

Living Out the Gospel of Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 9:19-27

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The Priority of the Gospel

How important is the progress of the gospel to you? Really? To put it another way, in a world of to-do lists, time management strategies, personal mission statements and goal setting—how high up the list is the Gospel of Jesus Christ in your life? As much as questions like these might make us uncomfortable, we must ask them if we are to take seriously our study of 1 Corinthians, particularly chapter 9. In verses 19-27, Paul clarifies his attitude towards issues like idol meat and money for ministry (topics we have dealt with over the past couple of weeks) with an over-arching principle for his life. “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (vs. 22). The message could not be any clearer. For Paul, the progress of the gospel is of utmost importance! In all that Paul does, whether we’re talking about meat in the marketplace or accepting financial support, he wants to clear the ground of unnecessary obstacles that might hinder unbelievers from coming to Christ. In verses 19-27, Paul shares with the Corinthian church his passion to “win as many as possible” (vs 19) and he invites them to share his fervor and to follow his example.

Contextualizing the Gospel

Paul believed in the power of the gospel to change lives and to reform cultures. In fact, he was so committed to bringing the saving power of Christ into people’s lives, that he was willing to adapt his behavior (not his message) in the morally gray areas of life, so as not to hinder people from accepting the gospel. It’s called contextualizing the gospel and it’s what Paul is talking about when he says, “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews”. The principle is that Paul would adapt his method of communicating the gospel, depending on the cultural context, to “win as many as possible” (vs 19). It is clear that Paul would never compromise the content of the message (1 Cor. 15:3-5) nor would he participate in anything morally objectionable. He did however set an example that is incredibly significant for Christians in an ever changing culture. Since we are all in a sense missionaries called to take the love of Christ to the broken world around us, we need to understand our role in contextualizing the gospel.

Incarnational Ministry—Communicating the Gospel with Your Life

The underlying truth in all of this, which is often overlooked, is that Paul was “out there”. He was intent on inserting himself into any and every culture or people group if it afforded him the opportunity to share Christ. As the Father entered a broken world in the person of Jesus Christ, the Bible calls you and me as Christ followers to model our lives and ministry after the incarnation. You can’t share the love and healing of Jesus Christ with broken and lost people if you don’t ever spend time with them. Like Paul (and Jesus), we need to be “out there”!

The Power of the Gospel to Change and Motivate You!

All of this is only made possible as the truth of the gospel impacts our lives. The more that you are transformed by the love and grace of Jesus, the more you will love Him, love others and be willing to make sacrifices and lay down your rights so that others can come to Christ. It takes effort to live out the message of Jesus Christ in a fallen culture. Like an athlete training to win the prize, Paul calls Christians to live a life of self-discipline, focus and sacrifice—all for the sake of the gospel. Is there anything else worth living for?

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

This week, spend time reading through and meditating on 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. How is the Lord speaking to you through this passage?

All Things to All People...

What kinds of cultural contexts do you find yourself in outside of the church? Do you find that you are motivated or able to come alongside unbelievers in those contexts? Why or why not? Is there anything in your life that might hinder others from responding to the message of Jesus Christ?

What sacrifices might you need to make to "live out" the message of Christ in the world around you?

Up Coming Events...

Are you plugged in?

This month in the lobby you can get plugged into the community at River West Church. Just put your name in the fish bowl and we will make sure you get "plugged in"

Financial Peace University

We will be offering Financial Peace University again beginning on Monday, February 4th at 6:30pm. This is a 13 week series that teaches biblical principles on how to handle our finances. We will cover topics such as; communicating with your spouse about money, paying off and staying out of debt, teaching your children about money, learning to be a cheerful giver, and many other practical topics. Sign up today in the fellowship hall or contact Julie Messenger at 503-699-2226 or Julie@riverwest.org.

Outreach Ministries Drive...

Our Outreach Ministries need your help, this month bring your new or almost new, coats, socks, maternity clothes & sleeping bags, etc... as well as nutritious foods to church.

Fri 2/1-Sun 2/3

Wild Horse Camp-High School

Young Life has an awesome weekend planned & has invited our High Schoolers to join them! Contact Pastor Josh for more information at 699.2226 or josh@riverwest.org

Thursdays, Starting 2/7

Foundations: Series 4-Building a Biblical View of God

Join as we continue our in depth study of Christian Faith, spiritual practices & competing worldviews. 7-8:30pm @ RWLG

Forgiven and Set Free

Have you had an abortion? Has it been difficult to accept the promises and the grace and the unconditional love of God in your life? Please call Sheri Harkavy 503 887-7080 or Raffa Scanlon 503 449-1316 (personal lines) to get more information about this completely confidential study.