve. Are we doing that?

B. **Second**, sometimes serving can be opening our wallets (**2 Cor 9:12**)

1. Paul is bringing home here whole section of **2 Cor 8-9** on giving
 - a. Christian "service" he is talking about is "grace of giving" (**8:7**)
 - b. Were side-tracked; Paul is refocusing on grace & service of giving
2. We can serve others by sharing in our finances (example of sign)
 - a. Had insurance, but this was one chance... and someone stepped up
 - b. Another example our new church oven (*hasn't been donated yet*)

C. **Third**, we're all part of the body, but no one is appendix (**Rom 14:17-18**)

1. Romans were squabbling over special days, eating meats, even wine
 - a. Paul says the kingdom of God isn't focused on issues like that
 - b. We're to focus on things at center— righteousness love, joy, peace
 - 1) When you let go of your issues to focus on love, joy & peace?
 - 2) He says that you serve Christ and you build up others!
2. We'll all part of the body, but no one gets to be the appendix
 - a. Appendix does nothing until it gets infected and upsets body
 - 1) Paul says godless chatter spreads like gangrene (**2 Tim 2:16**)
 - 2) All are part of body, but healthy body can't have gangrene!
 - b. You serve Christ by focus on love, joy and peace and move on