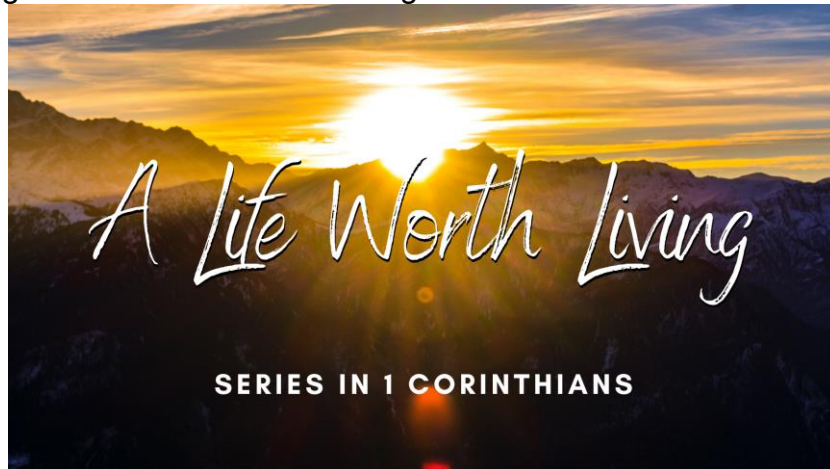


This morning we begin a new series we’re calling:



“A Life Worth Living,” a study that comes from the book of 1 Corinthians. Without question it’s fair to say that almost anyone you would ask the question: ***Do you want your life to have meaning and worth?*** They would say, “YES!”

Certainly, in our day and time with all that’s going on around us with the Coronavirus, where we’re all really seeing our lives shrink-wrapped into a really confined area, we’re all seeing very poignantly what’s really important in life. In other words, now more than ever, we want to live a life worth living. And so were the people living in Corinth in the first century.

One of the key passages in the first letter to the Corinthians is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. You’ve made your way there. I want you to see it...

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-12**

***<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. <sup>12</sup>“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything.***

Church family, today, and over the next several weeks, we’re going to see how the Word of God is going to address the people of Corinth to help them understand how to live the Christian life in a very, very pagan and evil place. You see, in the city of Corinth, (a colonized city of Rome), the people of God were struggling mightily with how to live lives that weren’t marked by their former way of life. In fact, it’s important for us to understand...to be called a “Corinthian” was to say that you were not a good person at all. It was almost like someone was cussing you to call you a “Corinthian.” It was about as low as you could go.

Corinthians struggled with sin? Are you? Are you living in sin this morning? Maybe you are a follower of Christ, but for whatever reason, you’ve fallen back into some of the ways of thinking and living that you were delivered from. Maybe you are like some of the Corinthians of the first century

who were living under such relentless pressure to conform to the corrupt culture of the day that you find yourself giving in instead of standing up.

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And folks, if that describes your life...you are NOT living a life up to the level that Jesus would have you live. You are living beneath your identity as a child of God. You are living beneath where Jesus has lifted you from your past and your sin. If that's you today...listen carefully...today you're going to see what it means to live a life filled with Grace. You're going to see what it's like to get untangled from the web Satan has spun for you, that's been tangling you up and tripping you up. Let's see this now:

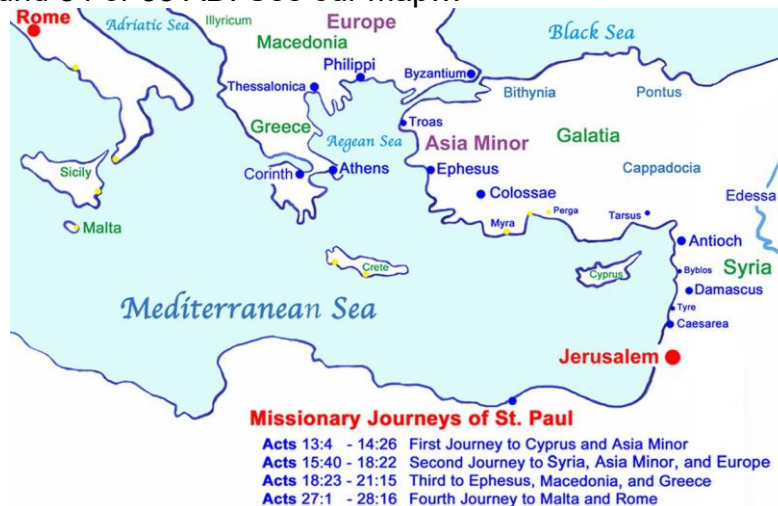
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### **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, <sup>2</sup> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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According to 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians...and that would have been around 54 or 55 AD. See our map...



Locate Corinth, just to the left of Ephesus (middle). Paul wrote this at the end of his 3-year ministry in Ephesus, which was at the end of his third missionary journey. Paul had been informed by a lady named Chloe, verse 11 of this same chapter, that there were all kinds of problems, so see, Paul was tasked with having to address many problems in this letter, and we'll see these over the weeks to come...but the first thing he addresses is their position in Christ and WHO they are...and WHERE they've come from. And that's why he reminds them they are SAINTS.

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### **1 Corinthians 1:2**

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints... You say, "I'm not a saint." If you're saved you are! I know some think a saint is some dead person who has been memorialized in stained glass...but, biblically speaking, a saint is simply a follower

of Christ. In fact, the word Christian means, “Little Christ,” and what we are to do as “little Christs” is to act like Him. That’s what it means in verse 2, to be “sanctified,” or set apart. Jesus saves us and “sets us apart” (like separating your groceries) as His...that’s our position and says, **“Now go act like me!”**

Church family, you and I should never do anything that He would not do. Would Jesus ever lie? No. So we shouldn’t lie. We Jesus ever steal? No! So, we don’t steal. Would Jesus ever commit adultery? Absolutely not! And we shouldn’t either, because that’s totally foreign to what a “little Christ” would do. And you see, CHURCH FAMILY...this is the foundation of our identity in Jesus and brings us to the essence of “The Life Worth Living!”

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And that life is a life of Grace...the word that is the foundation to this entire passage. Watch it.

### **1 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,**

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So church, where did the grace of God come from? Did we go dig it up? Buy it? Earn it? Nope...it was given to us by God through Jesus. And get this...this GRACE OF GOD covers the past, present and future... Listen carefully, grace is a gift. In fact, that verb “given” (in verse 4), is in the aorist tense in the Greek, which means a *specific point in time*. What does that mean? It means you received the grace of God for the very moment of your salvation...the moment you trusted Jesus and called on His name to save you...you received grace!

And church, that’s why we can sing “Goodness of God”...even today...even through times like we’re living in with this terrible virus...ALL MY LIFE YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL, ALL MY LIFE YOU’VE BEEN OH SO GOOD, WITH EVERY BREATH THAT I AM ABLE, I WILL SING OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD... Why? Because of the grace of God.

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You see, the Grace of God makes life worth living! We’ve got to grasp this today. It was the grace of God that was sufficient to help Paul when he prayed for his thorn in the flesh to be removed...God said, “No Paul...but my grace is sufficient.” Grace is the foundation of the Life worth living!

And yet, for many Christians this is the part that we don’t seem to fully understand. You say, “What are you talking about...I understand. Grace is good...” It is...but, I want you to see HOW GOOD IT REALLY IS. Because I believe many are trying to use grace incorrectly today.... So many are trying to use God’s grace in the absolute, wrong way. They are using it as a license to sin...they claim God’s grace and sleep with their girlfriend and cheat on the test and lie their employer... Folks...what I’m describing to you is not a life of grace, but a life of sin and if you’re okay with this kind of lifestyle, you might need to examine yourself to see if you are really born again...a Christian!

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I love the line of the new song we’ve been singing in “Holy Water,” by We the Kingdom... Look at these lyrics...This is the process of salvation that leads us to the desire to live for Jesus...and to not abuse His grace...but rather, to use it to walk in His power. Watch this...

### **HOLY WATER**

Dead man walking, slave to sin

I wanna know about being born again

I need You  
Oh, God, I need You

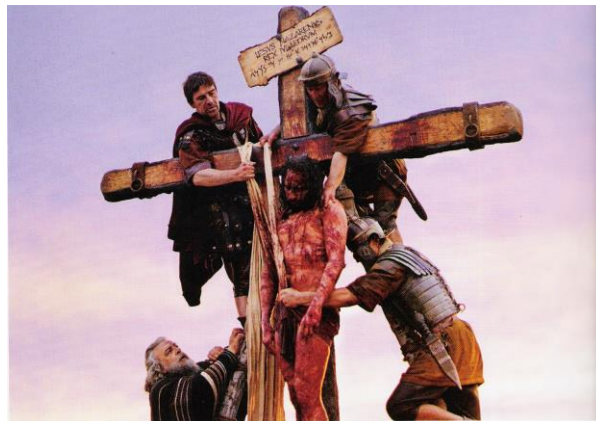
So, take me to the riverside  
Take me under, baptize  
I need You  
Oh, God, I need You

Your forgiveness  
Is like sweet, sweet honey  
On my lips  
Like the sound of a symphony  
To my ears  
Like holy water on my skin  
On my skin

I don't wanna abuse Your grace  
God, I need it every day  
It's the only thing that ever really  
Makes me wanna change

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Folks that song describes the Life Worth Living...and folks, never forget what God's grace cost Jesus...Take a look...



That's gruesome folks! Grace is: **“God’s riches at Christ’s expense.”**

God is a God of equity and justice. He's holy, therefore, He can't just say, "Well, forget the sin...who cares?" Nope! Because of justice, because sin **had** to be dealt with...God sent His Son to pay for it. And Jesus was able to become my substitute. Why? Because He was perfect and in that perfection, He could pay for my sin, your sin by shedding His blood as payment. (Without the shedding blood there is no forgiveness of sin).

Listen, Jesus was perfect and that meant He could meet the righteous requirements of God. And when He did, thanks be to God, God could then extend grace to us...to sinners, because the price had been paid. Jesus paid it all...all to Him I owe...sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it what as snow.

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When God calls a man, he bids him come and die.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor, who stood up to Hitler and his Nazi rule during WWII. He was a faithful man, but was eventually hanged by the Gestapo, Hitler's gang of thugs. I want to show you what Bonhoeffer said about grace. He broke grace down to two categories: costly grace versus cheap grace in his book, "The Cost of Discipleship."

**"Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it, a man will go and sell all that he has... [Costly grace] is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.**

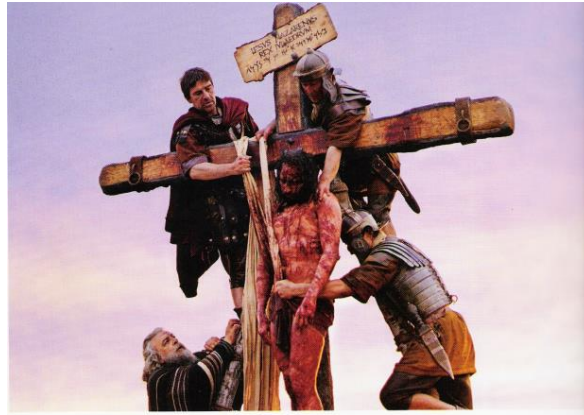
**It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: 'you were bought at a price,' and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."** Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

Church, this is where it's going to get deep... Think hard with me... Ready... Here we go... Grace can only operate when there's sin. Right? You see, if there's no sin, there's no grace...there's got to be something to forgive, or grace isn't necessary. That's Romans 3...

**Romans 3:23-26**

<sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.<sup>25</sup> God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,<sup>□</sup> through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—<sup>26</sup> he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

When you receive Jesus by faith...you are justified...cleansed by the Grace of God. And, see it again, this is what cost Jesus...



That's not cheap grace, that's costly grace. Listen...this is the message to the Corinthians living in a pagan culture and to us today, living in a pagan culture...Jesus took your sin, not so that you can live it, justify it or excuse it...but, so that He could take it from you so that you can have THE LIFE WORTH LIVING. Listen, this is so rich...grace is the undeserved, unmerited kindness of God and it's FREE, a gift! And Church, because that's true...grace and guilt cannot go together. You say, "Grace and guilt? Why do you bring that up?"

Because so many are eaten up with guilt. Oh listen, maybe some of you watching today are collapsing under the weight of what you've done. You're somehow trying to figure out how you can alleviate your guilt. But, that's not how it works. You have to surrender. You've got to come to the place in your life that you want Jesus more than anything... And when you get to that place, you'll fall at His feet and you'll find there is enough grace there to overwhelm your sin and your soul and set you free! Anything less than that...and you'll be right back in that life of sin...just like those Corinthians. You see, this why we started at 1 Corinthians 6. See it again...

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### **1 Corinthians 6:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. <sup>12</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

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Are you thankful for the costly grace of God and I'm not going to abuse it. Are you? Oh be reminded...when Jesus died on the cross, He took all your sins and crushed them...not so that you could live any way that you want!! NO!! So that you could live the way He wants you to live...and the only way you can do that is by His grace! Do you see that?

Listen to me...if you're out there today and you're not a Christian, can't you see what you're passing up. Jesus is saying to you today, "Come to me and believe in me and follow me and I will cleanse you of all your sins. I will forgive all of it. I will set aside all your guilt. I will hold you blameless and make you holy and you will be mine forever. Protected, cared for, loved and cherished!" Would you call on Him today?

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Do you know what Jesus wants after our salvation? He wants us to live for Him! Right? Yes...but, so many Christians are trying to do that in their own strength and they are miserable. Let me show you what we have to be. Watch this word in verse 6: **TESTIMONY.**

### **1 Corinthians 1:6**

<sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—

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That word “testimony” is: ***marturion*** and we get our word: ***martyr***. In other words, Jesus has given us the power to be martyrs for Him... That’s why He said that we must deny ourselves and take up our crosses. The word marturion is translated, in Acts 1:8, as “witness.” You know Acts 1:8.

**Acts 1:8**

***<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

As we begin to close, let me ask you... Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for Jesus?

You know, we’re all being asked to sacrifice a lot right now for this coronavirus...and you know what...it’s a good thing that we learn to do some hard things in this country. We’re pretty soft compared to our parents and grandparents. I think so much of our healthcare folks right now. These wonderful folks took an oath to be willing to sacrifice their own health to protect and care for us! I’m so grateful for them!

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Will we do this for Jesus? This is what Paul told Timothy to do. Paul was near death... He knew the Romans would take him out of that Mamertine Prison in Rome any day and kill him. So, he wrote this to Timothy. (Oh, these words are so applicable for us today).

**2 Timothy 1:7-11**

***<sup>7</sup>For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. <sup>8</sup>So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. <sup>9</sup>He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup>but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup>And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.***

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Folks, I said it last week and I said it three weeks before that and I’ll say it again (as long as the Lord keeps telling me to say it), we’ve got to OPEN OUR MOUTHS FOR JESUS. We haven’t been doing that in this country and Christianity is declining. Listen, our biggest problem is not the coronavirus, it’s SIN and the eternal death that comes with it. Are you telling people about Jesus?

I’m convinced our biggest problem, as followers of Jesus, is that we just don’t talk about Him. We’ve been convinced that we can’t. We’re not smart enough or gifted enough or we’ll mess it up. That’s a lie! We must not miss this.

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**1 Corinthians 1:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—***

Christians have been given everything we need to Talk...we’ve ben ENRICHED IN ALL SPEECH and KNOWLEDGE! Yet, some of you still don’t think you can do it...and that’s because you are missing Acts 1:8. Here’s who does it...

**Acts 1:8**

***<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;***

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The Holy Spirit is going to give you the words. He will not leave your mind blank. Listen, you have a message. You have the testimony of what Jesus has done in your life and it’s an amazing story and it’s YOUR STORY and only you can tell it!

You see, I think we under-sell what we can do, because we listen to Satan's lies. Church, because of the grace of God, we can open our mouths and the Holy Spirit will give us exactly the right words at exactly the right moment every time! We lack nothing folks! That's verse 7.

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**1 Corinthians 1:7**

**7** so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Listen folks, we've got everything we need to live the LIFE WORTH LIVING. Why? Because we are saints who have the GRACE OF GOD! Now, let's go live in that grace!

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