

## What am I?

My kids that I teach love riddles. They get one every day. No, it is not the typical riddle that you might think...the kind that has a clear answer and an amazing set of questions. It is a riddle that causes them to think and act differently. It is one that challenges their way of thinking. One of the riddles that I put up on the board the other day was a simple question:

“If you sacrificed all that you had and gave it away, do you think you could be happy?”

You could see their confusion! So they told me that they don't understand why they have to answer such a “stupid” question as this. They even went as far as blaming me for their confusion. You see, my kids see everything for “what is in it for them”. Although this is typical with children, they don't see that they have “something to give”. As a teacher, I challenge them to work, live, and play not as if the world owes them anything but as if they owe the world something. This is where I think the parallel for “The Lord's Church” comes in.

We in the church must be “mission-minded”. In fact, it has been our **challenge** across our heritage in churches to consider others more than ourselves. I just wonder if we have made any progress? When the apostles were arguing about who was the greatest, the gospel of Mark records that Jesus told his disciples that “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and the servant of all” **Mark 9:33-35**. Do we find ourselves coming to church unwilling to accept any challenges that await us? Do we find ourselves praying that our lives will be better and free of any challenges? Where are the prayers for those who need help the most? The Lord did not promise us or even His Son the prospect of a “challenge-free” life. Here is what he does promise. Jesus says in **John 7:37-39** “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within Him”. And so...we come to Jesus to fill ourselves with this “living water”. What do we do for others?

For those of you who appreciate riddles, do you think that Jesus spoke of “water” to quench His own thirst? Somehow, I feel convicted in Christ's words! I never want to lose my thirst for God, and as importantly, I never want to lose the challenge of meeting the needs of those around me. I often think in the church that we have to wait to drink the “water” that Christ offers to us only when we are thirsty. This is like refusing water until we know that we can't go any further! Does this further our progress of being a “mission-minded” church? If Christ held the “water” for me to drink to my hearts content, why should I not hold the “water” for others to drink? Our hearts should take comfort in the fact that when we were thirsty; Christ gave us what we needed.

So, what contribution do we make in our “mission-minded” church? Hopefully, everything that we do for our church will glorify the one who bought the price for His church. By developing our gifts and using our gifts, we hope that it builds our church. We hope that everyone can contribute without the idea that what they bring to contribute isn’t worthwhile. I Cor. 3:5-13 said it best when Paul discussed divisions among Christians in the church in Corinth:

<sup>5</sup>What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup>I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. <sup>7</sup>So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup>The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

<sup>10</sup>By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup>his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

The challenge for us is not to feel inadequate when we are challenged to do more for His church. We must be strong in our conviction for Christ in all that we do. Our prayer today is that we remain “thirsty” for God, that we know our purpose for getting involved in His church, and that we hold “the cup” for others to quench their thirst.

Eph. 3:20-21

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

May God bless you in His service!

Steve