

SERVICE THAT GOES BEYOND THE NOW

(First Things First, Pt3)

January 26-27, 2019 ser3804 Sat Sun E & Sun L

I. CATCHING UP!

A. We, that's us, you and me, we are almost there. We moved from 30% to 50% last week. What am I talking about? The "B" challenge. What's the "B" challenge? To read through the Bible, cover to cover, in 5 years. (That's just one chapter a day.) Come on, for those of you who have not yet signed up for the challenge—you can do it!

For those of you who weren't here last week or for the past two weeks—the weather wasn't very friendly—and you're up for the challenge, put a "B" on the Welcome Card, with your name, cell or email...and you're in. **(Show photo of Welcome Card, filled out with a B in a circle.)**

For those of you who were not here last week, we hope you're in for the "T" challenge. Pick up a transcript of *G-TRIPLE-C'S THREE Ts*, or better yet, watch it on line. After you've done that and you're up for the "T" challenge, put a "T" on your Welcome Card or Giving Envelope and place it in the Offering Container.

(Show photo of Welcome Card, filled out with a T in a circle.)

Now, if you're already reading through the Bible and Tithing, you're not exempt. Hand in your name because you're important to the total picture. Think, just think, if we can get over 50% of all of us reading through the Bible and giving God the full tithe, how life changing that would be! **(Show photo of Welcome Card, filled out with a B, T or both.)**

ILLUSTRATION: After service last weekend, a lady came up to me and shared how taking on the T challenge a few years ago changed her life. **(Show video—Ruthann Goller-Enz)**

B. There are four challenges in front of all of us as a church family as we enter into 2019. Today we meet challenge *number three*—SERVICE.

C. Let's pray!

II. POINT OF INTRIGUE

A. Called in the womb.

1 Samuel 1:2-18 PME 301; LAB 389

It was an age when a man could have two wives, or more, and it was not illegal. (What do you think men—would you have liked to live in those days? Those of you who are married, please, don't answer.

LOL! How come women didn't have two husbands? Because one was enough. LOL!)

Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Now Peninnah had children but Hannah did not. Every year when Elkanah would go to the temple, he would give gifts to his wives and children, but to Hannah he would give twice as many gifts because she had no children. Because God had closed Hannah's womb, Peninnah would provoke and irritate her. (Like brothers often do to one another.)

ILLUSTRATION: Last week we celebrated AJ's birthday, and every chance his brother, Levi got, he would needle him. To find some semblance of peace, the First Lady of the Church had to sit between them. (Now, they are 13 and 12.) For those of you who have sons, or maybe even daughters, you understand that picture.

But these are grown women. And Peninnah is needling Hannah! "Come on, grow up!" Right?

This went on for years. Often when they would take the trip to the Tabernacle, Hannah was so distraught she couldn't eat or stop crying. Let's pick up the narrative...

9 ... Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. **10** Hannah, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. **11** She made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your

maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.”

12 Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth. **13** As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

14 Then Eli said to her, “How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine” **15** But Hannah replied, “No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. **16** “Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation.” **17** Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.” **18** She said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad*.

Most of you know the rest of the story. A year later Hannah gave birth to a son and named him Samuel, which means, “Heard by God.” As promised, after Samuel was weaned, he was taken to the Tabernacle where he lived, grew up and served under Eli, the priest of God.

Now the story doesn't end there. When Samuel was 12 years of age and lying down in the Tabernacle, he was startled by a voice calling out to him. Samuel, thinking it was Eli, went to him and said, "Here I am." Eli told Samuel that it wasn't he who spoke and to go back and lie down. Yet again, Samuel heard the voice call out. And once again he went to Eli only to get the same response. **(show photo)**



Now what comes next is interesting. Grasp this! Samuel had been working in the Tabernacle for at least 7 to 8 years. The Bible says in **1 Samuel 3:7**

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him.

THAT'S ONE REASON FOR THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE TO READ THE BIBLE—It's God speaking to us. Read to hear God. Read to discern God's will.

ILLUSTRATION: How many times do I encounter people who speak Christian jargon? They know what the Bible says; they can quote it—better than I. (So can Satan.) Yet there is something that doesn't ring true. You know, deep in your know-er, that person isn't born again.

They can talk about Him, but don't know Him. That's about to change for the boy Samuel.

The Bible says, Samuel went back and lay down, and once again he heard a voice calling for him. And once again he went to Eli. But this time Eli knew it was the voice of God calling to Samuel. And Eli said to Samuel,

“Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. **(Let's keep reading.)**

10 Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

19 Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail. **20** All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. **21** And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

B. Here's the point of the illustration—obviously there are many—but here's the one I'd like to draw our attention today. All three times when the LORD called out to Samuel, and Samuel went to Eli, Samuel's answer was “Here I am.” Note, he didn't

say, “I am here.” One speaks of location; the other speaks of the position of the heart.

C. This sermon is entitled “Service that Goes Beyond the Now.” When we do for others and do for God on our terms, our reward is temporal. But when we do for others, and God, on God’s terms, the reward is eternal—it goes beyond the now.

1. One says, “Here I am.”

2. The others says, “I am here!”

One says, LORD I’m here in Sewell, NJ. If you want me, I’m here. Don’t ask me to move to California; they’re a bunch of whackos anyway. But whatever you want me to do in Sewell, I’m here. The other says, “Here I am,” all of me. Whatever, whenever, wherever...I’m yours LORD.”

Actually, in most cases, if not all, our relationship with the Lord stalls, if not sputters out, if we serve Him on our terms and not His.

ILLUSTRATION: I recall when we first moved into this building. I was meeting with a couple desiring to get married. She was a Christian; he was not. She demanded that he come to Church if they were going to get married. Now, she didn’t come to Church because she worked on the weekends. He came. Sat on the first row. Took notes.

I think it was the second or third time we met. I asked a probing question, one I ask all of the couples whose marriages I officiate: "Is there anything you'd like to change about Mr A/Ms B?" Oh, my gracious, there was a laundry list, one of which was: "If he thinks I'm moving to North Jersey after we get married he'd better think again. I'm not giving up my job. I've worked too hard to get where I am." Mr A and Ms B never did get married. They would not have come to the altar with "I am here," but "Here I am." One reveals a true servant's heart, the other a self-serving heart.

C. Note: I didn't address if we should serve, because God has called EVERYONE who believes to serve. That's a given. Listen to His words in

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be

served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."



LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?'

Martin Luther King Jr.

III. YOUR PLACE OF SERVICE

A. So, if you don't have a place of service, we'll be delighted to work with you on finding one. It's the heart of Jesus; it's the heart of every believer in alignment with our Lord.

On Monday we honored one of America's true heroes—a man of wisdom and bravery, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr King understood that being a servant, first to God then to others, was indeed a person's highest calling. (**show slide and read it**)

I've been meeting with a number of "20-30 somethings" this year; it's something God has placed on my heart for 2019. Listen, we all have a place...EVERYONE...even if you're a 90 something like Abe who ushers at the age of 96. **However, it's that generation (20-40 something's) that is going to lead GCCC into the next two decades.** *We, who are a little older (LOL!), guide and mentor, but ***they*** must take ownership. But, they can't take ownership unless we give it to them. **[R]**

It has been so exciting. *They* are excited to be given the challenge. *I'm* excited they have taken on the challenge. YOU'LL HEAR MORE ON JANUARY 30TH—CATCH THE VISION. (**show slide**)



On January 30th you'll meet the new Leadership Team, as well as our Campus Pastor. Do you want me to tell you who that Campus Pastor is? **/pause/** It's Gina Kulikowski. Great choice! Right? The reason why I gave you a preview of January 30th by giving you Gina's name, is to assure you that we will do everything in our power to see that you have a place of service in our GCCC family.

It doesn't have to be much. Start small. Once every five to six weeks. Maybe it's once or twice a year with one of our major projects like *Feed My Starving Children* or *Project Love* or *So Loved—our Easter Passion Play*. Maybe it's taking the emergency phone line one night a week for three months.

B. So, what do you say, "Let's make a deal!" Check the block on your Connection Card and let us reach out to you and make sure your *promise and potential* is achieved here at GCCC (Ephesians 2:10).

[Band sings while people fill out their cards.]

[Band pads under the Pray-er and then sings while Offering is taken and cards are collected.]

[PB closes with Invitation out after the Offertory.]

IV. INVITATION

Last week we talked about honoring God with the tithe - which is pleasing to the LORD.

However, there is something even more pleasing to God than the tithe, and that is giving Him your life. Have you given God your life? You say, "*Pastor, how?*"

Admit - your sins have separated you from God. (*Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23*);

Believe - that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal

Lamb/Messiah.) (*Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22*);

Commit - yourself to His righteous by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (*Isa 53:5; Col 1:22*);

Do it today! (*Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2*).

<p>Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!</p>
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words with Invitation.