

**Goal: That the hearers would strive to be all things all people to save some.**

“*There’s no I in team!*” Have you heard that before? “*There’s no I in team!*” It’s an important truth that we remind athletes, whether you’re talking about UH men’s volleyball or the NFL. Now, Tom Brady may be the one who is glamorized, but without receivers and an offensive line, the Patriots wouldn’t have made it to the Super Bowl. “*There is no I in team.*” Something the Philadelphia Eagles are aware, as they lost their star quarterback and had to work together to make it to the big game.

There’s another saying I want to teach you today, “*there’s no me in Christianity.*” “*There’s no me in Christianity!*” Often, someone tells me that being a Christian is all about having a personal relationship with Jesus and that being part of a church isn’t necessary. That idea is not supported by the Bible in any way. Actually, God’s Word describes the Christian life, living as a disciple of Jesus, as one that is lived in a community according to the law of Christ.

The phrase, Law of Christ, might sound strange. I mean, we’re familiar with the law of God, that’s the 10 commandments that He gave through Moses and that God wrote on each of our hearts ([Romans 2:14-15](#)). You know, don’t murder, don’t steal, don’t have other gods, remember the Sabbath day, don’t covet, honor your parents, etc. The law of God shows us where we fall short and how we fail to live the perfect life that God requires. The law of God condemns us when we sin and it threatens punishment.

The law of Christ, on the other hand, shows us the cross, where Jesus took the punishment that we deserve, and it focuses us on living in love. The law of Christ is not a list of do’s and don’ts or else, it’s a list of freedoms, freedom from God’s punishment, freedom from having to live under others expectations, freedom to be God’s beloved. The law of Christ declares that we are free and it joins us together, like a team, to receive God’s blessings and share the blessings of the Gospel with others, who are still feeling oppressed by God’s law. “*There’s no me in Christianity!*”

Paul describes how he uses that freedom, “***For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.***” (1 Corinthians 9:19–23)

For Paul, being under the law of Christ means that He is free to love and serve others, being what they needed him to be. That’s Christ’s ministry pure and simple. How

do you share the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus with Jews? You live within their community, understand their traditions, and become a Jew. How do you share the Gospel with those who are homeless? You go and spend time with them under the bridge on Kam highway or at food distribution here Saturday mornings, spending time getting to know them, understanding their struggles, their fears, and their hopes. As Christ's disciples here at Saint Mark, we are not to merely be a place that people are drawn, although that may happen, it's a place that reminds us of the law of Christ, that we are forgiven and free. It's here that God equips us with His blessings of forgiveness and life. And it is from here that He then sends us to reach others in love to saving some.

That's what the missionary in Botswana and India and China do. They move to that foreign place, learn the language, the traditions, and the culture and become part of the community, and that community becomes part of them. It's then that they are able to share the Gospel of Jesus, in their language and with respect to their culture and traditions. But it's not just missionaries in distant lands.

I grew up in California, in a suburb of San Francisco. I loved California and it was my home. However, God led me to Missouri to prepare for ministry at Concordia Seminary. My plan, was to return home to the Bay Area as a pastor, but God had other plans. He placed me at St. Paul Lutheran Church, School, and Preschool in McAllen, Texas, down south on the border of Mexico. I didn't speak Spanish and I didn't have a high regard for Texans, but I embraced the culture, becoming both a Longhorns and an Aggies fan. I taught Vacation Bible School in Mexico and built a pool for an orphanage there. I grew to love Texas and the culture of McAllen part of me and I of it, but the Lord had other plans for me.

It wasn't back to the California coast, but to a small, rural farming, and proud military community of Fallon, Nevada, to serve St. John's Lutheran Church and Preschool. I knew nothing about alfalfa or dairy farming, nor was I familiar with Naval procedures, but I embraced the culture of Fallon. I grew to love NASCAR, ride horses and drive cattle. I became a chaplain to the crisis pregnancy center and volunteered on base. I even learned to appreciate big game hunting. That's quite a stretch for a Marine Biologist from California, but that's what discipleship under the law of Christ is all about, *"being all things to all people in order to save some."* Now, for almost 9 years, I've called Kaneohe my home. I've not only been active in all of our school activities but I've coached soccer and helped out at our District Park. I have gained such an appreciation and respect for our beautiful island and the Hawaiian culture. Such a shift from northern California, eastern Missouri, south Texas, and northern Nevada. I don't do this because I am the pastor, but because I am a disciple of Jesus Christ and I am trying to be all things in order to share the Gospel and save some within our community.

I hope that you understand, being all things to all people isn't only the call to pastors. It's the call we each have as disciples of Jesus, who live under the law of Christ.

It urges us to not just live for ourselves, but to live for others and with others, spending time, understanding their struggles, sharing their joys, celebrating their milestones and then considering how can I convey to them the love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Does that sound difficult? Sure, being a disciple of Christ isn't easy. It means constantly listening and learning to live a life of love for others. Here, God gives us an example, ***“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2: 5 – 11)*** It is Jesus love and sacrifice that becomes our motivation to do likewise.

Some think Christian discipleship is all about coming to church on Sunday mornings, as if this is the goal of our faith, our Super Bowl. ***“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So, run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9: 24 – 27)*** But it's not! This isn't the big game, this is our practice facility. It's here that we receive instruction and encouragement from our coach and Lord. This is where we learn the about the competition and how to prepare with God's Word for the spiritual battle. This is where we get our uniform of righteousness through the waters of Baptism. This is where we are refreshed through Christ's body and blood. This is where we practice the drills of love and service to others, whether it's serving in our Food Bank or teaching Keiki Church, leading songs of praise or serving on a ministry board within our congregation.

Then after we've practiced here, over and over again, we go out and live what we've learned. Out there is the target of our faith. Out there is our Super Bowl. Because, out there we are not just disciples of Jesus but we are missionaries for Christ, becoming all things to all people in order that we might save some. ***“There is no I in team!”*** ***“There's no me in Christianity!”*** We live, free to serve, free to love, free to be all things to all people because that is Who Jesus is for us. So, where will the Lord lead you, as you leave this place, so that you would be all things to all people to save some? In Jesus name. Amen.