

A close-up photograph of two vibrant green leaves. The leaf in the foreground is slightly out of focus, while the one behind it is sharper. A single, clear water droplet is perched on the surface of the front leaf, reflecting light. The background is a dark, blurred brown.

First
Corinthians

growing pains

“Vocational Ministry” | Elder Mike | August 3rd, 2025

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (ESV)

¹ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ² If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³ This is my defense to those who would examine me.

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (ESV)

⁴ Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

⁵ Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? ⁷ Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (ESV)

⁸ Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? ⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (ESV)

¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹² If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (ESV)

¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

Speaker: The Word of the LORD.

Congregation: Amen! Praise be to God.

The Roadmap for Today's Message

1. "I've got my rights..."
2. "But, I didn't use my rights..."
3. God's Thoughts on Vocational Ministry
4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ² If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³ This is my defense to those who would examine me.

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

⁵ Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

⁸ Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same?

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:11-12a (ESV)

¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹² If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

1. "I've got my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

1. "I've got my rights..."

Deuteronomy 18:1-2 (ESV)

¹ "The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD's food offerings as their inheritance. ² They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them."

2. "But, I didn't use my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹² If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

2. "But, I didn't use my rights..."

1 Corinthians 9:15a,19 (ESV)

^{15a} But I have made no use of any of these rights...

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

2. "But, I didn't use my rights..."

2 Corinthians 11:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. ⁹ And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

3. God's Thoughts on Vocational Ministry

Matthew 10:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— ¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep."

3. God's Thoughts on Vocational Ministry

Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave **the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,** ¹² to equip his people for works of **service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

Ephesians 3:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

Ephesians 3:7-12 (ESV)

⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

Ephesians 3:7-12 (ESV)

¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV)

¹ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

the MISSION God has given Cornerstone:

**To join God in reaching and transforming
people into passionate followers of Christ**



Salt & Light

Jesus is passionate about Abba and people. Because of this, He is actively ministering the fullness of His gospel right now to people all over our world in the ways they have need by His Spirit. Jesus calls us to be the salt that gives flavor to the world and the light that shines in the world. This compilation is meant to help you discover some of the ways your brothers and sisters at Cornerstone have joined God in ministering life to our world so you, too, can join Him in what He is doing with the passions, gifts, skills, resources, and conviction He has imparted to you.

We are excited about the journey you are on with Holy Spirit and want to see you experience more fullness in your relationship with Him, so please do not hesitate to contact us at missions@cornerstoneseseattle.com if you have questions, need to update us, or want to talk about ways you can get involved.

Compassion Ministry

Overview

Cornerstone's compassion ministry helps our church family align with God's heart to see, feel, and respond to humanity's hurts and God's hopes. These ministries continue to grow and change as we grow deeper hearts of compassion.

Our vision is that each person in our church family would live out the whole Gospel by helping those who

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV)

¹ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1 Corinthians 8:9 & 13 (NIV)

⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (NIV)

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.

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT)

¹ Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Reflection & Repentance

Jesus and Paul gave everything to build the church. In imitating Jesus and Paul:

1. How much is building God's church on your heart & mind?
2. How much does building God's church drive your goals, day to day choices, and actions?
3. How much are you willing to "give up your rights" to love others, build God's church, and bring His gospel to the lost?

Action Steps

1. Own your role(s) in building the church with God's Spirit
2. Own your role(s) in bringing God, His love, and His good news to your world as the church

4. God is Building His Church to be of Jesus

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV)

¹² "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.