

The Weekly Word
June 4-10, 2018

As weather warms and nature grows, may you grow as the Word of God fills you. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, June 4: 1Corinthians 4- Conscience...

Verse 4 launched my thinking. *My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.*

Our conscience can be a powerful tool for good, but it remains an element of a human life, therefore, it is fallible. Very fallible.

Even though Paul's conscience was clear, Paul understood that his conscience was fallible. It could be right or it could be wrong. Jesus, however, is always right and his judgments are always correct. So even though Paul's conscience is clear, he rests his life and his declaration of innocence in the hand of the Lord.

For the most part my conscience is good, steering me toward what is right and away from what is evil. But my conscience is not perfectly good. Like me it is touched my sin. To trust my innocence to my conscience, rather than Christ, would be a colossal mistake.

No, my faith needs to be in Jesus not my conscience!

Keep me tethered to you, Jesus.

Lord, my hope is in Christ alone... not my conscience, not my good deeds, not the hope I am better than most, not in believing that everyone gets eternal life. Lord, my only hope for salvation and eternal life is You, Jesus... My hope is in You and You alone, Jesus. And in this truth I will rest tonight.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ and His righteousness... Amen!

Tuesday, June 5: 1Corinthians 5- Egregious Sin...

Apparently the church of Corinth seemed to pride themselves that they had a man who was known to be committing egregious sexual sin. We cannot be certain whether they merely tolerated this behavior because they didn't want to hurt someone by calling out their behavior or, more plausibly, whether they considered themselves more spiritual because they could 'tolerate' behavior like this. Either way, the Corinthians were unwilling to deal with this flagrant and widely known sin in their church.

Dealing with sin can be such a painful situation in a church.

Most of my life I have served smaller churches. One of the grand blessings of a smaller church is that people really feel like they have a family. On the flip side, everyone knows and cares for each other, and that can create real difficulty when it comes to confronting sin.

So I feel for the Corinthians...

Paul, however, makes a challenging rejoinder; *Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?* (6). Sin –so blatant and so well known – unchecked is a cancer that can affect the entire body over time.

At this point I shifted from the church to me personally. Is there any sin in my life that needs to be checked? It won't be as blatant and perverse as the Corinthian situation, still sin is sin and needs to be dealt with.

So my heart stills and I look inside...

Lord God, point out areas of pervasive sin. Show me. It won't be easy. Show me how to rely on Your Holy Spirit that I might gain victory over this area in my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, June 6: 1Corinthians 6- Temples of the Holy Spirit...

We humans are a messed up lot, even those of us living for Jesus. Apparently we should live 'better' than we often do, at least if the Corinthians serve as a model. They were suing each other and struggling with sexual sins. What a church! Still Paul opened his letter calling them the *church of God in Corinth ... those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people* (Corinthians 1:2a).

We probably aren't much different today. Oh, our sins might be different but living below God's ideal is the same.

After dealing with lawsuits, Paul tackles sexual immorality. He seals his argument against sexual immorality with an incredible understanding.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies (19-20).

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in us! That thought is staggering. The Holy Spirit is the 3rd person of the Trinity and fully God and He is within us. We have God in us!!!! And just like a temple was to be maintained clean and pure so we are to keep ourselves (our bodies) clean and pure.

The thought gets even richer... we are no longer our own. Why? Because we were bought with a price... the life of Jesus, the 2nd person of the Trinity, when he died on the cross to be the payment for our (my!!!) sins.

I am not my own... I am God's.

When I was married 38 years ago. I gave up living my life for myself. I now have to factor my wife into all my decisions...her needs, wants and desires.... I went from 'me to we' thinking. I pondered this as an example of what occurred when I pledged my life and confessed Jesus as Lord. No longer do I live for myself... now it is God and me...or as Paul reminds me the Holy Spirit is in me, so it is the Holy Spirit and me. And I need to learn to build that into my regular thinking and living.

The outcome Paul says is that we should honor God with our bodies.*

Honoring God with my body goes far beyond what I do sexually. It is a bigger principle that Paul applies to a sexual problem in the church, but it could be applied to eating habits; drinking/drug habits; sleeping habits.

God has given us one body and we should honor Him with it. This speaks to the things I use my body to do. Do I honor God with the work of my body?

The reverberations of this text just keep expanding!!!

God leads me on a review of how I am using and not using my body to honor Him...

Lord, thank You for this marvelous body. May I honor You with how I treat and use it. I offer it to be a tool in Your hands to help advance Your kingdom near and far. Through , I pray. Amen.

*Implicitly this text is Trinitarian. Holy Spirit in us; bought with the blood of Jesus; therefore we should honor God!

Thursday, June 7: 1Corinthians 7- Bought at a price...

Marriage may be the most significant human relational institution, so it really is no surprise that God's Word will have things to say about marriage. Ephesians 5 has deep things to say regarding mutual submission within marriage. Today's reading says much about sex in marriage, singleness, as well as other aspects of marriage and divorce.

In the middle of this chapter Paul makes a powerful statement that I chose to ponder... *You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings* (23).

You were bought at a price... 'purchased and owned' are two words that come to mind. I am owned. I was purchased. As I thought about that, I mused on the truth that I was purchased by the life of Jesus, the life of God's one and only Son. God gave His life for me. Jesus gave His life for me! This is a staggering thought. I rolled it around in my thoughts.

How highly God thinks of us (of me) that Jesus would die for us (for me). Oh, my...

Building on this amazing truth, Paul reminds us *do not become slaves of human beings*. Don't trade God's ownership of your life for ownership by some other entity or habit.

Why trade down? Why be owned by anyone else but God who paid such an exurbanite price for your (my) freedom?

I don't normally think of things in these terms, but I am trading down if I allow myself to be subject to anyone else but the Lord. When I do that, I am trading myself from someone who infinitely loves and values me to someone/thing who frankly could care less about me. When I think of it in these terms, all I can say is, "Oh, my... what a fool to trade down."

I return to the wonder of considering how loved and important I am to the Lord... what a wonderful thought to rest in today...

Thank You, Lord God, for Your love, and willingness to buy my freedom at such an exorbitant price. Thank You. I thank You in and through Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

Friday, June 8: 1Corinthians 8- Now about...

I was thinking about the opening two words of the chapter: *Now about...* for all their issues and problems the Corinthians were willing to seek their apostle's advice about particular matters. In fact much of the letter is Paul answering a series of 'now abouts...'

The letter begins with problem issues that Paul has learned about and which he addresses. But then in chapter 7 he turns to address issues about which they have sought his advice. *Now for the matters you wrote about...* (7:1)

Chapter 8 and following are other 'now about' matters. As I said above, for all their issues and problems the Corinthians were willing to seek their apostle's advice about particular matters. This got me wondering, to whom do I turn when I have a 'now about' issue? How about you?

Recently I went to a conference and one of the leaders, mentioned that he has had a particular Christian brother as a coach/mentor for 35 years! I hear others speak about spiritual directors or accountability brothers/sisters. This has not been my continual practice. I have, as I think about this, had brothers I have met with regularity during seasons of my life. Still I haven't had a consistent voice with whom I can speak about when I have a 'now about' issue. I do use God's Word regularly and certainly the Spirit is the best 'now about' counselor. Still there is something

to having the eyes and heart of another brother or sister (depending on your gender) who can look you in the eye when answering.

And if I consider the early chapters of 1 Corinthians, they had a trusted brother who could raise issues they might never have considered, left to themselves.

Hmmm, do I have a brother like that?

Lord do You have someone who would be a good 'now about' partner for me during my current phase of life and discipleship???

I return to verse 1: *Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up (1).* These words advocate a significant difference between knowledge and love. Knowledge not tempered by love, not controlled by love, not supported and walled in by love can be dangerous and destructive.

Love is the base from which a disciple's life must grow.

I don't like to use 'must' phrases if I can help it. Must/have to/should/ leads to laws and rules. However in this case, as I ponder, I feel comfortable in using 'must' because love is the character trait that Jesus wants to define His disciples. *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35).* Love for a disciple is a must...

I must learn to love all people... only then am I faithfully following Jesus.

Well, this single sentence has taken me on an interesting journey this morning. It has been helpful for me, I hope the same is true for you.

Lord, may these words penetrate my protected life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, June 9: 1Corinthians 9- Run well...

Run... run the race wisely and steadfastly and faithfully. Run... *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize (24).*

Run in such a way as to get the prize... Those words struck me hard.

Live your life in such a way as to get the prize...

Live your life as best you can for Jesus.

Above all else live faithfully for Jesus.

Plan your life to live faithfully.

Give every effort to live faithfully for God –Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit.

I think of marathoners... there is strategy during the race and training before the race, both of which allow a runner to run in such a way as to get the prize. You have to know when to go hard and go alone and when to keep with a group and let the energy of the group carry you. You have to know the pace you can sustain.

The analogies are straightforward with life and living for Jesus. Many times I need people to help me run my best. There are also times I need to be alone with the Lord and allow Him to speak into me. And there are times when I need to break off from people holding me back and run my race for Jesus.

So many thoughts circulate in my thoughts... thoughts about training, thoughts about nutrition and rest and rhythm.

People don't accidentally run a marathon well... and people don't live a life worthy of our calling in Jesus by accident either.

What do I need to do to run my life well for Jesus? These are the thoughts upon which I am ruminating.

Lord, to run well, to live well, to finish well... none of these will happen by chance. Guide me, O Holy Spirit, that I might pay attention to Your voice and follow Your lead as an athlete follows her or his trainers and coaches. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, June 10, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.