

INTRO:

Alright friends, come on back...I hope that gave you a chance to connect. AND that you'll continue that connection within a Missional Family Meeting this week, since THOSE are really where we're able to connect around good news and help others do the same!...Parents, at this time, please feel free to dismiss your 5 and under children with *Claudia*, who's going to take em into our kids room across the hall during the message - (PAUSE) -

So there've been a few times in life when the Lord has worked something into me that/despite my best efforts has stuck with and honestly really changed my view OF life. And one of those times was in 2006 sitting in the auditorium of Riverside High School, listening to my Pastor at the time, deliver a message on prayer. And to be honest, I really can't remember much about that message EXCEPT that toward the end of it, he said, *"I want you to consider how the Gospel of Jesus Christ INFORMS...prayer."/*"*consider how the Gospel INFORMS prayer.*" And then he simply connected some truths about Jesus's life, death, resurrection and ascension TO prayer... But what was so impactful about that moment was that I suddenly realized, I could ask that question about anything/insert ANYTHING in the place of prayer: *"How does the Gospel inform x/you name it."* And I'll tell ya: It was like a lightbulb went off for me, and I realized/maybe for the first time that Jesus/the Gospel isn't simply the entry point into Christianity/ya know, like the diving board into pool of faith or something. I realized it's also the deep end of the pool/has the ability to inform EVERYTHING. As I hope you've seen throughout this series: The Gospel's not just the elementary stuff of Christianity - the abc's as it were. It's the A TO Z. We don't get Jesus for salvation and then graduate onto other things for sanctification. No, it's Jesus: His life, death, resurrection and ascension in and for EVERYTHING. There's even a little phrase for this. It's the phrase *Gospel Fluency - Gospel Fluency: the ability to interpret and ultimately translate the everyday stuff of life, through the lens and language of Jesus. Gospel Fluency.*

Friends, the case I wanna make to you both TODAY AND next Sunday/and it's a big one: is that to the degree to which you're able to bring the Gospel to bear on the everyday stuff of life/ become Gospel Fluent as it were, THAT'S the degree to which that stuff will over time get fixed: hence my message title, *"The Gospel Fixes Everything."*

So here's what we're gonna do: We're gonna pray, and then over the course of two Sundays/ today and next/so ya gotta be here next week too; we're gonna continue our "True Myth" series looking at *1 Corinthians*, which is a letter written by the Apostle Paul ALL about how the Gospel fixes all kinds of problems; specifically, 8 that the Corinthian church faced. My hope here being that as you see the Gospel fix THESE 8 problems, you'll come to see that it really can fix ANY problem IF if you'll simply appropriate it by faith. Sound good? Ok, let's pray and then we'll look at the first 3 of these 8 problems today. *Let's Pray...*

TEXT:

So as I said *1 Corinthians* is all about how the GOSPEL fixes problems. Now what do we mean/ what do the Scriptures mean by "the Gospel?" We mean/write this down: *The Good News of Jesus' Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension for our past, present, and future freedom!...*

Let me say that again: ***The good news that with Jesus' Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, we who believe, are freed from past penalty of our sin and brokenness; are being freed from the present power and pollution of it; and one day, will be free from the very presence of it.*** That's the Gospel. And THAT'S what Paul brings to bear on each of the problems in the Corinthian Church. We're looking at 3 today - make sure you're following along with the Scriptures listed in your Order of Gathering. Here's the ***First One: The Problem of Spiritual Consumerism***: Look in ***ch. 1 vv.10-12***, Paul says this, *"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and same judgment. For it's been reported to me that there is quarreling among you. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."* Apparently some of the Corinthian Christians were dividing over teachers - picking which teachers/preachers/pastors they liked best and then forming opposing teams. So within the SAME church family, you had people on, for example *"Team Paul"*, cuz of course he was the smart one/the seasoned Apostle right? But then you had others going, *"Nah Paul's boring. Always wants to talk theology; 'Team Apollos' is where it's at."* Cuz Apollos was a preacher's-preacher/could captivate an audience. Still others were like, *"Nah man. That guy's just a celebrity preacher. Team Cephas is where it's at."* And Cephas was the Apostle Peter's Aramaic name. So these are people getting behind Peter cuz of his emphasis on ministry to the Jews...And then finally, cuz there's always couple of these in every church - the *"Oh we're with Team Jesus"* Team. And these are the really tough one, cuz these are the people, who ya know, only read CERTAIN translations of the Bible and God forbid if they catch you reading another, they're like trying to share the Gospel with you cuz they assume you're unsaved. OR they just have very strong opinions about...I don't know... everything! Like everything is a monumental thing, and whatever side THEY fall on, somehow that's always the side Jesus would fall on...So needless to say there was this spirit of Consumerism creating all kinds of division, cuz of course, anytime you let your affinities, preferences, comforts or just personal ideas guide you more than the Gospel and love for others WITH the Gospel, you're bound to divide with those AROUND you, since by definition your preferences, comforts and ideas are not necessarily the preferences, comforts and ideas of others. Moreover, if you believe being a part of a certain group in anyway justifies you, than what's naturally going to happen is you're going to demonize and ultimately divide from those who aren't a part of the group. That's what the Corinthians were doing!

SO being a good Pastor, what should Paul do? I'll tell ya what I'd do: I'd say...*"Stop It!"*... Thankfully Paul was a much better Pastor. What he does is bring the Gospel to bear on the problem. Look he says, ***vv.13 and 30-31***, *"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or you baptized in the name of Paul?...Because of him/that's God you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."* ***You see what he's saying?*** He's saying - write this down: ***If It Doesn't Save; Don't Separate! If It Doesn't Save; Don't Separate!*** Paul's reminding the Corinthians, that no matter how strongly they favor a particular Pastor or much they think that their "group" is the right one, THAT pastor/THAT affiliation with THAT group can't actually justify and save them! Only Jesus can do that. As Paul says, *"only Jesus is our*

wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” We’re not baptized or brought into God’s acceptance because of our affiliation to a group. We’re brought in by being IN Christ Jesus. So Paul’s saying, why get all hot-n-bothered to the point of dividing, just because someone has a different preference or idea than you about non-essential/non-salvation things? ***You see?***

I’ll tell ya, THIS has sorta become my operating principle for all things politics in the last few years. Cuz those of you that know me know that I have strong political opinions. And generally...I think I’m right ABOUT my opinions/Abby tells me I’m NOT! But I’m never in doubt...But at the end of the day, I know that no matter how strong/informed/educated I believe my opinions to be...neither my politics NOR yours are going to save people! Only Jesus can save. So you know what that frees me to do/you know what that CAN free you to do? Reject this culture of having to hate those who disagree with you and instead actually love and be friends with people who don’t come down on the same side of the political isle AS you. Cuz ***If It Doesn’t Save; Why Separate! ...Paul takes the Gospel; namely, the FUTURE freedom/ FUTURE salvation Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension affords us***, and he brings it to bear on the Corinthians’ ***consumerism***, understanding that if they simply take it to heart, it’ll ***fix their divisive Consumerism***...and ours!

Second, The Problem of Sexual Immorality: Look in ***ch. 5 vv.1,2,6***: Paul says, “*It’s ACTUALLY reported that there’s sexual immorality among you. AND of a kind that’s not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife (YUCK). And you’re arrogant! Ought you not rather mourn? Let him who’s done this be removed from among you...Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*”...The Corinthian church was/as the name implies, situated in the city of Corinth, which was a highly cosmopolitan, pluralistic AND morally corrupt Roman city. Even in the morally corrupt Roman Empire, Corinth was known for EXCESSIVE immorality. To be called a “Corinthian” was, actually, to be considered a kind of sexual deviant...incest, which Paul references here, being simply one form OF that deviancy... BUT certainly not the ONLY form. Cuz understand, when Paul says that there was “*sexual immorality among them*,” that word for “sexual immorality” is a kind of “junk drawer” word encompassing all kinds sexuality NOT between one man and one woman, in the confines of a covenant marriage.¹ And so the problem with the Corinthians here was: instead of living out the call of EVERY church, to be a faithful presence WITHIN a given context/***a “Hub” of Freedom & Family if you will***, especially as it relates to Biblical sex and sexuality - the Corinthian Church had instead begun PROUDLY taking on the sexual values OF the city - as Paul says, “*become arrogant*”/boasting even about their anti-Biblical sexual mores...frankly/unfortunately like a lot of churches today, when with their signs, placards, and mission statements boast of being pro-abortion, or cool with pre-marital sex, or simply LGBTQIA+ affirming! BOASTING!

Now, let me be clear here: The ISSUE was that they were BOASTING...NOT struggling/BOASTING/arrogantly/publicly celebrating these things that God has called sin. Cuz look, everyone of us has as Scripture says, “*sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*” Many of us

¹ JUDGING LIKE JESUS - 3-19-2006 - Mark Driscoll, [Mark Driscoll Sermon Archive 2005-2009](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009).

with sexual sin! Struggling with sexual sin is NOT the issue. If that's you, there is an UNLIMITED amount of love, grace and support for you. The church should NEVER/hear me: NEVER push away person a who's STRUGGLING with sin. We should only ever pull that person in. Cuz at the end of the day, that's all of us in one form or another!... The problem with the Corinthian church was, she wasn't struggling. She was given-over to sexual immorality to the point of having become proud, arrogant and essentially unrepentant about it. **You see?**

And so, again what does Paul do? He brings the Gospel to bear on the problem. He says **vv.6,7** and then over in **ch.6 vv.13-14**, "...a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you REALLY ARE unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed...The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body..." Let me explain what he's saying: In the OT, "leaven"/or "yeast" was symbolic for sin BECAUSE of it's ability to spread or metastasize.² Like cancer; if sin is not dealt with, it always grows. And that's because God has created us to live for Him. So you can't live for yourself in some way/which is the heart of sin, and it NOT lead to your dis-integration... So the first thing Paul does is like a good doctor, diagnose the sin, and then charge the congregation/FOR their own good, to not tolerate it, lest it metastasize...But THEN you notice, he starts talking about Passover and Jesus. And that's because on the eve of the Exodus before God delivered Israel out of Egypt; DURING the Passover He commanded the Israelites to make UNLEAVENED bread. And He did so as a symbol of two things: **One** that the events of the Passover were gonna come so quickly that Israel would have to be ready to leave even before their dough was leavened. But **Two**, that IN leaving, Israel was being called OUT of slavery and INTO a new relationship with God - one in which, God having graciously FREED Israel, Israel would then live to return love and worship to God. Cuz that's always the order in the Bible right: We don't obey to GET God to love and accept us. God HAS loved and accepted us; THEREFORE we obey... The measure of that, of course being as Paul says, "**JESUS as our sacrificial Passover lamb.**" JESUS NOT allowing the Father's wrath to PASS-OVER Him, but instead taking it for you and me, so that WE, who were formerly "leavened"/full of sin, can now be seen by God as "UNleavened" - clean, new, acceptable, beloved!...**So put all this together:** What Paul's saying, in contrast to what our culture says, is/write this down: **Don't Do You/Don't Be You; Be Who God's MADE You! Don't Be You; Be Who God's MADE You!** And in Christ/through His sacrificial death on the Cross, who has God made you? A new creation; clean, acceptable, holy and righteous. So why in the world would you ever go back to the un-clean, un-righteous, old you. That's not YOU anymore. **Don't Be You; Be Who God's MADE You!**

It's like a friend of mine who adopted child from Russia years ago. One of the hardest things for him to watch in the initial months after he brought his son home was to see him sleep on the floor each night. Cuz of course, before he brought his son home, he and his wife set up a bedroom with this great bed full of books, toys, and stuffed animals, thinking that when his son saw it, he'd love it. The only problem was, the child had spent so many years sleeping on nothing more than a mat on a cold orphanage floor that he didn't even really understand the

² Hosea 7:4

concept of a bed. And so when this friend of mine introduced his son TO the bed, he was actually kind of scared of it/insisted on sleeping on the floor. And what was so hard for this friend of mine, wasn't so much that his son was literally on the floor; I mean they kinda treated it like camping...but that his son was still...essentially living as an orphan...But that's not who he was anymore!...Paul's saying the same thing. In Christ/because of the Gospel, we're not unclean anymore. So why keep toying with uncleanness. It's not who you are! Paul simply takes **the PRESENT freedom/PRESENT new identity Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension affords us**, and brings it to bear on the Corinthians' **sexual immorality**, understanding that if they simply take it to heart, it'll **fix their Sexual Sin**...and ours!

Third and Finally, The Problem of Relational Discord: Look in *ch.6 v.1*, Paul says, "*When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?*" Apparently, relationships among the Corinthian Christians had so deteriorated that some were suing others in the church...which if I might say by way of aside here: Is sadly encouraging to me for 3 reasons: **One**, it reminds me of how grateful I am to be your Pastor! I mean whatever problems we have as a church AND we do have some cuz none of us are perfect/ALL of us need of grace; at least the last time I check, none of you guys were suing each other. So thanks! But **Two**, it reminds me, ya know when I start thinking - "*God, I'm just not a great Pastor. I messed this up or I messed that up or whatever,*" Paul wasn't a perfect Pastor either. He PLANTED the Corinthian Church and it was a hot-mess. So that makes me feel alright. But then **Three**, it reminds me that at the end of the day, church is messy! We should EXPECT it to BE messy, and not flee when it GETS messy. Cuz as we've always said, church is not a building or a program; it's a people. And people are messy...some of you more than others/ I'll let you decide who that is...The Corinthian Church was no different.

So again, what does Paul do? He brings the Gospel to bear ON their **relational discord**. He says, *ch.6 vv.9,11*, "*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?*"...at which point he then gives a non-comprehensive list of sinful lifestyles and practices, and then says this: "*And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*" **What's he doing?** He's reminding the Corinthians of what God has done for THEM; namely, "*washed, sanctified, and justified them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,*" when THEY they were living in all kinds of sin...IN HOPES THAT, if they see the grace God's extended to THEM, they'll in-turn extend it to each other, which of course will diffuse any **relational discord**! In other words, Paul's reminding them of a very simple, you could call it "Gospel-principle," one which if I'm honest, has probably saved my marriage more times than I can count. And it's the principle of/write this down: **First Sinner; Second Sinned Against! First Sinner; Second Sinned Against!** Cuz see, the reason the Corinthians were at odds with each other/really the reason we EVER get at odds with ANYONE is because we tend to focus on how someone's hurt us right? And when we're hurt, we respond based on what we believe the person who hurt us, deserves. Well, you do that long enough and obviously it can get ugly. I've heard it described like playing tennis, where ya start out on your side of the court lightly hitting the ball over the net to your opponent. But then they receive it and intentionally or not, they hit it back to you, but with a little

more pace. So what do you do? You hit it back to them with even more pace...UNTIL you're both up at the net slamming the ball at each other. Well, Paul's saying, if you're doing that, it's simply because you're believing that YOU'RE PRIMARILY a righteous people dealing with unrighteous people around you...when the reality is; you/me/the Corinthians, we're PRIMARILY sinners, who've been forgiven by God, being then asked to forgive other sinners of FAR LESS than God has forgiven us! **You see?** Cuz no matter how badly someone's sinned against you, it'll NEVER rise to the level of how you and I have sinned against Jesus!...**First Sinner; Second Sinned Against!**³ Imagine if that became the standard for how you related to people in your life/what that would do to your relationships...Paul's simply taking **the PAST freedom/PAST forgiveness Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension affords us**, and bringing it to bear on the Corinthians' **relational discord**, understanding that if they simply take it to heart, it'll **fix their Discord**...and ours!

CONCLUSION:

So you see, whether it's spiritual consumerism, sexual immorality, relational discord or any of the 5 problems we'll look at next week, the Gospel of Jesus: **The Good News of His Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension for our past, present, and future freedom** - it's like a kind of skeleton key for every issue. It fixes everything, because even though, as Jared Wilson says, you and I "*exhibit a multitude of symptoms, conditions, and problems running the gamut from self-indulgent immorality to self-satisfying morality...the gospel is nevertheless, the answer, because the gospel is the power of God to save,*" which means it's also to power of God...to fix.⁴ All anyone has to do is believe and bring it to bear on the everyday stuff of life. May YOU/may WE become that kind of Gospel-Fluent family together, and in so doing MARVEL at how God begins to re-weave what's been torn, fix what's been broken and make sad things come untrue...**Let's Pray...**

³ Explanation and some wording adapted from <https://churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-articles/304753-one-thing-thats-missing-spiritual-life.html>

⁴ <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2009/11/the-gospel-is-the-antidote-for-everything/>