

Intro: (read vs17-24)

One day this little girl was walking in a garden and noticed a particularly beautiful flower. She admired it's beauty and enjoyed it's fragrance. "It's so pretty!" she said. And as she kept gazing on it, her eyes followed the stem down to the soil in which it grew. "This flower is too pretty to be planted in such dirty dirt" she cried. So she pulled it up by it's roots and ran to the water faucet to wash away the soil. It wasn't long until the flower wilted and died.

When the gardener saw what the little girl had done, he said, "You have destroyed my finest plant". "I'm sorry "she said, "but I didn't like it in that dirt". The gardener replied, " I chose that spot and mixed the soil because I knew that only there could it grow to be a beautiful flower".

How many times do we murmur and complain because of the circumstances into which God has sovereignly placed us? How many times might we fail to realize that He is using the dirt, the difficulties, the trials and pressures He's placed us in to grow us. To bring us to a new level of spiritual beauty.

He wants us to be where we're at. Be all He's called us to be in the circumstances He's placed us. Reveal His beauty in you, in the soil in which He's planted you. Don't think you need to be plucked out to be beautiful.

That's kinda what the Corinthians were going through. Brand new spirit filled believers trying to navigate through this new life in Christ.

"I'll be all you called me to be Lord when I finally get married".

Some were saying "If I could only be divorced, I'd be free to serve you better". "He or she is a distraction, a hindrance." "They're not even saved"

Paul "has" been talking about marriage, but it's right here that he uses this time to widen up the discussion because God wants you to be all He's called you to be right where your at. Many people think that God don't love them right where their at. That they have to be more, do more, before God will call them beautiful. It's kind of a works – righteousness thing.

So in this section Paul deals with some of that. I've entitled this message "Be Where Your At". Meaning be what God's designing you to be right in the circumstances your in.

17-24 I. LIVE AS YOU ARE CALLED

17 A. You can life for God where you are right now

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

1. You can live for God right where you are right now. Notice how Paul says "**As God has distributed.**" "**As the Lord has called each one**". "**So let him walk**"

a. This Christian life is illustrated as a walk. Though at times we're told to stand "**stand fast in the Lord**". Or run, "**run with endurance the race that is set before us**". Life in Christ is illustrated though as our walk.

i. You don't hear someone say "Hey how's your stand?" or How's your run? No You'll hear "Hey how's your walk? Meaning how's your life in Christ? Where's the Lord been taking you?

b. Because a walk in tales that your moving forward. Your not going backwards. Walking is putting one foot in front of the other and your enjoying God's presence and where He's taking you.

2. So Paul is simply saying "wherever your at right now, enjoy His presence in the walk.

a. Enjoy the Lord in the place where He's assigned you. That's what the ESV says "**Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him**"

b. God knows exactly what you're going through and where you are. Oh You've made your decisions, God hasn't violated your free will, but in His sovereignty He's working all things together for your good because you love God and are "called" according to His purpose.

i. Even though you & I have made decisions, God has still given us an assignment. A calling. And it includes wherever you are right now.

ii. To enjoy His presence right where you are.

3. Let us not be like Adam & Eve who, when they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the cool of the day in the garden, hid themselves from His presence.

a. Ps 89:15 **Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.**

i. Know the joyful sound

ii. They 'walk' in the light of Your countenance.

b. Wherever you are wherever God has called you, Paul says "so let him walk"

c. You don't have to wait for your circumstances to change!

d. Or like in some situations in Corinth you don't have to try and change your circumstances. As in marriage. **"As God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk"**

i. Walk in that marriage as an example of Christ's love and grace.

ii. I'm so grateful for my Mom. (explain none of us were saved when God called her)

iii. Today every single one of us are saved and my Dad, his father, his wife are with Lord.

e. She didn't preach. She walked.

17b 4. **"And so I ordain in all the churches".** Paul's saying look this is not something I'm telling just you guys.

18-20 B. **Using Circumcision As An Example**

18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. 20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.

1. Were you called while you were circumcised? Then don't go and try to undo your circumcision. And what if you were called while uncircumcised? Well don't go get circumcised. Cause neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything but keeping God's commands in the heart. That's what matters.

a. I think the reason why Paul brings up circumcision is because that's a perfect example of the outward move of the flesh to try to seem like we're more in line with God's will.

i. Like the children of Israel

ii. These things don't mean anything if your heart is not with me.

b. This is kinda what we do right? Where we do these outward things and think "This is what's going to get me in line with God". This is what's gonna show everyone else that I'm in line with God.

i. We sign up for things, we buy the big brand new bible. We go to these meetings or bible study or church services, set up. We do things like that but sometimes

these things just become the outward circumcision. When there's no true change going on inside the heart.

- c. Or we do these things to try to keep up with others. "So and so is circumcised and , well, they seem to be doing much better in their walk and so maybe that's what I gotta do.
 - i. So and so is signing up, or so and so is going. Maybe that's what I gotta do.
 - ii. Maybe we play these outward works. Thinking this is what I got to do to be right with God. This is what I got to do to make God love me. (Or seem more spiritual)
- d. This is what may have been happening in the church there. Some thinking; looking over at the lives of others (who may have been circumcised) and said "Man their marriages seem to be great, look at 'their' kids and their jobs, maybe that what I need to do to be blessed." (Opposite for the circumcised, maybe I got to reverse it)
- e. God is saying, " No just serve me right there. Your not out of my will because your going through a trial. Your in the soil I planted you in. And I'm going to do a work right there, don't look at them. **"Let each man remain in the same calling in which he was called"**.

- 2. "Oh Wens, I just know I could be doing better!" **Go with me Over to Phil 3:12-14**

- a. " I haven't attained..... nor am I perfected..... but I press on! I press on to lay hold of that reason for which Christ layed hold of me!"
- b. "I'm not saying that I've apprehended it all yet but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reach forward to what lies ahead." (**Illustration #1** **Tony Evans**

- c. That reminds me of Reggie Jackson (Man I used to not like that guy). Mr. October
 - i. He got his name because he used to shine in the postseason.
 - ii. He once said in an interview that He lived for the postseason because it was his time to shine. But He had to get through the regular season to get there. His secret to shining in the regular season was keeping his eye on October. God is looking for some Mr. & Mrs. Octobers—people with their eyes on eternity who faithfully play the regular season because they're looking forward to the post season glory.
 - iii. **"Press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus."**
- d. Read vs 15-16 (let us walk)

21-24

C. AN EXAMPLE OF SERVING NOW FROM SLAVERY

21 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. 22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

21a

- 1. **"Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it".** In the original language Paul is saying let not this be the object of your care or concern as to whether or not you can serve God now.
 - a. Some people are so concerned about their present situation that it keeps them from stepping into what God has planned.

b. These were slaves who were concerned about their slavery being a thing that hindered their growth in the Lord.

i. I can understand that by what I used to feel like in prison.

ii. A similar thing was happening to a man who had an infirmity for thirty eight years in Jesus' time. **Go to Jn5:1-8**

21

c. "Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it". This greek word for concerned means just that to be interested and concerned over something. But it's the same word used in 1 Pet 5:7 when it says to cast all our cares upon Him cause He's cares for us. He's concerned for us. **"Because God is concerned for us we don't have to be concerned about our situations. Dispositions.**

d. Your area the object of God's love. You were made to be loved. In fact this is what God says **Isa 49:15** "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. ESV

22

2. We need proper perspective. You know that no matter where we're at spiritual perspective is still very important? **"For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave"**

a. Again this reminds me of being in prison. Locked behind walls and bob wired fences. Guns pointed at you when you're trying to eat. You know you're a new creation, forgiven but your debt to society is still owed, and they don't care about no freedom you say you have. But if you were called even as an inmate..... your Christ freedman.

b. And those who were called and living free unlike slaves or inmates? Your Christ's slave.

23 3. **"You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men?"**
What's Paul talking about? Don't try to keep up with the Jones' spiritually speaking to seem to more spiritual. That's becoming slaves of men. Don't look at someone else's walk thinking God doesn't have His hand on you or isn't up to something in your life because it doesn't look like theirs. That's being a slave of men.

24 4. **"Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called."** Now some people can take that verse and think it means something different than it really means.

a. "Well, I'll just stay in that same place I was when God called me brother" Drinking, drugging, sexing.....partyinglyingstealing etc. But what does it say? **"let each one remain with God** in that state in which he was called? You think God wants you to stay in that state?

b. No Paul was saying if you were married, single, circumcised, uncircumcised, slave or free, don't let that stop you from walking in the Lord. But remain with God in it. **Be where your at!**

Community Group Questions

1 Cor 7:17-24 “Be Where Your At”

- I. Paul was encouraging those in Corinth to walk out their Christian lives in the place they were at “as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk.”
 - Do you sometimes feel as if present circumstances you’re in keep you from serving God the way He wants you to? If so how does this passage (vs17-24) speak to your heart?
- II. Sometimes we may feel because of a present disposition that God has abandoned us. Or because we think other people’s lives are so much better, that God somehow loves & blesses them more.
 - What are some thoughts, scripture passages or concepts that can keep you focused on God’s love for you, right where your at in life?