

**Intro:** Most of you know I like to fish. What you might not know is that I don't like cleaning fish! Most people don't! Smelly, Messy, Gross, All kinds of debris left over...And, top it all off...If you aren't careful...Hurt! (Fins, Knife...)

That's a little of what Paul is dealing with as he is writing to the Corinthian church! He CAUGHT them on mission trip, NOW he is in the process of cleaning them up! He is dealing first hand with what one of my professors said: *"Yes, we are fishers of men...but never forget...once you CATCH them...you gotta CLEAN them!* People are MESSY!

That is what is going on in 1 Cor ch 5, 6, 8! I am calling this section of our series "Messy Church: Selfish Indulgence!" The Corinthians church is full of believes in Jesus Christ. They got the message, they got saved, they know Jesus... BUT: There is a LOT of "Cleaning Up" that still needs to take place in their life. Still Selfish...shows up different ways

### 1. Messy Grace People Refuse To Release Selfish Sin.

Here is the issue: The Corinthian church is full of people that know Jesus...but are holding on to baggage of past! They came to Jesus, they got "saved" they know who Jesus is...but they aren't living up to what they know!

Look at what Paul Says Jesus has done for them...it's clear they know Him! Ch 6:11

All three of these words are past perfect tense An ACTION in past whose Effects continue to the present!

- **Washed:** When they came to Jesus their sin, guilt and shame was washed away!  
You were washed by God...made clean...still clean in His sight!
- **Sanctified:** To be set apart for God...Set apart to be Holy  
You were set apart for His purposes and glory...still set apart to serve and honor Him
- **Justified:** You were made as if you had never sinned...God sees you as justified  
And He still sees you that way! Just as if you have never sinned.

BUT: and Here is the kicker: They aren't living as if those things are true in their! Instead...they have found their way BACK to where they came from. They WERE washed...but they keep finding the mud! They WERE set apart to serve and honor God...but they aren't doing that...they are serving THEMSELF! They WERE justified...but they keep finding ways to sin that you should have long ago left behind!

The vast majority of the book of 1 Corinthians is Paul writing to the Church saying...LIVE UP TO WHAT YOU ARE!

If you analyze the balance of the book you are going to find that it roughly breaks down into two categories.

- Personal Sins of Selfish Indulgence the Corinthians need to let go of! Stop being personally selfish
- Corporate Sins of Selfish Action the Corinthians need to leave behind! Stop being corporately selfish

Today: Messy Grace Pt 1: Personal Selfish Indulgence!

### 2. The "Variety Pack of Messy Grace Personal Indulgence."

When you read through 1 Corinthians you find ALL kinds of things going on in the church that shouldn't be happening. These are the things the Corinthians wrote to Paul about, basically saying: "Hey Paul, what should we do about..."

#### A. Sexual Immorality:

5:1-4: Twisted Incestuous Relationships that are being BRAGGED about!

Vs 2: Pride Vs Grief: (One of the strongest words for Sorrow and Grief)

6:9 All the variety of ways we have found to take the beautiful expression of love in marriage: Mess it up!  
What was created by God to be an expression of love, unity, joy, between man and wife, Twisted

#### B. Grab Bag of Wickedness: This reminds me of Rom 1: Not only do wrong...CREATE new ways do wrong!

5:6:10 Thieves, Greedy, Slanderers, Drunkards, Swindlers:

Notice something here: All of these sins Paul is talking about are about ME...taking advantage of and hurting YOU! Core issue of every one...is SELFISHNESS:

Basically...I matter...YOU don't...And I am willing to do whatever I need to do to take care of me!

You...don't matter. If I hurt you, cheat you, slander you, as I indulge myself...its OK!

If I use you for my personal pleasure...treat you like an object because it makes me feel good...GREAT!

It's all about me!

Illus: That's why Warren's book on Purpose Drive Life So Impactful! First line: "It's not about me!"

- C. Valuing Personal Gain over Corporate Testimony: Lawsuits  
 6:1-8 The Corinthians are taking disputes between Christian brothers to worldly courts!  
 Stop and think: *Those who claim to know and love Jesus...can't resolve it*  
 People who know the love, truth, grace, forgiveness of Christ: *Going to lost world for help!*  
 Instead of bringing it to wise people in the church...take it to ungodly!  
 Vs 7: Completely defeated already!: Lit = *A loss of honor and dignity:* To be shamed!  
 The fact that you can't resolve it...take it to unbelievers...means testimony compromised  
 To your shame you who claim to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, are living a very different way!  
 Vs 7: Wouldn't it be better to be mistreated by a brother and keep testimony of Christ!  
 Something like THAT never occurs to most of us! We feel the need to be vindicated, WIN PROTECT  
 Instead Paul says: Choose the path of protecting the testimony of Christ and Church.  
 (That's why I placed this in the Selfish Indulgence Category: Who cares about Testimony: I'm RIGHT!

- D. Abuse of Personal Freedom: Ch 8:4-14 Food Offered to Idols  
The issue: Can you eat meat from an animal sacrificed in idol worship  
 Just like Jewish worship: many false religions sacrificed  
 Can you eat that...if you do...are you participating in that false worship!  
 Some say who cares: We KNOW there is one God...why not  
 Others say...no way! I can't Feel like I'm doing wrong thing  
The Freedom: Selfish Indulgence: I can do it and don't care! Vs 4-6  
The Struggle: Vs 7 Weak conscience: It is defiled  
The Messy Grace Sin: Vs 9-12 My freedom HURTS you spiritually! BUT I DON'T CARE! 8:13 Never again  
 (Notice issue: Not I don't like it: But: It trips me up!)

Corinth Was a Messy Church...Wasn't it! Guess what...Not that different from much of what we struggle with today!  
 Oh, the specific issues might be different...but the core problem is the same: Selfish Indulgence at Another's Expense!  
 Fortunately, Paul didn't leave us to solve this on our own!

#### 4 Principles That Help Us "Clean Up" Our Mess! Solutions to Selfish Indulgence!

1. Understand the Difference between Permissible and Beneficial 6:11  
 Permissible: Legal or Moral: I can do this because it doesn't violate God's standards/commands  
 Beneficial: Not Spiritually helpful! I'm not going to do this: Not conducive to spiritual growth! Help me  
 Paul is basically saying...Just because I can doesn't mean that I SHOULD!  
 Not CAN I...But is this going to help me spiritually?
2. Understand the Danger of Permissible and Mastery! 6:11  
 Permissible: Legal or Moral: I can do this because it doesn't violate God's standards/commands  
 Mastery: Be brought under the power of! Can be ANYTHING: Food, Drink, Sports, Business, Work....  
 I can have a drink...but do I risk the danger of it mastering me: Father alcoholic!!!
3. Solve the Issue of Ownership. 6:19-20 God 8:13 brother: Never Again!  
 You are NOT your own! WOW! Is it possible to be more counter cultural. In our world SELF is God!  
 Whatever I want to do, whatever please me, whatever seems right to me...I CAN CHOOSE: MY LIFE!  
 NOT if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ! You belong to HIM! How you conduct yourself...reflects upon HIM!  
 YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN! You must settle THAT issue...and until you do...Messy Grace Person! ABOUT YOU
4. Determine Where YOU fit in the order of Priority! 6:20 Honor God w/body  
 Not only are you NOT your own...Not MOST important...You don't make the top 3! Not as a follower of Jesus  
 Christ! He told us: If you want to follow me...Lay down your life and pick up your cross DAILY!  
Illus: I'm Second: Jesus comes first then me: I beg to differ. NO YOU ARE NOT SECOND! Jesus comes first,  
 then your brother or sister in Christ, then the testimony of the Church, and if you are married your wife, and  
 then your children...YOU DON'T EVEN MAKE THE LIST!  
Messy Grace People: Have to Release Selfish Sin: Immorality, Wickedness, Personal Gain, Abuse of Freedom  
Messy Grace People: Need to LEARN and LIVE the principles that help them become what Jesus says you ARE!

CONCL: Are you living like what you used to be, instead of what you ARE? Solution: Repentance: Seek forgiveness:  
 Start living out: BENEFICIAL, MASTERY, OWNERSHIP, PRIORITY: STOP MAKING A MESS!