

## Be a Spoon

### Scripture: Matt. 20: 20-28

While setting the table for dinner one evening, a little girl entertained herself by bringing the utensils to life. Her mother listened as knives, forks and spoons carried on conversation and wrestled their way onto the table.

Suddenly the girl looked over at her mother and declared, "If I had to choose -- I'd be a spoon!"

"A spoon," her mother replied, intrigued. "Why would you want to be a spoon? What would be wrong with being a knife or a fork?"

"Well," the girl explained, "forks are too grabby -- always stabbing stuff and taking it like it's theirs. Like in school -- I hate it when somebody takes a piece of my dessert with their fork and eats it."

"Okay," her mother agreed, "what about being a knife?"

"No, knives are scary -- like, they cut things, and you can't really eat with them, just slice stuff up," she responded.

"But," the little girl continued, holding a shiny spoon in front of her face, "spoons can scoop up lots of stuff and even pass it around. They're just --"

"-- Nice and round and smooth and friendly," her mother suggested.

Her daughter's eyes lit up. "Right!" she said. "I'd rather be a spoon!"

Be a spoon!? It's not just a silly childhood dream. It is a great image of a Christian lifestyle, a ministry in motion. That little girl's analysis of silverware was right on the target. But it was also a revealing insight into the way various types of people operate in this world.

Wanna be a fork? We've all known plenty of "forks." These are the "gimme" people, those who never seem to have enough on their own plate to satisfy themselves. So they are constantly on the lookout for something more, something better, something different. In their greed, "gimme-more" fork people can't stop to savor the morsels they are collecting. The only craving they care to satisfy is the "stab-it-so-you-can-consume-it" desire.

Wanna be a knife? Knife people are fixated on what lies before them -- but only because they are trying to figure out how they can carve it up into a new shape -- especially a new form that they will wholly determine. Knife people are control people.

Knives try to reconstruct reality so that it will serve their purposes, so it will suit their preferences. No matter what is placed before knife people, it is never quite right. The sharp blade of the knife goes to work, slicing off anything they find offensive, cutting down any big goals into tiny piecemeal projects, dissecting the heart out of ideas, never leaving anything whole.

Wanna be a spoon? Spoons are distinctly different, because instead of taking, spoons are designed to serve. A spoon offers sustenance to others. It is not just concerned with scooping up everything in its path for itself. Spoons exist for one purpose only: to serve and save.

Spoon people are adaptable -- they can operate in a variety of venues. Whether it's hot soup or freezing ice cream, they can scoop it up. Spoon people serve others.

Because their shape is less specialized, spoons are more adaptable. You can eat steak, spaghetti or soup if you have a spoon. If necessary, a spoon can even do some cutting. Who hasn't sliced through a cantaloupe with the edge of a spoon? Being a spoon -- a server, a saver -- sometimes means dishing up some pretty tough stuff. But a well-balanced, sturdy spoon can do it.

Paul, before his Damascus road experience, was a knife person. As a zealous Pharisee, he tried to surgically cut off Christianity, which he deemed an offensive growth on the body of Judaism. His strict adherence to the Law had already sliced his view of rights and wrongs, clean and unclean, chosen and cursed, into neat, predetermined pieces.

**Paul was transformed into a spoon.**

In his new spoon form, Paul became committed to serving Christ by serving others. The sharp, pointed attacks of Saul the knife became the nurturing, nourishing scoops of service and salvation dished up by Paul the spoon.

As a spoon, Paul demonstrated that he could "dish it out" -- but he also could "take it." In all his correspondence, it is obvious that Paul himself received sustenance and support from the Christian communities, the churches of faith, that he helped establish.

Paul could "take" the abuse, the insults, the imprisonments, the cold, the cruelty he experienced as a servant of Christ. In fact, he welcomed these experiences, viewing them as ways he could participate in Christ's suffering. Not even the prospect of death fazed Paul. For he was fully convinced from the eyes of faith that the gift of righteousness he had received would bring him to full participation in Christ's resurrection.

What kinds of changes would you have to make in your soul to stop all the frantic fork- stabbing and nasty knife-slicing that pierces your life? What would it take to replace those actions with scooping-out spoonlike service?

- ◆ To be in service to brothers and sisters, instead of being in competition . To give up trying to "have it all," and instead commit to "sharing it all."
- ◆ -- To cut out carving up those who are different from you, and instead adapt your attitude to meet their needs.
- ◆ -- To stop worrying about what is on your own plate, and instead start paying attention to the nutritional needs of others who sit around you every day.

Being a spoon, being in Christian service to others, doesn't mean being a slave to any and all demands thrown your way. As a faithful witness of Christ's love, Paul knew there were times when the dish he was called to serve was hard for his audience to swallow. The various Corinthian groups fighting for theological pre-eminence and spiritual superiority didn't want to hear that the greatest spiritual gift was love.

The proud Athenians, with their sophisticated pagan ways didn't want to have their patron-goddess revealed as just another lifeless silver statue.

The proud, Law-touting Judaizers in Philippi didn't want to hear all they thought they had gained was loss.

Yet, Paul also recognized that spoon spirituality is the essential ingredient for effective ministry.  
Be a spoon!

That is the ministry of First Baptist Church----that is evangelism---being a spoon---going out and showing the love of God for people.

Wanna be a spoon?????

Mother Teresa, whose sisters in Calcutta ran both a hospice and a clinic for leprosy patients, once said, "We have drugs for people with diseases like leprosy. But these drugs do not treat the main problem, the disease of being unwanted. That's what my sisters hope to provide." The sick and the poor, she said, suffer even more from rejection than from material want. Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty."

One need not be a doctor or a miracle worker to meet that need.

**It's not easy to be a spoon.** A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said "Your husband is suffering from a very severe disease, combined with some horrible stress. If you don't do the following your husband will most likely die.

"Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant, and make sure he is in a good mood. For lunch, make him a nutritious meal. For dinner, prepare an especially nice meal for him. DON'T burden him with chores, as he probably had a hard day. DON'T discuss your problems with him. It will only make his stress worse. And MOST importantly, make love with your husband several times a week and satisfy HIS every whim. If you can do this for the next 10 months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health completely."

On the way home, the husband asked his wife:

"What did the doctor say?"

He said "You're going to die,"

We can laugh at that-----but it's no laughing matter----There are people in Holton that have needs-----and when we sit back and are satisfied to be forks and knives-----We are saying to them-----“your going to die”

Jesus could have said it to me-----Vern Finley-----you're going to die----but He didn't----He not only served----He died----for me.

How do you tell if a person is a Christian-----you tell by their service What do people see in you???

**Spoons have only one purpose: They are designed to serve. In a world of knives and forks -- be a spoon.**

### **Children's Sermon**

Philippians 3:4b-14

At restaurants, my children always hand us their knives because they know not to play with knives. My parents never taught me not to play with spoons! Assemble a large collection of spoons of all shapes and sizes for the kids to handle. Include spoons with holes so that you can show them that spoons that look less than perfect are designed to serve a purpose. Fill a spoon with a few drops of perfume and let the children pass it around while smelling the fragrance. Let the fragrance fill the room by putting a drop of perfume in each child's hair. Help the children to see how Mary and Martha both served. Be prepared to discuss Judas and his role as a disciple as you retell the story.