

What Gospel Living Looks Like

1 Corinthians 4:6-21 (ESV) [6] I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. [7] For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? [8] Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! [9] For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. [10] We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. [11] To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, [12] and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; [13] when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. [14] I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. [15] For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. [16] I urge you, then, be imitators of me. [17] That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. [18] Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. [19] But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. [20] For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. [21] What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Big Idea

We must keep listening to the voice of God through his word and other faithful believers if we are going to fully realize who we are in Christ and to live for Christ in every way.

Consider God's goal in giving this letter to the church at Corinth. Paul was sent by the Lord to Corinth. God used him to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and some of them believed. Paul continued for eighteen months teaching, witnessing, and strengthening the church. He helped them to understand who they were in Christ, what they had been given in Christ, and how they were called to live in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1-2 (ESV) Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, [2] To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:5-7 (ESV) that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— [6] even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— [7] so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV) 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 the same judgment.

But what happens if we stop listening to the voice of God as he speaks to us through his word and through other faithful believers he has placed in our lives?

In recent days the Titanic has been brought back into the spotlight because of the implosion of the submersible Titan, on June 18, 2023. There were numerous warnings from other ships to the Titanic on the night they struck an iceberg, that they were entering an ice field. An hour before Titanic was destroyed, they had received warning from the Californian, stating that they had stopped, because they had become surrounded by ice.

Titanic's radio operators were handling passenger messages at the time and scolded the Californian for interrupting them. Three and a half hours later Titanic would be sunk beneath the Atlantic Ocean and over 1500 people would lose their lives.

If we ignore the word of God and the voice of God, we can also bring incredible devastation to our faith personally and to the life of the church family collectively.

The radio operators were given to the ship to warn it. Paul was given to the Corinthians to guide them. God has given us his word and godly teachers to help us. One of the key questions we must answer is—will we listen?

Paul had used metaphor after metaphor to show them who they were in Christ and what Christ wanted for them. Paul was simply a servant of Christ, a fellow worker with them, a master builder used by God to work in God's field and to build God's house. The Corinthians needed to understand that they belonged to the Lord as his temple. They were also servants of Christ and stewards of God. They were a family together, saints called to grow in Christ. They had been given everything they needed in Christ, but they needed to receive that truth in humility, realizing that they were never self-sufficient, but were completely dependent upon Christ in order to live like Christ.

Paul had applied all these metaphors from Scripture so that they would understand that Scripture was to be their ultimate guide and the framework by which they lived.

(See 1 Corinthians 4:6-13)

I have applied all these things to show you what to avoid:

- 1. Don't ignore God's voice. God's word is the framework for how we live.**
- 2. Pride leads us away from the Lord and leads to misplaced priorities.**
 - A. Arrogantly taking sides.**
 - B. Glorifying in ourselves rather than the Lord.**
 - C. Spiritually satisfied.**

(See 1 Corinthians 4:14-21)

I have written all these things to show you what to do:

- 1. A correct theology of the cross does away with pride and creates humility.**
 - A. When reviled we bless.**
 - B. When persecuted we endure.**
 - C. When slandered we entreat or reply with care and concern.**
- 2. We imitate Christ in all ways (humble, faithful, sacrificial, servant, believing, enduring, obedient, forgiving, peaceful).**
 - A. “I urge you, then, be imitators of me.” (4:16)**
 - B. “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (11:1)**
 - C. “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Eph. 5:1)**
 - D. “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord...” (1 Th 1:6)**
 - E. “For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus...” (1 Th 2:14)**
 - F. “Not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Her 6:12)**

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