**BCM Bible Study: Oct. 2/3, 2019**

**1 Corinthians 6:1-20: Grace-Fueled Living**

Looking Back (10 minutes)

Follow up on the challenge from last week to share your faith and engage in spiritual conversations.

* Did anyone have any good conversations with a nonbeliever? How do you plan on following up? What are the next steps?
* If you did not, what stood in the way? In what does your life need to look different in order to be able to engage with non-Christians in intentional ways?
* What did you learn about yourself in this process?

What We Owe Each Other: **Read 1 Corinthian 6:1-11**

* What is the issue that Paul is addressing in these verses?
* In vv.1-6, what is the reasoning that Paul gives for insisting that they settle their disputes amongst themselves?
  + **Read John 13:34-35.** When Christians cannot settle disputes in effective, gracious ways, why does this hinder the witness of the chapter?
* Verses 1-6 give theological and practical reasoning for settling disputes amongst themselves, but vv.7-8 speak more to the heart issue. What is counter-cultural (for the Corinthians and us!) about what Paul says here?
  + In earlier chapters, we saw that the Corinthians prided themselves on being “wise.” But these incidents demonstrate that they are only operating by the world’s wisdom. (For a refresher read 1 Cor. 1:18-25) What could be some of the root/heart causes of their inability to settle these disputes amongst themselves? In what way are they operating by the world’s wisdom?
  + Note that though Paul calls these trials “trivial” (v.2), this is just relative to the eternal judgment that he is talking about. In fact, these courts cases were likely significant disputes involving personal property. In light of this, consider these challenges from Jesus: **Read Matthew 5:38-48, John 13:12-16**.
    - What are some ways that people have wronged you? Why was it difficult to make things right with them?
    - When we inevitably struggle to live in these ways that Jesus commands, what does it reveal about your heart?
* What is the purpose of vv.9-11 in terms of Paul’s argument? Is it merely to list out sins? Why or why not?
  + The things in this list share something important in common: they come from a self-indulgent, self-serving mindset. By contrast, because Jesus laid down his life for us, we are called to do the same for others that they might come to know Christ by means of how we treat them. “***In light of the great debt we have been forgiven, no one owes us anything; rather, we owe each other all of ourselves.***” (Craig Blomberg) In what way would your life be different if you lived this way? How could you regularly serve others around you?

Bought with a Price: **Read 1 Cor. 6:12-20**

* Look at verses 12-14. What attitude is Paul combating here?
  + The Corinthians were trying to justify sexual immorality by saying that because of the grace of God and freedom from the law, they were free to live as they pleased. In addition, the Corinthians were saying that just like food is meant for the stomach, sex is made for the body. What is wrong with this kind of argument?
    - How have you seen people twist God’s grace to excuse their own sin? How does this typically impact other people?
  + In 6:16, Paul uses a word (“joined” in the ESV) that appears in Genesis 2:24 and he also quotes that verse. By doing so, what is Paul setting as the standard for sexual morality?
    - From v.18, it looks like sexual immorality is more serious than other sins. This does not mean it is more repulsive or makes us worse sinners in the sight of God, but that sexual sin hurts us more because we are living outside of God’s will with regard the most intimate part of ourselves.
    - How have you seen sexual immorality impact people negatively?
  + Look through the passage again and call out where Paul mentions the body. What is he saying about the body here? Is this different than how you usually think about your body as it relates to spiritual things?
    - A lot of people think that what we do with our bodies has no spiritual implications. Paul says that this is not correct! What would it look like to honor God with your body?
  + In v.19b-20, what is the motivation that Paul gives for fleeing sin?
    - Have you ever experienced a new depth of God’s grace? In what way did that impact you?
    - In v. 18, the verb for “flee” has a continuous aspect to it, so it means “continually flee.” In what ways have you found victory in fleeing sin?
    - How do we take the truths of this section seriously without creating a shame culture that inevitably leaves people trapped in sin?

Conclusion:

* In light of these things, challenge your group to do something intentional to honor God with their body. Here are some options:
  + Share your sin struggle with someone (leaders, offer yourself as a safe place) and ask for help and accountability
  + Set new physical boundaries with your significant others
  + When temptations arise, commit to pray instead of giving into that temptation

**Special Notes:** This chapter often gives rise to discussions about homosexuality. Here are some things to note should the question arise. There are three words in question in 6:9-11:

* “Pornoi” = sexually immoral = fornicator. This is the easier one; it refers to unmarried men and women who have consensual sexual intercourse with one another
* “malakoi” and “arsenokoitai.” These terms are usually translated as “men who have sex with men” or something along those lines. There is great debate about these terms and whether or not they refer to sex with adolescents or consensual vs. forced sex, rape or prostitution. It is true that sex with adolescent slaves was common and there is no doubt that Paul is thinking in some way about this forced, dominant sexual relationship based on the argument he has just made. ***However, the entire chapter (and Romans 1) demonstrates that Paul’s fundamental basis for sexuality is creation. Anything outside of that created intent is sin.*** While it is difficult to know what the specific focus is here, there is strong reason to believe, based on the broader meaning of these Greek words and the broader understanding of Paul, that not only forced sexual relationships, but all homosexual acts are in view.