

# **“AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY IN CHRIST, II.”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

**July 2, 2017, 10:30AM**

**Scripture Text: Mark 10:41-45**

## **Introduction.**

I want you to know how proud I am of First Church. You were amazing this week and in all the weeks of preparation before. You went above and beyond all week long with our Serve project.

I was reminded by one of our Serve volunteers of something I said in my first sermon of this year.

“My prayer is that 2017 may be the most spiritually faithful and fruitful year in your life and in the life of First Christian Reformed Church.”

I believe what happened last week was one of the most significant events in the life of our congregation. I have never seen anything quite like this. As I watched and participated I saw how God was at work and realized there was no way I could just go on business as usual this morning. We have to stop and reflect on what God allowed us to be a part of.

This summer Youth Unlimited offered 28 Serve sites around the US and Canada (9). Each student paid \$360 plus airfare for the privilege of working hard and serving some people they didn't know with other kids they didn't know.

62 youth and leaders came here from four CRC churches from MT, MN, and IL. They served our community through nine work sites and we as a church served them to make it all possible. Over a hundred members of our congregation served led by an incredible team of volunteer leaders.

Stand if you volunteered or helped with the Serve week, in the kitchen, on the worship, sound, projector, on the work sites, came to the prayer meetings or wore a prayer bracelet, were a host family on last Sunday morning, made cookies or bread, bought snacks, bought or donated tools or vehicles or trailers, helped with set up or clean up, stayed up late to be a night watchmen.

## **Testimonies:**

I want you to know the fruit of your labors, I want you to know about the lives you touch, I want you to hear firsthand reports of God's grace, God's providence.

I have asked five members of our Serve volunteer team to share briefly from their experience. The first will be Steve Lankhaar, who along with Len Honcoop coordinated and organized the nine work sites. Steve and Len brought their years of experience with youth conventions to fruitful use this week.

Next Ria Van Weerdhuizen will share how God work as she coordinated the community life aspect of Serve. Then Cal and Laura Buys will share, and finally our host coordinator and youth pastor, Dan Houston.

## **Wrap Up:**

*Serving is messy*, still getting things back to normal around here.

*Serving is hard*, different jobs, sacrificing, costly, time consuming.

*Serving is humbling*, out of comfort zone and more prayer dependent. Also as sinners our sin gets exposed, especially pride. Jesus disciples.

*Service takes humility and humility makes authentic community possible.* The impulse to self breaks fellowship and unity and peace. Self leads us to broken relationships and isolation. When our needs and wants and desires and expectations rule then the rule of love and service is lost.

## *Serving is one of the most Christ like things we can do.*

Jesus turned the world upside down in so many ways and perhaps none more profound than when He ushered in *a kingdom where the King serves*. And if the King serves, how much then should all who desire to follow the King and be a part of His kingdom.

**John 13:15-17** I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and the glory of his humility and servanthood. Let us all live up to the example of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

There is more glory in a soup kitchen than in the throne room of a king. There is more beauty and power in our nursery than in the White House. The angels see and marvel more at one who ministers or serves children or the elderly or the poor than do they marvel at CEOs and captains of industry.

## *Serving is rewarding*

Lives touched and changed, one student committed his life to Christ.

Every day gives us a myriad of opportunities to serve and give and share and think of others rather than ourselves, at home and work and in our neighborhoods and churches.

The life that is spent for the sake of others, the life that is sacrificed in service will be truly rewarded in the life to come, thirty, sixty and a hundred fold.

Are you willing to serve? Are you willing to do whatever task the Lord calls you to do? Are you willing to do something menial, lowly or unpleasant? Are you willing to serve without recognition or reward? Are you willing to set aside your own desires?

True greatness is found in serving others.

True greatness is found in promoting someone else's happiness.

True greatness is found in helping another person advance.

True greatness is found in lessening someone else's sorrow and in increasing their joy.

True greatness is found in sacrificing ourselves for the sake of others.

True greatness is found in leaving this world and those in it better.

We don't all have the same knowledge or gifts or talents or abilities, but we can all serve, we can all put the interests ahead of our own. We can all live up to the example of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

I love you and I am so proud of all of you, for your prayer and support and patience.

“My prayer is that 2017 may be the most spiritually faithful and fruitful year in your life and in the life of First Christian Reformed Church.”

**Prayer:** Our Holy Father in Heaven, we beseech you this morning to bless our seeking of you. Above all, dear Father, grant that our lives will increasingly bring glory to your dear Son, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, in whose precious name we pray. Amen.