MESSY GRACE: **1 Cor wk 10 – I’m a Contender!**

**Known for its crazy days & wild nights - then some became Christians.**

**Struggling to live for Jesus in a culture pulling them in another direction. Learning to grow up. 1 Cor – answering their letter.**

**The set up last week: A BIG QUESTION - 1 Cor 8:1-10:33**

**Then - Is it wrong to eat meat that was once offered to an idol?**

**Not something we normally deal with. For us the question is…**

**Today - Is it wrong to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (The Grays)**

**PAUL’S LONG ANSWER - 1 Cor 8-10 (3 chapters)**

**\* 8:1-8 An idol is nothing – but not everyone knows that.**

**\* 8:9-13 Love & concern for others governs our freedom. Love trumps freedom!**

**Today Paul gives examples of how he applies this to his life Apparently, some were bothered by Paul getting paid for ministry. Paul responds a little frustrated & gets a bit sarcastic**

**Paul’s Personal Example**

**1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not free? (I’m not a slave to anyone, I don’t work for free) Am I not an apostle? (see my business card, do you see who I work for) Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? (post resurrection, he hired me) Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? 2 Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely, I am to you! For you are the seal (proof) of my apostleship in the Lord. (I am a leader – met Jesus – plant churches – and I poured into your life.) 3 This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. (I as much as anyone have rights)**

**Every Christian is a minister, but some are called to lead, shepherd, train, & equip the body of Christ (Eph 6) for a living.**

**He is about to make a defense for paid vocational ministry**

**1 Cor 9:4 Don’t we have the right to food and drink? (to eat and celebrate - to more than just survive) 5 Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas? (Jesus brothers, other apostles, even Peter are married - Paul was thinking it about. I have the right to enjoy coming home to a wife and kids, to have time w/ family - to laugh and love. I should not have to beg!) 6 Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work *(outside the church)* for a living? (They can have a family and get paid – but not us?)**

**3 reasons: Reason 1 – common sense. 1 Cor 9:7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? (You don’t serve in the military and tries to figure out to eat – you serve others and get paid) Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? (Doesn’t a farmer feed himelf from his own crop) Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk? (Doesn’t a shepherd survive off the sheep).**

**What about the one in the Army of God, the one sowing spiritual seed, one shepherding the flock of God? People don’t understand this work we do…**

**Reason 2 – Biblical command - 9:8 Do I say this merely on human authority? Doesn’t the Law say the same thing? (biblical principle) 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” (Deut 25:4, 1 Tim 5:18) Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely, he says this for us, doesn’t he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? (make a living and provided for) 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn’t we have it all the more?**

* **I have the right to be reasonably paid as a minister of the gospel**

**We have the right to support that is reasonable and comprable**

**Pastors should make what is comparable to their community.**

**\*Reasonable – not using ministry to get rich! (1 Tim 6)**

**He has this right – but… 9:12b But, we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. (We should have been paid, but for your sake we did not press this with you – his heart)**

**For their culture and their immaturity Paul says…**

* **I chose personal sacrifice over personal rights – for your sake**

**Rather than complaining – I kept preaching!**

**If I am willing to deny himself such an important right for your sake, then you should be able to deny your “right” to eat meat sacrificed to idols for others sake.**

**BIG Q - Should ministers assert this right or release this right?**

**They should do what serves the gospel best – and don’t let it stop you.**

**Know this: (90% work outside jobs out of necessity – I did off an on) If they do get paid – they should work hard. Most think we slack off all week – No, it is brutal. People die in this job (heart attacks).**

**Avg pastor works 50-60 hrs a week - 70% say they are extremely stressed - 90% feel fatigued - 100% know a colleague who left ministry because of burnout, church conflict, or moral failure - 70% have a lower self-esteem since entering ministry - 80% say ministry has negatively affected their family - 80% pastor’s wives wished husbands choose a diff profession.**

**Everyone week pastors leave the ministry – they are deep fried or stay afraid and pander - fighting the church and their own depression. I did.**

**When I told my mom, I was going to be a minister… At livingway I worked at times outside job. I would do be a pastor whether I get paid or not, which I have over the yrs many times with Livingway.**

**Again, he makes a defense for compensation - 13 Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? (Mandate in OT - how Levites lived) 14 In the same way, the Lord (Jesus) has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.**

**“The Lord has commanded” (Matt 10:10, Luke 10:8) Reason 3 - Jesus said so**

**(It’s God ordained) Anyone who preaches the gospel has the right to be supported by those they preach to and shepherd.**

**Many think pastors should be poor, families dressed in rags, never on vacation, drive crap cars, and eat beans. This contributes to why so many ministry families fall apart, and churches fail – the weight and stress. This is why we faithfully support missionaries and ministries, and why I get paid.**

**1 Cor 9:15b And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me, for I would rather die than allow anyone to deprive me of this boast. (I’m not saying pay me - I did not invoke this right because of your immaturity – But I do boast in God’s provision) 16 For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!**

**Love that! That is my heart! As a young preacher, I preached anywhere for free a lot and still do. Would any of you work where you work for free – if they did not pay you? I would – I can’t not do this! Woe is me if I do not preach!**

**1 Cor 9:17 If I preach voluntarily, (willingly) I have a reward; (self-satisfaction) if not voluntarily, (God’s calling) I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. (showing obedience to God) 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, (to you) and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel. (walking in God’s will is my reward)**

**The underlying message – I have the right to be paid for what I do with you – and should have been paid**

**The main message - preaching the gospel to you was more important than getting paid**

**If I can give up this so you can know Jesus – I think you can give up your personal preferences so people can know Jesus.**

**Understanding our freedom**

**Chapter 8 - Living as an example – as to not cause another to stumble**

**Chapter 9 - Living with intention – as to cause someone to discover**

**We have great freedom, but we should at times sacrifice our rights for the growth of others and the sake of the gospel.**

**This passage is often used as a defense of our rights – but it is actually about the sacrifices that we make of our rights.**

**He explains this freedom - 1 Cor 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.**

* **It’s not what I can gain, but who I can gain.**

**Paul - I get paid by other churches, but not from you. I did not make a big deal about it for the gospels sake – to win as many as possible.**

**That has got to be our goal – to win as many as possible. That is the heart of Jesus – who wept over a city. There are 100’s, 1000’s, millions, billions that do not know Jesus. God help us – empower us – move us – take the gospel to the city and the world!**

**1 Cor 9:20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. (when I am with them, I eat kosher for their sake) 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (I will eat lobster and BLT’s) (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. (weak = a Christian with lots of restrictions) I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.**

* **I adjust my life out of love**

**Well, I don’t care what others think – you should. This is not hypocritical it is accommodating – this is loving – it’s maturity.**

**True freedom is putting the gospel first and others above self**

**Get to know people, meet them where they are, relate to them where they are - so I can tell them about Jesus and his love for them. “To win as many as possible”**

**Examples: I don’t drink, watch, holiday, or eat, or talk – when with them – so as to see them meet Jesus through me.**

**Why does he do this? – 1 Cor 9:23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (Romans 14)**

**The blessing of the gospel is seeing people set free, delivered, forgiven! New life! New direction! Transformed by God! He says, that’s why! I do it for you! I can’t imagine a better life!**

**Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes…**

**He says if I get paid - great, that is a justified and biblical right. But if I don’t, I’ll never stop preaching the gospel! I love you too much!**

**At this point I imagine Paul leans back, take a break, takes a walk around Ephesus – “how can I connect with them?” He sees the arenas in tier town - The Isthmian games**

**He sits back down and asks – Do you like to win?**

**1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.**

**Corinth hosted the Isthmian games (pic) – second only to the Olympiads. Every other year – they had a 20,000 seat theater.**

**3 parts: horse races, sports, music competitions**

**9:24b Run in such a way as to get the prize. (people coming to Christ are the prize here) 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown (wreath crown of pine branches) that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. (shadow boxing – I fight a real foe) 27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave… *(ESV discipline my body to keep it under control)***

**He is not suggesting self-torture (like monks literally beat & whipped themselves) Our bodies are loved temples of God. He figurately speaking. \*\*I tell my body what to do – discipline.**

**…so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (I live a life of freedom and self-control – as to not lose the prize.)**

**He is painting a picture – they would have totally pictured a packed city, everyone had one thing on their mind – winning!**

**How to win the race - How to be a Contender. Playing to win takes:**

1. **Hunger! - “v24 Run in such a way as to get the prize.” I want to win!!!!**

**I am not out for a jog – I run hard – there is a prize at stake! (People)**

**Am I playing to win or playing not to lose? They are not the same. One makes an impact the other squeaks into heaven. (squeak toy) One thrives, one survives - one is dangerous, one is safe - one advances, one holds ground - one scores, one is simple defense**

**I think of our church, services, outreaches – do we want to win the prize of lives changed or just have another service or event?**

**Playing to win means taking risks, walks in faith, steps out, grows, pro-active, serves - it means you have a plan for your spiritual life.**

**Do you have the desire? – a holy hunger!!!**

**Run to win!! There are no participation trophies in heaven.**

1. **Focus – “v26 I do not run like someone running aimlessly”**

**See the prize – focus on it! Run towards that mark! Not aimlessly.**

**Some of you are running aimlessly - with no purpose or direction, if you don’t have a direction – you’ll end up nowhere.**

**Some of you are running towards the wrong prize – focused on money, career, relationships, kids, education, hobbies – those are all perishable rewards. Only thing you can take with you is people!**

**Do you want to win souls? Seasoned saints – Run! Mature Christians - Run! New believers - run! Don’t be disqualified! See them, run to them!**

1. **Discipline – “v25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training… v27 I discipline my body and keep it under control”**

**The games in Corinth required strict training for at least 10 months (had to sign agreement) – they did not mess around with people who were not serious about winning. It takes disciple to win!**

**Boston marathon – 2 years of qualifications. No walk on’s.**

**1 Cor 9:27 I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave (bring it under submission) so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

1. **Sacrifice – “I strike a blow!”**

**You’re out with someone confronted with a gray area –**

**Ask yourself - Is this really beneficial for my race? Will this really help me or others in their race? (mighty blow, mighty blow)**

**“v26 I don’t beat the air” I know my foe, a real enemy who seeks to attack me and my family – most the time the enemy is - me. (strike a blow to me)**

**This is at the heart of these three chapters**

**I have got to be willing to get rid of myself.**

**Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh (in this life and body) I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 5:24)**

**What are you running for? What is the prize your eyes are on?**

**Don’t get sucked into the stuff in front of you – see the people!**

**Hunger, Focus, Discipline, Sacrifice = WIN**

**The Big Picture: When I cross that finish line who will be there?**

**This week in small groups –What are you doing with what I gave you? (parable of the talents) (Romans 14)**

**Don’t squeak out another day…**

**Are you running with intention – RUN!!!! To WIN!!!**

**Wk 11 – 21:56**

**9:24-10:13 A good start is no guarantee of a happy ending.**

**TODAY’S PASSAGE FEAR & FREEDOM 1 Corinthians 10:14-33**

**1) Never participate in the actual worship of another god or idol. 1 Corinthians 10:14-22/ 1 John 5:21/ Revelation 21:8/ Exodus 20:1-6 Deuteronomy 32:16-18/ Psalm 106:34-37/ 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 & 14-15/ Galatians 1:6-9/ John 14:6**

**2) Don’t worry about indirect “spiritual contamination.”**

**1 Corinthians 10:23-26/ John 8:44 & 1 John 4:3-4/ Romans 14:1-15:7**

**3) Adjust your actions based on who you are with.**

**1 Corinthians 10:27-33/ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

**1 Cor 10 - Wk 11 (northcoast)**

**WHO’S IN THE CROWD, AND HOW DO WE TREAT THEM?**

**(adapted from Dr. Lawrence Osborne)**

**1 Cor 8:7-13, Col 2:16-23, Gal 5:1, Ro 14:1-23, Luke 17:1-4, Gal 2:11-14, 3:1-5**

**► The Strong Christian:**

**Not necessarily better - “neither is better” this is not about who is better!**

**Enjoy your freedom**

**► The Truly Weaker Brother:**

**In danger of falling way or going back. I don’t want to be sucked back into that - I was in bondage. Don’t want anything to do with it. Alcoholic. That is why we do not want those at church events.**

**Put aside your freedom**

**► The Professional Weaker Brother:**

**The Christians who arrogantly tries to control others – this what I think and this should be the same for everyone.**

**Rebuke and teach in love**

**► The Phantom Weaker Brother:**

**The “they” – if you do this “they” will do this – “they” will think this – who is the “they”**

**Just ignore and enjoy your freedom**

**1 Corinthians 10:18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? Are we stronger than he?**

**The Believer’s Freedom**

**23 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.**

**25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”**

**27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. 29 I am referring to the other person’s conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?**

**31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.**