

Sermon on 1 Corinthians 9: 16-23; Mark 1: 29-39

Our Savior's Lutheran Church; "All Saints Series"

February 4, 2018

Dear friends in Christ, grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please join me in prayer: Gracious God, help us understand what it means to be 'all things to all people,' and in doing so, remind us of who 'you' have made us to be. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

Today we are in **'week three'** of our sermon series on the movie, "All Saints." I hope you have enjoyed our time together in worship, and in your LifeGroups, as we have reflected on the 'meaning' of this story and how it speaks to our 'own lives' as people of God united in 'mission' and 'ministry.'

Today, we 'continue' our discussion of this movie, and as we do, we consider also today's 'scripture readings,' and how they, along with the movie, paint a 'picture' for us of what it 'means' to be God's people.

Specifically today, let's think about what 'Paul' is speaking of in reading from Corinthians when he says: "I have become 'all things' to 'all people?'" (START FUSSING WITH THE "IDENTITY BAG.")

“All things, to all people.” It sounds so ‘noble’ and ‘good’ and ‘righteous’ doesn’t it? An **‘idyllic way’** to live as God’s children.

But what really does it mean to **‘be’** **“All things to all people?”**
Well, I brought along a few things for us to look at that might help us figure this out a bit.

(Bring out the “My Identity” bag.)

- This is my, **“Identity Bag.”** In it I keep reminders of all the things **I am to other people.** ‘You’ each have one of these of these **“Identity Bags”** of your own you know, for you too are many things to many people.
- *(Start pulling out hats and putting them on. Say the name on each hat and describe how I am each one of these things to different people in my life. Others in the congregation are these things too; say it from the women’s perspective of who they are too.)* **(Start to go back to pulpit.)**
- All these **‘Hats** and many more, remind me **of ‘all the things’ I am to ‘all the people’ in my life,** but do they ‘really’ give me my ‘identity?’ Do the things in **‘your’ “Identity Bag,”** give you ‘your’ ‘identity too?’

- What about when it comes to our identity as **'Christians?'**
Do these things make us who we are as **Children of God?**
Well, yes and no.
- This seems to be a question the Pastor in our movie is struggling with too.

Pastor Michael is certainly trying to be many things to many people. He comes from the Bishop's office to be the **'administrator'** who will oversee the closing of the church and the completion of that congregation's ministry. However, as we know, God has other plans for this tiny church, and soon Pastor Michael begins to wear the **'hat'** of **'mission developer'** as the church comes alive again.

Now he is the pastor to the **Karen refugees** who have made the church their home. It is an identity we too share as a 'denomination' called to proclaim the gospel of Christ to **'all our brothers and sister'** within our **'world'** and **'community.'**

Soon Pastor Michael begins to wear more 'identity hats.'
'Advocate for the refugees,' 'fundraiser,' 'farmer,' along with being a **'husband,' and 'father,'** and many other things, to many other people.

At one point in the movie, when he is ‘again’ water the crops ‘by hand’ after working non-stop doing everything else, the handle breaks off the barrel, and it pushes him over the edge. He starts beating the barrel and yelling, he had reached his breaking point. Trying to be ‘all things to all people,’ was more than he could do. Do ‘you’ ever feel that way?

As God’s people, we are ‘called’ to live in the example of Christ each day, doing what we can do, out of love for God, and for our neighbor. We are ‘many things’ to ‘many people.’

But when we try to be ‘all these things,’ to ‘all these people,’ at the ‘same time,’ we begin to realize too, like Pastor Michael, that it’s more than we can manage. We don’t like to admit this, because sometimes it feels as if we are ‘failing in our ministry’ if we can’t ‘do all things’ all the time. But even ‘Jesus’ knew the importance of wearing ‘one hat at a time,’ and, wearing it ‘WELL!’

Think of those Gospel stories of Christ. Jesus ‘clearly’ was all things to all people. He was a ‘teacher,’ a ‘healer,’ a ‘leader,’ a ‘champion of the oppressed.’ He was a ‘Son!’ Our ‘Savior!’ He was ‘all things’ to ‘all people!’ But over and over again in the Gospel

stories, in those moments when ‘each person’ came to him with their ‘deepest need,’ **he became what ‘they needed most,’ ‘at that moment,’ the ‘one thing then’ they needed him to be!**

In today’s story, Jesus had just come from **‘teaching’** in the synagogue, where he had also **‘healed’** a man with an unclean spirit. **“Teacher” and ‘Healer.’**

After that, he enters the house of Simon and Andrew, where we discover Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Immediately Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up, **“and the fever left her.”** **“Healer” is what she needed him to be the ‘most’ at that moment.**

Others came to him that night. **“And they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons, the ‘whole city’ was gathered around his door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.”** He was **‘many things’ to ‘many people,’ but in the moment of their deepest need, he was the ‘one thing’ each of them needed the most!**

Yes, all of us, like Jesus, wear many different hats. We are ‘many things’ to ‘many people,’ but none of us can be **‘all things’ to ‘all**

people' 'all of the time. But we 'can be' what the people in our lives need the most, in each moment we share with them!

- *(Take out the hats and put them on one by one. Say, "We can be the best"....(whatever is on the hat)...we can be, "to that person...in the moment we share with them!")*
- We are called to be each of these things along the way, and each hat we wear is very important indeed, they are part of our 'identity.'
- But there is 'one thing,' and 'one thing only,' that makes us who we are, and enables us to be the best we can be of "all these other things."
- We are who we are, because of what "Christ" has made us to be! **"Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the Cross of Christ, forever!"**
- **We are who we are, because 'Jesus was' who 'He was,' when we needed Him the most! "SAVIOR!" "HEALER!" "GIVER OF LIFE!"**
- **When we needed Him the most, he became all we would ever need!** *(Begin to put the "Identity Bag" away.)*

It's the Cross of Christ that makes you who you are...**it's your**
'identity' Child of God! It's what gives you the ability to be 'all these
other things' to the people in your life each day!' Thanks be to God,
for helping us be the person we are 'called' to be! Amen!