

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

March 12th, 2023

Jeff Bruce, Lead Pastor

The Gain is Worth the Pain (1 Corinthians 9:19-27)

1. The Pain of Missional Living (vv. 19-22, 27)

2. The Prize of Missional Living (vv. 23, 24-26)

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. Read v. 19. In what sense is Paul “free”? How does Paul use his freedom? How is Paul’s attitude similar to that of Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 2:5-8)? How does his attitude towards “the weak” (v. 22) serve as a model for the Corinthians, and how they were to treat such people (compare 1 Corinthians 8:8-13)?
3. Read vv. 20-22. What does Paul do to reach people from different cultures? How does he become “like a Jew” to reach Jews (v. 20; compare Acts 16:3; 21:23-26). How does he become like a Gentile to reach those “outside the law” (v. 21; compare Acts 17:22-34)? What *isn’t* Paul willing to do when contextualizing the gospel (v. 21)? In what sense is he willing to “become all things to all people” (v. 22)? In what sense is he not willing to do this?
4. How does Paul describe his life as a missionary (vv. 24-27)? Why would this illustration have been particularly relevant to the Corinthians? How does Paul’s lifestyle (v. 27) serve as a rebuke to them, and their view of bodily desires?
5. What motivates Paul to reach people for Christ (see v. 23)? What prize is he hoping to receive for his labor (vv. 24-27; compare 1 Corinthians 3:14; 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)? How does this passage reshape our motivations for living a missional life (see John 4:34; 15:10-11)?

Application:

6. Jeff mentioned contextual barriers we must overcome to reach people in the Bay Area. What barriers have you experienced? How have you tried to overcome them?
7. Jeff noted that reaching for people for Jesus always involves pain. Why is this the case? What pain have you experienced in living on mission? As a group, what kind of pain might you anticipate if you focused collectively on reaching the yet-to-believe?
8. What’s one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?