MESSY GRACE: **1 Cor wk 8 – Where You Are Now**

**They were a church struggling to live for Jesus in a culture pulling them in another direction, dealing with tough issues.**

**Known for its wild days and a wild night life. We are Christians what now? Mix-matched couples & singles trying to live for Jesus.**

**Sex is everywhere – parties, drunkenness, personal pursuits, materialism, greed… what do we do? Chapter 7**

**If your married to a believer… 1 Cor 7:1-11**

* **Pursue God and each other in your marriage!**

**Paul lays down a plan - pursue God together and pursue each other. Hold tightly to each other, seek unity, and run after God!**

**If your married to a non-believer…1 Cor 7:12-16**

* **Stick it out and be alight in your home! (V12-16 –dealt with this deeply)**

**(in regard to mix-matched marriages) 1 Cor 7:17 Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. (this one is for all churches – BTW – some have diff counsel) 18 Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts. 20 Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. (talking about mix-matched marriages – who you were married to when you got saved)**

**God has a plan for you there – stick it out and be a light.**

**This is however never meant to condone a sinful marriage.**

**Paul uses another example to clarify this - 1 Cor 7:21 Were you a slave when you were called? (This does not condone slavery) (Eph 6:5-8, 1 Tim 1:8-10)**

**Roman slavery is complex: Bond servant. 4 out of 10 in Empire were slaves. Over 2 million people. Some by choice (education/ trade / land / loan / military) some by force (debt / conquered nation). Usually lasted set number of yrs. Issue, what is your state in life?**

**1 Cor 7:21 Were you a slave when you were called? (When you became a Christian some of you were a bond servant – a life did not want? You can’t just leave) Don’t let it trouble you although if you can gain your freedom, do so. (if you can get out of it legally – go for it)**

**What can we learn from this?**

**We can apply to our current state of work life**

**If you’re in a dead-end job…**

* **Flourish where you’re planted**

**You may not have asked for this life – but you got it.**

**Flourish where you are planted. Work hard – be your best. But if you are offered a way to change your circumstance – do it!**

**1 Cor 7:22 For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord’s freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ’s slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.**

**You are bought – new ownership! That job – that situation – does not own you or define you! Jesus defines you!**

**Like some of them - and most of us, this is the only option we have.**

**We have got to learn to flourish where we are planted.**

**1 Cor 7:24 Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. (dealing specifically with being married to an unbeliever – applies to every area of life)**

**If we can’t bloom here – we’ll can’t bloom anywhere**

**Now conversation turns to The Singles**

**1 Cor 7:25 Now about virgins… (all the single ladies – actually both sexes)**

**It can be difficult to be single - sometimes feeling unimportant, feeling less spiritual, limited in life, low on funds, now sure where life is or where you are going – confusing and scary**

**(rewind to verse 7) 1 Cor 7:7 I wish that all of you were as I am. (NLT – paraphrase - Paul wants you to be “single as I am…”)**

**Is Paul really saying he wished everyone were single?**

**We know Paul does not want everyone to single because: If He did…**

**\* He would be wishing the end of human existence – not biblical**

**\* He would be contradicting Gods covenant of marriage – Jesus & OT**

**\* He would be saying that what God said was good is bad**

**\* He’d be saying that what God said was not good, was ideal (Gen 2:18)**

**\* He would be contradicting his own words (just praised marriage benefits)**

**1 Cor 7:7 I wish that all of you were as I am. (I don’t have to worry about being in a relationship) But each of you has your own gift (special grace) from God; one has this gift (special grace), another has that.**

**Is there a gift of singleness – a gift of celibacy?**

**Entire ministries are built on this inaccurate premise (context)**

**Often leaving some depressed, thinking they’re destined to be single – worried they have the gift of singleness.**

**Here is what it means for you - If you’re single…**

* **Embrace this season of our life!**

**Recognize the blessings and special graces and opportunities you find yourself in. Embrace where this time of your life.**

**Less responsibilities, worries, greater freedoms, flexible time**

**Is there a gift of singleness? Not necessarily but being single can be a gift. It can be a blessing in a season of your life – just like marriage has it’s graces.**

**1 Cor 7:8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. (again, for the reasons stated this cannot be referring to singles should never get married. To understand this, we need to see)**

**1 Cor 7:26 Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is.**

**Present crises – immense persecution, trials, and soon coming tribulations. (1 Cor 7:29 …the time is short.)**

**In light of the coming persecution – don’t do it… 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (This does not mean – you should get married for sex)**

**If you’re single…**

* **Marriage will not solve a sex problem**

**Paul is not implying marriage is ever a solution to sexual sin and sexual problem. In fact – they tend to increase the issues.**

**Things look grim in front of us – use wisdom. Maybe now is not the time to get married. But don’t live in sin, get married.**

**Simply = if you plan on having sex, don’t plan on being single.**

**All the single people!**

**1 Cor 7:25 Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. (Jesus did not talk about this – but as one lead by God and your spiritual authority, I say…) 26 Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. (single) 27 Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.**

* **There is right time and a wrong time to get married**

**29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. (what time? Not Jesus return, but a great persecution. He prophetically was speaking) From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; (hold loosely the things you cherish – they may be taken from you) 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; (thing are about to turn upside down) 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. (don’t hold tight to the possessions of this world – you may find yourself with nothing) For this world in its present form is passing away.**

**Everything we know is about to change. We could be killed at any moment – and the people we love taken!**

**Roman empire was mostly tolerant of other religions – as long as you were polytheistic - didn't care who you worshiped as long as it included the emperor. That was a problem for Christians - blamed for all negatives and attacked.**

**That day did come: Written in 50’s, already facing persecution & death, by the 60’s Rome was at war with Christians. Many apostles were put to death by then, Paul was beheaded, Christians were dragged out, murdered, set on fire, thrown to wild animals (skin sewn to them), pierced and used for lanterns. By 70AD Jerusalem was completely destroyed. The world has completely changed.**

**(in light of the present crisis) 32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs - how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world - how he can please his wife - 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world - how she can please her husband. (in light of the present crisis) 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. (in light of the present crisis – you will not have as much to worry about)**

**This is a decree to never get married – it is a warning as I see severe days of persecution coming. And it did come**

**How does this apply to today’s singles?**

**If you’re single…**

* **You have greater freedom to pursue the adventures of God**

**Marriage can limit your ability to serve God in some ways.**

**Travel, budgets, time, availability restrictions. Then kids…**

**Singleness has its advantages! If you are single you have the opportunity to serve and please God with less distraction.**

**1 Cor 7:36 If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, (arranged marriages and engagements) and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. (in wanting to get married) He is not sinning. They should get married.**

**If you’re single…**

* **You are to live a sexually pure life in your dating life**

**If you love that person and want to grow old together – stop living together and stop sinning and get married. Sex in marriage is not a sin!**

**1 Cor 7:37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin - (in light of the present crisis) this man also does the right thing. 38 So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better. (again - in light of the present crisis)**

**If you’re single…**

* **Don’t let anyone look down on you if you’re single**

**Don’t feel pressured or forced. It is fine and at times better to be single.**

**Pressure from family – friends – other couples – from ourselves. Is something wrong with me?**

**Stop chasing people and chase God. Learn to be the person you desire to have. A sold-out servant of God – pursuing the fruit of the Spirit!**

**1 Cor 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. 40 In my judgment, (in light of the present crisis) - she is happier if she stays as she is and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.**

**Again – he is not saying you should never get married – this is about a current issue of a coming great tribulation.**

**If you’re single…**

* **If you are dating - #1 on the list: is that person a Christian?**

**39 … she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.**

**(2 Corinthians 6 – unequally yoked)**

**You might have a list: Looks, career, stability, sports, musician… whatever. #1 on the list better be – they belong to the LORD! Jesus is (for real) their Lord and savior.**

**This is at the heart of all this - 1 Cor 7:17 Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them.**

**I want to leave you with two thoughts:**

1. **Change the perspective of your situation – you are on assignment!**

**We’re not here by accident – we’re here by assignment**

**No matter what place you are in right now – Jesus has a great mission for you. You can live for God where you are right now – walk in it now.**

1. **Stop trying to undo the past, move forward from where you are!**

**Rom 8:1-2, 2 Cor 5:17, Eph 1:19-23, Psalm 113:6-8, Jer 29:1, Is 43:18-19, Is 40:31**

**That failed marriage, wrongful divorce, sexual single life, lost opportunities, and failures and mistakes. God calls us to repent (turn to him) and move on from there!**

**No one is beyond the reach of the grace of God.**

**Paul had a lot of regret! He hurt a lot of people – left a trail of bodies behind him… your grace is sufficient.**

**Paul, apostle of Christ scene – your grace is sufficient…**