

Intro: Last weekend driving 7hrs each way...normally I like driving...not this time! The people I saw on the highway last weekend were totally oblivious to the world! They were in the fast lane...driving beside a semi; 20 cars behind them...Totally Oblivious: Driving like they were the ONLY people on the highway! Doing their thing...Heck with all you

That is where we pick up this morning. Remember where we left off a couple weeks ago. Then we talked about what we called: Personal Selfish Indulgence: Now, Paul is going to go after the same issue...Selfish Indulgence...but now it's Corporate Abuse. He is going to talk about all the things people do that impact everyone around them: CHURCH

- Messy Grace Pt 1: Personal Selfish Indulgence! All the left over personal baggage/sin dealing with
- Messy Grace Pt 2: Corporate Selfish Indulgence! Baggage that affects and impacts the Body/Church

The first set of problems Paul address a couple weeks ago was all about those selfish sins that primarily impacted the individual. Sexual immorality Abuse of Personal Freedom, Lying, Cheating, Stealing. Today: Whole Church!

Corinth is full of problems...because it is full of hurting people....Full of sin and hurt and abuse and pain. Just like every church! In the next couple of chapters Paul gives us a prescription for the sick people...(everyone) in our churches. His goal is to move them from being MESSY GRACE people to HEALTHY GRACE people. Takes time; Work; Energy; Investment So instead of looking at the problems...let's define this by talking about the solutions.

1. Healthy Grace People Put Others Before Themselves.

1 Cor 8

- Here is the issue: Food Offered to Idols: Can you eat that meat? Vs 2-8
- Notice where Paul Begins! *Doesn't start with the problem: Starts with the Attitude!*
 - >Knowledge: (he says this doesn't matter!) Puffs up: Lit = *to be spiritually proud of what you know!*
 - >Love: (he says this matters!) Builds up: Lit = *to make spiritually stronger, better, more!*

Paul is saying to the Corinthians, You have it all wrong! You thought this issue revolves around KNOWLEDGE It doesn't! Because you are a part of the Body of Christ, the Church...This issue comes down to LOVE!

Your knowledge is spiritually damaging your brother! Vs 7-9 They don't KNOW it...Trips them up...causes damage! When you do that...look at it...you are SINNING against your brother! Your knowledge Hurts them...you don't care!

Concl: vs 13: If my eating causes my brother damage..I'm going to put their spiritual wellbeing before my eating! It's not about what you know Paul says...its about whether or not you truly love your brother in Christ!

Illus: Healthy Grace people know to put others before themselves in order to serve them

EX: Last week: Sermon on marriage: I heard through grapevine: I chose not to come...because I'm not married:

Or, I chose not to come...marriage great...or beyond hope: No names associated with it...I don't care Teach You

1. Every service is bigger than just YOUR NEEDS...Right? Maybe you don't need it...But someone you know does
2. Pray for them...because they are sitting beside you: Take it to them during week...You are a part of the body...while it might not be for you...God can USE you: Help you understand, Help you Pray, Help you Help!
3. Maybe there is someone you are going to encounter this week...and that sermon for them! You messenger!

2. Healthy Grace People Give Up Their Freedom To Protect Their Brother In Christ!.

Vs 9-13

Notice what Paul says: Be Careful!: Lit = *to look at something; to take into account; be aware of situation*

Yes...you have Freedom to eat that meat...your conscience is clear...but look at what you are doing to others!

Your spiritual FREEDOM is causing them SPIRITUAL DAMAGE! Is your hamburger worth it? Pork chop so good?

Do you really want to cause your brother or sister in Christ spiritual damage, cause their spiritual life to be negatively impacted, cause them to be spiritually weaker and fall into sin that hurts them and everyone around them...just to have your way with what you eat? Is it REALLY worth it to you! Do you care so LITTLE about the body of Christ?

Healthy Grace people don't live that way. Messy Grace people do! Healthy Grace people take others into account!

Illus: Paul is saying: You are part of a body..a family...and because you are stronger...you have more responsibility!

Healthy Grace People live with an eye to those around them! They CARE about the Body...and how their actions impact everyone else. Not Messy Grace People. OH NO...They live for themselves...and themselves alone

App: When was the last time YOU made a decision that put others spiritual welfare ahead of your freedom? When was the last time you CHOOSE to voluntarily give a freedom you had every right to...out of respect brother? If you can't identify a time when you did that...Laid something down...Did something you didn't want to...for the good of others...You might BE a Messy Grace Person...and totally oblivious to what you are doing to others.

3. Healthy Grace People Lay Down Their Rights!

Ch 9

When Paul moves on to Ch 9 he takes things to an entirely different level. Not only do Healthy Grace people give up their FREEDOM, they voluntarily LAY DOWN THEIR RIGHTS for the benefit of others! Look at Paul's examples:

- a. I have the rights of an Apostle: vs 1-2
- b. I have the rights of any strong believer to eat and drink what I want vs 4
- c. I have the right to have a wife travel with me vs 5
- d. I have the right to be compensated for the work of spiritual leadership. Vs 7-9

Each and every one of those are things that I have the RIGHT to do: Lit = *Privilege; Freedom; Control; Right* ALL OK!
But, look at what he says in vs 12 and 15:

- Didn't use it: Lit = *to employ or put to work; to touch even slightly; to take advantage of*
- Put up with anything Lit = *to cover over; to conceal; to endure or put up with (No pay)*

Listen Paul is saying: I'm not doing what I do out of personal desire...My desires and my rights aren't in play here I do what I do out of service to Jesus...Necessity: Lit = *There is a compelling call on my life that will not go away!*

Illus: This goes all the way back to the road to Damascus: On that day Paul heard voice of Jesus: COMPELLED: WOE!

The issue is NOT my RIGHTS: But my CALL! Not my RIGHTS but my SERVICE! Not my RIGHTS my MINISTRY@

Vs 19: Though I am free...I make MYSELF a slave to work out the call of Jesus in my life! To EVERYONE!

Messy Grace people...they are all about their RIGHTS! I should be able to do this...I have the right to do this...I am free to choose my own path, walk my own road, set my own goals.

Not Healthy Grace People: Healthy Grace People have a calling: Lay down your life, Pick up Cross, Follow ME!

4. Healthy Grace People Prioritize Their Spiritual Purpose.

Ch 9:19-23

Paul tells us that being Healthy instead of Messy requires a series of voluntary choices that YOU choose to make. No one else can make these for you...Because you are giving up things rightfully yours, choosing path don't have to walk, putting others before yourself when you don't have to do that!

- Choose Service over Freedom: vs 17 Preach to everyone Purpose: To proclaim Jesus to everyone
- Choose Slavery over Freedom: vs 19 Slave to everyone: Purpose: To win as many as I can to Jesus
- Choose Weakness over Strength vs 22 Become weak Purpose: Meet them where are and win
- Choose Others over Self vs 22 All things to all men Purpose: So I might win SOME!

Paul says to the Corinthians, and to you and I: YOUR PURPOSE IS GREATER THAN YOUR PERSONAL PREFERENCES!

Of course I would be free, Of course I would not be a slave; of course I would be strong, of course I would serve myself But my PURPOSE trumps everything...and I will do whatever it takes suffer whatever cost I must pay, walk any road I have to walk...if it will help me win one more soul to Jesus Christ! I have MORE than a DREAM...I HAVE A PURPOSE!!

5. Healthy Grace People Know The Prize They Are Pursuing.

Ch 9:24-27

Paul says, *"I know why I am here...I know my purpose...and I am pursuing with everything within me!"*

- I know...Not everyone gets the prize: There are a lot running...don't get it: No participation ribbon spiritually
- I'm after the crown: The SOUL WINNERS CROWN: CROWN OF REJOICING! I Thess 2:19-20
Imagine...the rejoicing that will take place in heaven when sinners are thanking God...and the soul winner!
- I know the sacrifice I have to make: Beat my body and make it my slave! Do whatever I need to do!
Everything in me says: Take care of yourself...Do what YOU want...Serve own desires: NO: I have a Goal!
- I am NOT going to stand before the one who gave His life for me...and explain WHY I am empty handed!

Healthy Grace people have a goal...know the prize they are after...willing to pay ANY price to achieve it

CONCL: Know what Healthy Grace people do...They lay down their lives...pick up their cross...and follow Jesus! Corinth...was FULL of people that were serving themselves...Acting like the CHURCH revolved around them...Hurting others along the way, ignoring their needs, headed to heaven...with no perception of the damage they were leaving behind. Paul says: there is a better way: Follow me...as I follow Christ: Be Healthy, Not Messy: What about you?