

We Know, Part 7

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[0 : 00] You see, when you come to Grace, you never know what you're going to have to put up with. And to add to the prayer requests, just moments ago, we received a telephone call from Marie McConkie, and she's got an appointment at Cleveland Clinic tomorrow.

She's already been diagnosed with what is referred to as RSD. It is a debilitating neuromuscular disease. It is an affliction that her mother also suffered from, so obviously it's a genetic thing passed on to her.

And, of course, it is eventually extremely crippling and very debilitating. So we need to pray for Marie in connection with that, and let's do so.

Father, we recognize that these bodies, though they are fallen, are marvelous examples of your handiwork. We are so intricately made and so complex in our structure, everything about us. And yet, despite that, we see that it is a marred existence, all because of the fall. Because these bodies are not precisely as you made them originally.

[1 : 25] They have undergone a debilitating process that ultimately ends in death. But how grateful we are that you've even cared for that. And in and through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are able to have life in a way that the world knows not.

First of all, we're truly grateful that Marie McConkie enjoys that kind of life. She knows the Lord Jesus. And compared to that, nothing else really matters. So we simply ask that as she undergoes treatment, further diagnosis for her condition, that you will enable those specialists and doctors, technicians who are attending her, to note everything that is involved with her case so that they might be able to prescribe the most precise medication, whatever that might be, or the treatment or the therapy.

Most of all, we thank you that she can rest in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. We just look forward to the time when we will be done with this weary old fallen world.

And you will be making all things new. And we will be there to enjoy it with each other and with you. Until then, help us to maintain our sense of responsibility.

Help us to commit our way unto you. Help us to be ever mindful that there are those about us with needs. Greater than ours. And that we have opportunity to minister one to another.

[2 : 54] We ask that you will undertake for us as we engage the text this morning. And that out of it, there will be new enlightenment and understanding and appreciation for who and what you are.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Hard to believe that only two weeks from the day, we're going to be celebrating our 50th anniversary. And I have to remind myself that we're already about a year late.

Because it was last year that our 50th anniversary actually occurred. But due to the COVID and all of the confusion and everything that was in conjunction with that, it was decided that we'd best delay until what appeared to be a more opportune time.

And it appears that we hope it has arrived. And that will be two weeks from today. So you are all welcome to join us. There will be lots of memories to be sharing, lots of pictures, lots of things that some of you will fondly remember.

And others will say, I don't know most of those people. And many of those people have passed on to glory. And many have moved out of state and out of town and are no longer with us.

[4 : 08] But there are a number here who still are. And we appreciate the presence of each and every one of you. If you plan to join us, that will be on the 14th. And by the way, the 9 o'clock service will be dismissed with that day.

We will not have a 9 o'clock service, but we will be here for some goodies and coffee and fellowship at the 9 o'clock hour. So feel free to come and just enjoy the camaraderie and the fellowship.

Then the regular service will start on the 14th at 1015. And we plan to conclude at the regular time at 1130. And if you are planning to stay for the meal, we hope you'll be able to do so.

The vast majority of the meal is being catered so that very few will have to be bringing anything. But we do need a fairly accurate account of how many will be here.

And on the bulletin board, there are sign-up sheets. And if you will list, please, whether you will be present and how many will be in your party. That way we can give the best information to the caterer to make sure that we have plenty of food provided.

[5 : 17] So care for that item, if you would, please. And we do appreciate it very much. In your bulletin, you have an insert that is for October 30 and October 29.

And I just want to go over it quickly with you because of the importance thereof. And then we'll be looking at our text. And it is in 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

If you want to turn to it in advance, we will be there shortly. But the insert is one that is derived from publication of two minutes with the Bible.

And there will be a new supply of those received. I understand that we're out of them again. But a new supply will be received. And you might be thinking in terms of, I know it's upon us already, Christmas gifts.

They'll be here before you know it. And this is a really extraordinary explanation of the mystery. And I want to share this with you, not only for you here in the audience, but for those who are listening by way of Internet.

[6 : 29] Excuse me. Because it is so brief and yet so important. It was provided by Mr. Stamm, who has authored the book.

And it's entitled The Mystery. And despite the fact that we have been a church that has been proclaiming this subject for a little over 50 years now, I am still convinced that there are a number of people, and I can tell sometimes by the comments they make, that the mystery remains a mystery to many people.

And some have even been heard to say things like, well, well, I don't know anything about that mystery business. All I know is the only thing that matters is you just preach the gospel. That's the only thing that matters, and I don't care about the mystery stuff.

Well, the gospel is part of the mystery, and the gospel is part of the mystery, which is referred to as the grace of God. Thank you.

You do wonderful for an old storyteller. That receding hairline. So look at it if you would.

[7 : 44] Let's just follow along. And by the way, this isn't our message for this morning, but I just could not resist. In Ephesians 3, 1 through 3, the dispensation of the grace of God is specifically called the mystery.

That is, secret. It is thus designated for two reasons. One, it had been kept secret since the world began.

But now, through Paul, had been made manifest. Romans 16, 25. In other ages, it was not made known, as indicated in Ephesians 3, 5.

Rather, from the beginning of the world, it had been hid in God. Hid from ages and from generations, but now made manifest or disclosed to his saints.

Two, it was at the same time the explanation, the key to all God's good news, including that which had been proclaimed in ages past.

[9 : 00] It explained how it was that Abel could be declared righteous by bringing an animal sacrifice. God testifying of his gifts, recorded in Hebrews 11, 4.

It also revealed how Noah could become an heir of righteousness by building an ark. So stated in Hebrews 11, 7.

Or, how anyone could be saved under the dispensation of the law. Thus, we have in Paul's epistles not only the gospel or good news of the secret, but at the same time, the secret of the gospel.

This great secret, revealed to and through Paul, has rightly been called the capstone of divine revelation, for it concerns God's eternal purpose in Christ.

Through Paul, the chief of sinners, saved by grace, God has now made this glorious secret known to us.

[10 : 19] Ephesians 1, 9, that we in turn might make it known to others. Ephesians 3, 9. And as you've heard me say so many times in the past, this secret is perhaps the world's best kept secret.

It has been around for publication and promotion for 2,000 years. And it still is only vaguely understood by many, not understood at all by most.

And therefore, unable to really appreciate it. It is salvation based on grace and grace alone, whereby you don't have to give anything.

You don't have to promise anything. You don't have to do anything. There's just something for you to believe. And people say, but that's so simple.

It is. That's what's wonderful about it. It includes everybody. Anybody can believe this message. You are a sinner.

[11 : 25] That's bad news. And your sin separates you from an utterly righteous God who will not be able to tolerate sin in his presence. That's bad news.

The good news is Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for your sin, enabling you to freely come to God through Christ.

That's the good news. It's just that simple. And I've often said it may sound very, very easy. And it is. It is easy because Jesus did the hard part.

He did it all for you. And that song we were singing this morning, Why Should He Love Me So? It's called Calvary Love.

It's a supernatural love. It's a love that transcends anything that you and I can really appreciate. You know, Nathan was talking this morning about Jamie and baby Adam.

[12 : 26] And there is that mother-child bond. And you know, baby Adam has no idea how much mother loves him.

No idea. No appreciation at all. He just reeks in all of the benefit and advantages and the blessings and everything that come from being a baby to that woman in that household.

He doesn't have any understanding. Not really. And there is a parallel there. Sometimes I think that's the way it is between people of God and God himself.

We just can't begin to enter into the love and the appreciation that God our Father has for us. It's incomprehensible. Oh, the wisdom both of the foreknowledge and the workings of God.

How supreme are his... Well, let's look at it. Romans chapter 15. Romans chapter 15.

[13 : 31] How the text is moved again. Romans chapter 15.

Romans chapter 15. Boy, it really did move.

It moved back to chapter 11. In verse 33. Oh, the depth of the riches. Both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and unfathomable his ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again? For from him and through him and to him are all things.

[15 : 04] To him be the glory forever. Amen. Amen and amen. All right. If you would, please. First Corinthians chapter 5.

And we are considering a number of the phrases that Paul has referred to called the know ye nots. And it is the kind of expression that we would use today by saying, you do know and understand, don't you?

In other words, it's almost an assumption that I'm sure you know this, but I'm running it by you again because I really want to emphasize it. And you know of the 14 times that the Apostle Paul uses that phrase, at least as it's translated in the King James, know ye not, 11 of them are in his letters to the Corinthians.

And you might ask, well, why is that? I've often identified the church at Corinth as being Paul's problem juvenile, spiritual juvenile delinquents.

And indeed they were. And one of the reasons they were is because they were so accustomed to a profligate lifestyle before the gospel came their way.

[16 : 17] These were people who gave meaning to the term that they live like Corinthians. And it meant that you were the lowest on the totem pole when it came to morality and righteousness.

These people did not qualify. The Corinthians were some of the most profligate of all the people who existed in the Mediterranean world. And perhaps one of the reasons is because of their location, because they were central to much of the Mediterranean world at the time.

And there was an enormous amount of traffic coming and going from all parts of the world there. And it was the kind of city that had everything you could imagine to offer.

And people took advantage of it. And it was into that kind of climate that Paul went when he preached this gospel to the Corinthians. And he was delivering to them information the likes of which they'd never even dreamt of before.

They were people who were steeped in every kind of idolatry and debauchery that you could imagine. And yet when he came to them with the gospel and pointed out the sin factor and how that that would separate them from the one true God.

[17 : 31] And in fact, they were already separated. Then he gave them the good news. And many of these people embraced it. They came to faith in Christ. But they had a lot of baggage.

And it's the baggage that Paul is writing to update them about now. And he's going to remind them in chapter 6 that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

In verse 9, Paul says, Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, or homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. That's the kind of background that some of you people came out of. That's what he's saying. And then the next word.

But. That's all changed. Everything is different. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God.

[18 : 29] Now you have a different drummer to whom you may march. And it is as different as night and day. And yet, think of what an upheaval this is going to cause in the lifestyle of these people.

In the first place, the kind of situation that they are now going to be involved in, which is as a congregation of local people hearing information that they'd never heard before, how radically different that is from the bars and the brothels and everything else with which these people had been familiar.

It is requiring a radical lifestyle change. And the reason is because the sin factor has been dealt with. They have been brought into the sphere of the spirit of God.

And they now have spiritual resources available to them that they didn't even know existed before. And in fact, they didn't exist for them. And now Paul is reminding them how important it is that they leave that old lifestyle behind and embrace the new.

And for anyone who thinks that that's just automatic, well, maybe they just haven't lived long enough to experience it. But let's just jump in here to chapter 5, 1 Corinthians, and see what Paul is saying and how he is addressing this.

[19 : 51] It is actually reported that there is immorality among you. Well, I'm sure that couldn't have been new. Now, he's saying, actually, you people have set a kind of a new standard.

And this is something that is very, very serious. And God takes it very seriously. And I am responsible for calling you out on this. And when he says that this is the kind of behavior and activity that even the ordinary people out of whom you were saved, they don't engage in this stuff. Where do you get? And what he's talking about specifically is these people were allowing the kind of conduct to go on in their congregation, known to them that a man was actually shacking up with, living with his father's, or probably his father's second wife, or probably step-wife, or not his mother, but a woman to whom his father was married.

And Paul is calling them out on that. And he is saying that this kind of behavior does not even exist among the Gentiles there, where you are, that someone has his father's wife.

And I do think it's important that you know this is not suggesting that he's having relationships with his mother, which some translations might lead you to believe that. But it is probably a second wife or a courtesan or something of that nature.

[21 : 33] And you have become arrogant and have not mourned instead in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.

For I on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this as though I were present.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know, and here's where the King James, know ye not, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened, for Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

[22 : 43] Let us therefore, as a result of that, celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

And when he uses this principle about the leaven, he's talking about the effect that leaven has, which is frequently referred to as the word leaven, but in our vernacular, it would be yeast. Yeast is that element that is put into dough that causes the dough to rise and so on. It permeates the whole loaf. And what he's talking about here is you have a moral situation in your congregation whereby a man is consorting with his father's, probably second wife or third wife, who knows, and you are simply not only looking the other way, you are even congratulating yourselves for being tolerant of the situation.

Here is one of the primary examples of what is referred to as church discipline. It is a practice that today is seldom engaged.

And one reason, perhaps the biggest reason, culturally, is because our nation has entered into this thing of relative morality whereby nobody has the right to set standards for someone else, their behavior, et cetera.

[24 : 18] But what Paul is saying here is that standards have already been set. And we didn't set them. God set them. And the reason God sets standards is for the same reasons that people build fences around their yard where their children are playing because they are confining their perimeters and their activity to a certain area for their safety and their benefit.

That's the thing that we as believers not only need to understand but really be grateful for. God has set and established parameters for us and our behavior simply because he loves us more than you can imagine.

And he wants to protect us from the things that are not good for us as any parent would do for their child. And Paul is saying here, you as a congregation have a responsibility to call this man out and to discipline him for this kind of behavior.

And instead of doing that, what are you doing? It's a sad, sad thing.

They are boasting probably regarding their tolerance, probably regarding their live and let live attitude. When you should be grieving and you should be saddened over this and you should be taking some deliberate action, you are not only approving it but you are seconding it.

[25 : 57] And that's an unthinkable kind of attitude. So what Paul is telling them they need to do is eliminate this man from your fellowship.

Just how do you go about doing that? Well, you just have a little frank sit-down talk with him. The authorities of the church, the pastor, the elders of the church ought to go to a man. They ought to plead with him to forsake that kind of behavior and attitude.

And if he refuses to do so and says things like, why should you care with whom I sleep or whom I sleep with or it's none of your business and so on, then you are to disfellowship him.

You are to say, well, we are going to, like Paul says, we are going to turn you over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And what this simply means is they are consigning the man to a physical kind of judgment which could even result in what John calls the spirit, what John, the apostle John calls the sin unto death whereby consequences from bad behavior may be exacerbated because of continued behavior that could actually result in one's demise.

[27 : 13] Now, according to 2 Corinthians, there's every reason to believe that they were successful, that the man had done that, that he had broken with his past and with his behavior and that he had repented of his sin and then the same congregation there at Corinth is reticent to forgive him and to dismiss the sin and to receive him as a brother.

and he writes to the second letter to the Corinthians to tell them that now you had a responsibility to discipline this man and when he responded to your discipline, then you are to forgive him and welcome him with open arms back into your fellowship.

Instead, they were not doing that. They were continuing to hold him at arm's length and not giving him the rights and the privileges as a believer who has been restored should have.

So it's a kind of a mixed bag and it's all centered in this church at Corinth. This is the problem church. When he talks about the principle of do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough and what he's getting at is this.

If you are willing to permit this kind of known activity taking place in your congregation, don't think for a moment that it's going to end there because it will spread.

[28 : 45] A little leaven leavens the whole lump and when a congregation has people within it who are able to conduct themselves in a dishonorable way that is dishonoring to the body, dishonoring to Christ and you just look the other way or do nothing about it, you can expect that to proliferate and increase because it will.

Writer of Ecclesiastes says, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore it is set in the hearts of the sons of men to do evil continually. that's called either a lack of prosecution or selective prosecution. That's the kind of thing we're living with today where you can get away with anything if you are properly connected. It is called selective enforcement of the law and I don't know how many times I've heard people say things about people who need to be held accountable and we couldn't agree more. Everybody does need to be held accountable for their behavior. So far, I think about the only one significantly in Washington, D.C. that has been held accountable was Michael Flynn and he wasn't even accountable.

[30 : 06] What do you think of that? He wasn't rightly connected. That's why he was prosecuted. That's why he was plagued like he was and everything that went with it.

So what Paul is talking about here is a discipline that needs to be fair and just and across the board and no exceptions. This man, whomever he might have been, who knows, he may have been the biggest giver in the congregation.

He may have been the best known. He may have a reputation for being well-liked and et cetera, et cetera. So people just kind of give him a pass. But listen, and I say this to Grace Bible Church as well as to anyone else who is listening, if we really love each other like we are supposed to, there is a necessity to hold one another accountable for behavior that is dishonoring to the Lord and a refusal to do so and look the other way.

Oh, it's none of my business. Well, none of us is perfect, you know. We all have our faults. And that kind of nonsense, you are simply demonstrating a lack of love on behalf of the brothers.

We ought to say among ourselves as people in this congregation, we ought to say, I am responsible to walk a godly walk before the Lord and before the world.

[31 : 47] And what I am counting on is people who really care about me, if they see me and they know I am not doing that, I would hope they would love me enough to call me out on it.

We're not talking about being busybodies. We're not talking about interfering in people's lives.

We're not talking about spying on people or running around and seeing who's doing what and asking questions and infiltrating and all of this trying to ferret out evil in the congregation.

We're talking about the kind of behavior and activity that is generally known, that is public, that is conducting because it brings reproach upon the name of Christ.

We, who are in the body of Christ, do not have the right to allow that kind of behavior to go on. Now, am I talking about anybody in this congregation?

Nope. Not talking about anybody. I have nobody in mind, so you can forget that. I think he's really getting at, no he's not either. He's not getting at anything, he's getting at something.

[32 : 59] And the something is what the text is dealing with. And we are dealing with it because the hope is that in treating texts like this and explaining what is involved in texts like this, it can serve as a prohibitive factor for people who know somebody is going to call you out.

Somebody in that congregation or the board of elders in that congregation is going to visit. We had a situation many years ago, many years ago, and it was one that caused us to rewrite our discipline policy in our statement of faith just because of that very thing.

When a woman in the congregation left her husband and moved into the residence with another man and we didn't find out about it for about a month, we didn't realize what was going on and we started hearing things and so Barbara and I, my first wife and I, called this lady and we made an appointment with her and we met her in a local restaurant and we asked her, we told her, you need to know what is being said and we need to know whether there is any truth to this and she kind of bowed her head and she said, well, yes, it is true and I said, well, I called her by name and I won't go into her name here.

She's been off the scene for many years anyway and I said, you know, this is really dishonoring to, I know, I know, I know what the Bible says, I know, but, you know, and it was, I really care for this man and he treats me this way and that way and whatnot, you know, and we pled with her and we had a word of prayer with her and we told her, we have no interest in just being judgmental but you

need to know that God has already judged this kind of situation and your children are involved and it's just dishonoring to the Lord and we're asking you to repent of this sin and to break off this relationship and return to your husband and she promised that she would think about it and she would pray about it and long story short, she simply refused to do so and she knew that we were depending on her answer as to what our next step would be and I said, we'll get back with you a little later.

I want you to take a little time to think about this. A few days later, I called her and she made it clear that she had not changed her mind that she was not going to return to her husband and it was just her choice and do whatever you need to do and I said, well, the scriptures make it quite clear that this kind of behavior is not to be tolerated and this does not mean that everybody else in the congregation is lily white pure.

[36 : 00] Nobody has anything. No. What we're talking about is behavior that is outward that is conducted and becomes common knowledge for many and like I said, we're not interested in intruding into people's lives and spying on people or none of that nonsense but when it becomes so well known that the community is aware of it, you cannot allow that to go on.

Oh, well, yeah, they're a member of such and such a church and that's what they do there. You know, no, it isn't. No, it isn't. And I said, well, this is going to be a very painful and disturbing thing for everybody but I can assure you that the church is going to have to take some action regarding this and we don't want to do that.

We want you to recognize the error of your way and do an about face on this and we will work with you whatever is required by way of counseling for you and for your husband and we want your marriage to work and we want your children to grow up in a together home and we'll do whatever is necessary and she said, well, I'm just not interested.

I just want to pursue this but thank you for your interest and I appreciate that and so on and I said, well, the church will have no choice but to take this up at a business meeting and to deal with it. She said, I know that, I know that. So, broken hearted, we left the situation and as I recall, the next Sunday I met with the elders and I said, we're going to have to get together and talk about where we're going to go with this and it will probably involve a congregational meeting and it's going to be, it's going to be a real downer for everybody and we said, well, we have to do what we have to do.

[38 : 09] We've got to be true to the scriptures and about two days later we got a letter in the mail from this lady and she said that she was withdrawing her membership at Grace Bible Church so she was no longer a member which meant, of course, that she was no longer under the spiritual jurisdiction of the church because she's no longer a member and our bylaws made it very clear that if anyone wants to withdraw their membership for whatever reason they have the freedom to do so and we will honor their request if they no longer choose to be a member and that's exactly what she did and when the board got together we decided, hey guys, we're stymied here.

this lady has voluntarily removed herself from official membership. We have no jurisdiction over her and of course she wasn't going to be there any longer anyway so what do we do?

Well, there was really nothing we could do except pray for and minister to her husband and to her children but she was no longer available to us and it was a sad situation and because of that it resulted in our bylaws being rewritten as to how we would deal with situations like that and copies of it are available if you want to see so I say this because this is a very practical kind of thing and yet one reason I am bringing it is because I know I am near the end of my ministry here and this is the kind of content that I want this church to be armed with in connection with whomever your next pastor may be so that people won't look upon this as some brand new thing hey, this principle is 2,000 years old and it is designed to maintain the purity of a fellowship of believers and no one is suggesting as I have said before that there is 100% moral purity here listen folks we all know every one of us has our flaws and faults and failures none of us is perfect none of us consistently walks in the spirit we know we are all capable of delving into the flesh for some responses and activities etc. so nobody is saying we are looking for a perfect congregation well we don't have one of those Billy Graham used to say if you ever find a church that is perfect don't join it because you will ruin it well there are no perfect churches because there are no perfect people but we are talking about conducting one's lifestyle in a way that is just unacceptable for the body of Christ to behave and that's exactly what these were supposed to do in verse 9 he says chapter 5 in verse 9 I wrote with you in my letter not to associate with immoral people then he's going to clarify that because it needs some clarification and he says I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world or with the

covetous or swindlers or with idolaters the only way that you're going to get away with associating with those people and not associating with them is if you leave the planet that's the only way it's going to happen and that's not what I'm talking about for then Paul says you would have to go out of the world but actually

I wrote to you not to associate with any so called brother now there there is there is at least an inference maybe maybe he's not a real brother maybe that's part of the problem maybe he's not really regenerated that too has to be considered because you cannot expect an unregenerate person to behave in a regenerate lifestyle he says to associate with any so called brother if he should be an immoral person or covetous or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or a swindler not even to eat with such and one having camaraderie with people like that can give them a sense of encouragement and approval your being there with them is taken as being one of them and that's often the way they interpret it so in the church setting we're not to have any fellowship with these people in fact you can't have because what fellowship does Christ have with Belial none the body of Christ has a purity to maintain and that doesn't mean that we are to absent ourselves from all unbelievers because then Paul says then you've got to go completely out of the world and not only that but if you don't have anything to do with unbelievers how are you going to reach anybody we have a moral spiritual responsibility to reach out to lost people who do not know Christ and to give them the gospel of the grace of God and make them in doing so you make them aware of their sin as Paul wrote to the

[43 : 32] Ephesians in chapter chapter 4 or 5 of Ephesians he said have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness but rather expose them expose them that's call them out how do you go about that very carefully they need to be called out when sin is exposed that is calling out people and it is a tough business because who wants to be confronted about their sin nobody I know of in fact people tend to be defensive about it and they tend to be well who are you to be calling me out who are you some holy joe are you perfect do you have it all together this listen this is part and parcel of what makes the communication of the gospel not only so necessary but so difficult because you have to put your finger on the problem because if you don't identify the problem the solution has nowhere to go that's what makes this thing tough that's why a lot of

Christians just don't do it think about that could that be a motivation for our unwillingness to share the gospel you can't give people just the good news because the good news doesn't mean anything unless they understand the bad news that's what this thing is all about and in order to understand the bad news sin has to be called sin and God's attitude toward it has to be exposed and as I've tried to relate to you before even last week the reason God hates sin so much and makes such a big deal of sin is because God loves people and he sees what sin does to people it destroys it ruins people it kills people can we care enough about people to give them the truth even when they may look unkindly upon you for delivering it this is a tough sell for

Christians I'm satisfied this is a big reason why there is so little personal evangelism that goes on today you know it's almost like you mean to tell me that that I have to that I have to offend somebody in order to give them the gospel that's precisely what it boils down to and who wants to do that so it's best and it's easy to just dummy up just let each you know we'll just pray for them we'll just pray for them well that's great pray for them but we also have a responsibility to communicate the gospel to them and the only reason they are in need of the good news is because of the bad news you know and in this day and age man it's it's even tougher because like

I said this this is the generation this is the age of hey you're okay I'm okay we're all okay and this this sin hell farm damnation stuff it's just not appropriate well I remember the old preacher Bob Harrington years ago the old chaplain of Bourbon Street somebody says what do you think you're going to do do you think you're going to scare people into hell he said well it's better to be hell scared than hell scarred what's at stake do we really believe what's at stake does it really make a difference well what do you think these people were told here in first

Corinthians six beginning with verse nine when they are described as fornicators and a fornicator is simply someone who engages in sexual activity with someone to whom they are not married that's fornication and it can be I guess you could say that all all fornication let me put it this way all adultery is fornication but not all fornication is adultery because a lot of the fornication that goes on is between unmarried people particularly I'm thinking of our college and university campuses etc that's fornication and Paul says flee fornication now if you're going to call somebody out on this and you are a believer and you're in a college campus situation and you are in a dormitory with

colleagues and friends and this kind of behavior and activity goes on what's your attitude what are you going to say about it what are you going to do about it as a believer

[49 : 50] I'll tell you what most do they just dummy up and say well I wouldn't do that I wouldn't do that but who am I to tell so and so that they ought not to do that do we care enough about people to tell them the truth that's a question that each of us must answer his other in 6 9 is another do you not know and that's the righteous not inheriting what he's talking about of course is people who engage in these things as a lifestyle and all of these people that he's talking about when he says some of you were some of this that's what they were saved from they were involved in that stuff that was their lifestyle that was their modus operandi that was their everyday activity and it was from that that they have been delivered and how do you think Paul how do you think Paul gave the gospel to these people how do you think he went about telling these people about the good news if he didn't come down on the bad news first and listen you come down on the bad news that will brand you as the enemy some people you're being judgmental and what people need to understand is hey

I'm not judging I'm just telling you God has already judged and this is what he said and you just do with it as you please but this is what the scriptures say and the reason is simple God hates this activity because God loves you and God wants what is best for you this is a message that today is virtually unheard of our culture is marching to a drum beat that is completely foreign to what we're talking about here and let me ask you is the nation paying a price for it nobody's interested in reforming society just getting people to give up bad habits etc that's not going to cut it the only thing that will cut it is the introduction of the gospel but the gospel has to have some place to go and where it goes is where sin is that's where the need is for cleansing for forgiveness for lifestyle changes that's the point we're not much into that today we like to think of ourselves as being a tolerant society well we sure are and let me ask you a question is the nation paying a price for that we're not talking rocket science folks we're not talking about really super complex societal problems nope we're talking about plain old ordinary activities of the flesh to which the unregenerate are locked in and

Jesus is the only one with the key to unlock them and bring them to himself and this gives us this message to preach this is why the good news is the good news is because the bad news is bad but as I've said before if we're not willing to share the bad news with people the good news doesn't make any sense saved saved saved from what I'm fine I'm just as good as anybody else and you know what you are just as good as anybody else but everybody else is bad too for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God tough days we're living in to communicate a message like this but let me tell you something it's days like this that make the message even more important kind of like kind of like first century

Corinth only modernized and somewhat sophisticated but still with the same old demoralizing death dealing sin and the only remedy is this gospel as Paul says hey I want you to know this I'm not ashamed of this gospel for this gospel is the power of God through faith to all who believe how can you be ashamed of that this gospel and this gospel this good news alone has the power to regenerate to make new to forgive to sustain to empower everything that the human heart could possibly need wow no you don't and don't you know don't you understand the principle that a little bit of leaven leavens the whole lump and bad activities like that if allowed to proliferate will increase and abound because our creativity is almost unlimited when it comes to ways of satisfying ourselves and our own flesh and we need a check and this will be the check so whatsoever things are good whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are a good report all of these things are to characterize the body of Christ and that's the only way that you're going to be a light shining light on that hill this congregation and others like ours all throughout the area each one of us needs to be a beacon of light shining the light of the gospel out on an unregenerate society and nobody said it would be easy because it isn't it's difficult and I suspect that's why most of us don't do it or do very little of it it's difficult but what

God has called us to do he's also promised to enable us to do it well this is not the first time it has happened but it has happened again and that is I didn't give you the message that I had planned to this morning this was something different but the principle was in the ballpark anyway but because of the nature of the message I'll take five minutes if you've got comment or question anybody Joe yeah just a second Joe here comes a mic here comes a receding hairline with a microphone this this may not seem tied in but it really is the idea of this leavening affecting more and getting things

worse and so forth more people there's a law being passed in Philadelphia that's going to allow misdemeanor traffic violations to go on the police are going to be told or the law says you're not to stop anybody for this violation that violation you know numerous violations in other words there's going to be a law written to tell you to go ahead and break other laws and can you imagine when this gets started it's just going to blossom to well what's a small law what's a big law you know which violations you let go by this is this is a something in

[58 : 29] Philadelphia right now they're passing this law it has well they may feel they may feel this a necessity because when you defend the police or you know and you cause is there anybody is there anybody in our culture today that has to be more depressed and demoralized than law enforcement I'll tell you what these men and women they constitute that thin blue line that's the only thing between us and just flat out anarchy that's the only thing and more and more people are saying get rid of them defund them and hey I'd be the first to admit there are a lot of police officers that should not be police officers they don't have the right attitude or mentality for the job and they they are a detriment and the same thing could be said for prison guards they are a detriment many of them but for those men and women whose heart's in the right place and they want to serve and protect their community

God bless them and these people are up against horrendous difficulty today it's just amazing and by the way if you have opportunity to confront a police officer express your gratitude to them for being on the job and being willing to put on that uniform God bless them and there is an element out there that wants to remove it because you see what the big picture is there is an element hard as it is to believe there is an element that simply wants to destroy and that's that's the word I'm using they want to destroy the USA that we know so they can rebuild it in an image that they think ought to be that's exactly what is underfoot right now and I'm not going to take the time I could wax eloquent on this and

I could ask I could ask Mr. Jordan to wax eloquent a whole lot more but that's not our purpose for being here this morning but good to see you Jim and thanks for being where you are man have you ever got a full plate well let's pray shall we father this is difficult stuff we've been talking about and yet it is so very very important we we can only imagine the burden of Paul's heart as he saw what he was dealing with and tried to address it and we can understand the opposition that he received to it same kind of opposition that is received today there is so much taking place that we're not even aware of and what we are aware of is disturbing enough and our prayer today is that those in positions of responsibility may find a new fortitude a new courage a new willingness to speak out even though they know it's not going to be received by many in many circles and yet we know we have an obligation to speak forth the truth we pray this morning for for congressman Jim and for others in similar position for the senate for those who are struggling under tremendous opposition right now we just pray that you will encourage these men and women and and stiffen their backbone and cause them to know that there is a righteousness that this nation desperately needs and each of us who know something about it are charged with the responsibility of making it known we know it's not easy we know they're in a difficult place we know that there are temptations that abound there are things that would dissuade them from doing what their heart wants to do because it might not be politically correct or wise but there is a standard that heaven has set it cannot be improved upon and our prayer is that each of those who are in positions of responsibility for guiding and leading this nation may be attuned to it in a new way so that a revival of real genuine spiritual depth could be impacted upon this very needy nation can't think of a better place for it to start than right here or in Washington

D.C. our nation is sick our nation is in desperate straits we have conflict in every area we have so much uncertainty so many unwise positions set forth it's difficult to sort it all out but we know that none of it is foreign to you and we just want to pray to you for the courage and the backbone to step forth as individual members of Grace Bible Church right here anytime and anywhere we have an opportunity for the gospel we want to let it begin here thank you again for these age old truths from the text of scripture often poorly understood and poorly explained but the essence of which we trust we can grasp and be obedient to in Christ's name amen amen to to you you