MESSY GRACE: **1 Cor wk 4 – Grow Up!**

**Kids in restaurant playgrounds - the challenge to grow up. The best was always the next age – until you hit 18 and it’s… I wish I was still 8. But growing up is God’s design.**

**That is what Paul hits on today writing to Corinth. A church that was not growing up – an issue of spiritual maturity.**

**Last week: What spiritual maturity is – today, how do you grow up?**

**Like the church in Corinth, if you are truly a follower of Jesus – reborn, then you have the spirit of God in you – the Holy Spirit!**

**But they were not growing up – possibly like some of you**

**1 Cor - here’s what we’ve been learning. Churches are not programs or buildings, they’re people. And people are messy, and so churches are messy. We all come here with baggage – some of you with carry-ons.**

**When you’re dealing with people it just gets messy.**

**All of us come into church with our collective issues. That means this is a messy place because we’re dealing w/ people’s lives. We see this in 1 Cor. \* A messy place – in need of grace.**

**Paul talks about 3 TYPES OF PEOPLE: Galatians 5:16-26, 1 Corinthians 8:1**

1. **People that don’t know Jesus – 1 Cor 1-2**

**The spiritually blind, who see all of this Jesus stuff as foolish.**

1. **People that know Jesus - 1 Cor 1-2**

**The spiritual man who understands Christ and the cross. Those who have surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

**Then Paul gives another - 1 Corinthians 3:1 Dear brothers and sisters, (talking to believers) when I was with you, I couldn’t talk to you as I would to spiritual people. (mature believers) I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. (immature believers) 2 I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren’t ready for anything stronger. And you still aren’t ready, (some Christians are mature - some immature. Paul address a third type of person…)**

1. **People that know Jesus, but don’t always act like it - 1 Cor 3**

**It is possible to be a Christian and still struggle to look like a Christian sometimes. Those struggling to live a life that honors God.**

**“I would love to talk about deeper things, but you are not ready.”**

**Corinth church started 5 yrs ago- still in diapers, drinking milk.**

**Like infants - Christians that never grow up something is wrong. A baby vs. adult. It’s not cute anymore. As a baby yes – at 25 – not so much! A baby only thinks of themselves – but they grow – they contribute and offer.**

**Paul says - It is time to grow up – move beyond infancy!**

**\*\*\*How do you know they are an immature Christian or not a Christian?**

**If they respond and receive correction and encouragement - they grow. If they repeatedly do not, they may not be Christian. (1 Cor, Mat 18)**

**What is Spiritual Growth?**

**Spiritual growth does not happen overnight but over time.**

**Awkwardness of young relationships: silly words, sweaty hands, weird silence - over time it grows. I thought I loved my wife when I married her - it grew over time.**

**Spiritual growth takes time – but time does not equal spiritual growth.**

**Time does not equal maturity or spiritual health. I’ve known some pretty immature lifelong Christians - their diapers stink!**

**Spiritual growth is not a feeling - but faithfulness**

**Even when you don’t feel it. It is consistency and intentionality**

**The prophets of old who walked for years on a few words from God.**

**Spiritual growth is not spiritual gifts**

**BTW – they’re active in spiritual gifts (Chap 12-14) and still very immature. Spiritual gifts are not a sign of maturity.**

**Spiritual growth is not knowledge.**

**1 Cor 8:1 - You can know a lot - all it does is make you arrogant**

**Growth Giraffe measurement poster. Physical growth is easy to chart – you can see it. Paul says let me give you one for our spiritual growth.**

**Paul gives Three primary Indicators You Are Growing With Jesus**

**Tell the person next to you a 3 things you think are signs of a mature Christian. Now, the signs of immaturity? Paul says…**

**1 Cor 3:1-2 – I have to keep going over what you should already be doing. Walk in it – obey it and grow – it is time!**

* **You walk in what you know – obedience (LIFE TEAM !!!!)**

**James 1:22-27, 4:11, Luke 6:46-47, Rom 2:13, Matt 7:24, 22:35-40, John 14:1**

**Some want more from God, knowledge, understanding - but are not even walking in what they already know - immaturity.**

**Remember Spiritual growth in not knowledge**

**Luke 6:46 Jesus - “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?**

**I meet w/ people, tell them something that will help - and they say, I already know what I’m are supposed to do.” Okay, be mature, do it.**

**Here is another - 1 Cor 3:3 …for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world? (there is no difference in attitude – acting like those without Jesus)**

* **You get along with others – love \*\*How do you love people?**

**Paul says your jealous and like to argue - this shows you are following your flesh and selfish desire – rather than the spirit.**

**2 gauges of an unhealthy spirit - Insecurity & Arrogant Pride**

**\* Insecurity – breeds jealousy and self-focused eyes**

**\* Arrogant Pride – argumentative - has to be right, stirs trouble**

**How do you get along w/ the people closest to you? Not just strangers – where the rubber meets the road is your family, spouse, kids, co-workers – some of you are acting like babies. You think your mature - your jerkiness denies it. #1 indicator is how you treat others**

**Spiritual maturity is most clearly seen not in what we know, but in how we treat others. (Matthew 22:35-39)**

**The next one - 1 Cor 1:4 When one of you says, “I am a follower of Paul,” and another says, “I follow Apollos,” aren’t you acting just like people of the world? (team Paul, team Apollos – We like the old guy – we like to new guy…) 5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. (we have one mission – but diff roles, giftings, and styles) Another indicator is…**

* **You embrace the role you play in the Kingdom – mission**

**Notice the I’s. “I like this / want…” Some make church about self. I want this - I wish they did this - I like the other guy better – let’s leave.**

**The mature know - it is not about you, it is about God’s Spirit working through us for the mission. Polka worship – cool!**

**You have a role to play, as Christians we all do. Maturity embraces this**

**(Paul says) 1 Cor 3:6 I planted the seed in your hearts, (planted the church and introduced you to Jesus) and Apollos watered it, (now feeds you the word) but it was God who made it grow. (God uses people, but God does the growing in us)**

**Who are your Paul’s and Apollo’s? I can see them in my life. A family member, a friend, a pastor, a teacher.**

**3:7 It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. (That is not what is most important.) What’s important is that God makes the seed grow.**

**Ultimately – the HS is the one who produces the fruit – “the fruit of the Spirit” Galatians 5 – it is not called our fruit or work.**

**8 The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. (same mission) And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. (Walking in God’s mission and embracing the role we play – will be rewarded in heaven! More on thin is a sec) 9 For we are both God’s workers. And you are God’s field. You are God’s building. (pictures of farming, watering, and building – God is working on us through our spiritual leaders) 10 By the grace God has given me, (grace = spiritual giftings - see 3:12) I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (That Is what it is all about - not gifts, but Jesus)**

**“Each one should build” – that includes you your role**

**Find your role in the kingdom family – more on this later in 1 Cor**

**I will say this - Some have a lot to say about church and what they want but are not stepping into their role to see it happen.**

**Paul says - Check yourself – ask yourself?**

**\*\* Are you obeying what you claim to already know?**

**\*\* How’s your love? How is your love with those closest to you?**

**\*\* Is church about you and what you want? Or about others?**

**This nest part is unique (He say I laid the foundation of Jesus Christ…)**

**1 Cor 3:12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, (lasting things) wood, hay or straw, (temp things) 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day (When we face God) will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. (the fire = God’s judgment and testing – not a reference to Hell)**

**The return of Jesus brings a big symbolic bon fire – on that Day**

* **Christians will be judged by our actions and our motives**
* **This is not about the quantity of work – but quality of the work**
* **God will test the buildings work and the workers**

**14 If what has been built survives, (the fire test) the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved - even though only as one escaping through the flames.**

* **When our work is tested before the Lord, we will be rewarded according to what remains. There are rewards given by God!**

**Sobering to think many who think they are serving the Lord are really serving themselves - in reality it was nothing for the Lord.**

**Christians, our judgment will include both reward and loss.**

**2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**

**We will all face Jesus and give an account…**

**\* Unbelievers will face their sin - apart from Jesus you will pay it.**

**\* Believers will face their disobedience - did we live what we know?**

**Everything we do in life will be tested. I believe what we do here is more important than the Super Bowl- that last a year, this lasts forever!**

**And if what you do survives for eternity, you will be rewarded for it.**

**Paul is saying - Some will survive the test escaping the flames, but are still not growing in their role in the kingdom – Grow up!**

**Paul then re-examines their worship war issues – and tell us…**

**Why It’s Dumb To Look Down On Other Christians**

**This is not about ignoring accountability (1 Cor is all about that)**

**The first - 1 Corinthians 3:16 Don’t you know that you yourselves (plural) are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (often used as a - how to treat yourself verse – true in 1 Cor 6:19 – but not here. Different use here.)**

**Here it is not talking about YOU being a temple – it is talking about US together being a temple.**

1. **When we don’t get along – we vandalize God’s temple**

**People who slander and tear apart the body of Christ. God will hold you accountable. Stop the trashing the body! Stop destroying each other! God takes this extremely seriously.**

1. **When we think we’re superior – we deceive ourselves (Luke 18:9-14)**

**Some think, “Well, bless their heart. When they grow up – when they get like me – they will know better.” (looking down on) Some are notorious for this – “holier than thou” attitude.**

**1 Cor 3:18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, (I am better, smarter, more spiritual – grading by your standards) you should become “fools” so that you may become wise. / 21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders!**

**We tend to become followers of people - but they are just servants**

**Would you be excited to meet the president? How about the lawn guy, cook, mechanic, toilet cleaner? Well, maybe not…**

**1 Corinthians 4:1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.**

**\*\*\* Don’t belittle Jesus by making His life about a person – that is foolish and you are deceived.**

**He goes on - 1 Corinthians 4:4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness (our closets) and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. (Paul goes on to says I have applied this to my life. 3rd reason it’s dumb…)**

* **One day all of our own closets and motives – will be exposed**

**Your secrets will be made known so, if yours will be exposed – maybe we should not work so hard to expose others. (Matt 7:2)**

**I see this again and again - the more critical and negative a person is – the more garbage they often have hidden. As life goes on their closets are flung open. It may take years and years – but it will come out.**

**On a personal level, I notice people who complain about church most often are not in a small group, or went thru Living the Way, or not serving – and those most critical of the finances are not givers.**

**You know who does this… All of us. Because we tend to think our stuff will remain hidden – and habits will never be known.**

**Here is the last one - 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who makes you different from anyone else? (I’m more serious about God, I study, help people, memorize verses, witness more…) What do you have that you did not receive? (from God) And, if you did receive it, (from God – which you did) why do you boast as though you did not? (where do you think you got it from?)**

* **Everything we take pride in - we ultimately have received from God**

**How can you brag about something that God has done? That is dumb. That knowledge, skill, ability, experience, is from God**

**If you can study – who gave you the brain? / If you are an artist – who can you the ability? / If you are speak in front – who gave you the skill? / If you are more disciplined even – who gave you that strength?**

**God says how can you be arrogant about a gift I gave you!**

**What God asks you to do: Embrace your role in the family of God - Obey what you know to do – and - Bear with & love one another**

**Do this and you will be building a foundation with gold, silver, costly stones!**

**Larry Osborne – I ask myself will that person go to heaven? Sometimes not, but when the answer is yes, you might realize there are some goofy people going to heaven (with weird ideas and views) – but they will be in heaven. Larry says to himself – “Be nice, or in heaven they might just be your roommate.” You didn’t get a long down here – so, I’ll give you a little more time to work it out.**