

1 Corinthians 9:19-27 – For the Sake of the Gospel

Carmel Baptist Church

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Intro: Corinth vs. Charlotte

- As we have been studying the book of 1 Corinthians, we have seen Paul addressing the many different issues facing **not only** the church in Corinth, but the city of Corinth.
- In fact we see throughout scripture, a regular theme of God's love for cities and God's heart for reaching cities with His gospel.
- And to reach a city, one must know and understand their city...
 - So with Corinth, Paul understood that he was ministering to a Greek city and culture that was now under Roman rule.
 - A city that was made up of many different races and people groups.
 - A port city that was the center of trade and commerce for its region.
 - He made a point to learn and understand the local religions and philosophies of Corinth:
 - A city that followed the Stoic philosophies of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle.
 - And worshipped the Greek Pantheon of gods, such as Zeus, Apollo, and Athena...
 - Paul understood the major sins the city:
 - Sexual immorality of all types, Idol Worship of false gods, and laundry list of other deeply engrained cultural sins.
 - Paul made it a point to learn this city up and down, because he was a missionary to it.
 - Again, Paul knew that for him to bring the gospel message into this lost city, it would require both knowing and loving the city of Corinth.

Charlotte Overview:

- *And friends, the same is true for us today in the city of Charlotte...*
 - The scripture is blatant and frequent in its call for all true believers in Christ to be missionaries to the culture and city in which they live.
- In Paul's Second letter to Corinth, Paul tells us that if we are have been made new creations in Christ, then we are Christ's Ambassadors, as though God himself was making His appeal through us...
 - Therefore, **We must know and love our city if we are going to reach our city for Christ.**
- *So, how well do you know your city?*
 - Do you know that as Charlotteans, you are part of the largest city in the Carolinas?
 - The Queen city is home to 750,000 people and 1.75 million in the metro area.

- You live in the second largest financial center in the US, next to New York.
 - That means that a lot of people come here to work for banks, or financial services companies, or companies that support the banks and financial services companies...
- Charlotte is home to two struggling professional sports teams in the Panthers and Bobcats...
 - And we are the home of NASCAR...
 - Which even though I have lived here for 12 years, for the life of me, I am still not sure if NASCAR qualifies as sport.
 - I probably just offended half the room... 😊
- We live in a city with arguably the most confusing road system in the US...
 - Where roads like to change names five times for no reason...
 - And it takes literally 20 minutes to get everywhere...
- Charlotte is a **transplant city** where people come to raise their families.
 - Very few people in Charlotte are from Charlotte.
 - Which means that Charlotte is a **melting pot** of many different subcultures from across the US and world.
- We have a very high suburban population.
 - With maybe the highest concentration of soccer moms on the planet.
 - A city where kids are encouraged to be involved in absolutely every extracurricular activity known to mankind... all at the same time...
- Charlotte is a racially diverse city, but if we are honest is still very racially divided despite the progress that has been made.
 - With arguably the most racially divided segment of city being Sunday morning church services.

City of Churches:

- Which leads to arguably Charlotte's most distinctive quality and that is the fact that Charlotte is the City of Churches...
- Charlotte is the buckle of the Bible Belt:
 - There are 766 Churches in Charlotte.
 - And over 1250 in the greater Charlotte area.
 - There literally is a church on every corner of this city.
- Many think that because Charlotte has so many churches, we must be a "Christian City."
 - When in reality Charlotte is really "Culturally Christian City."
- The fact is that there are literally hundreds of thousands of people in our city that are in desperate need of Christ and if they died today, would spend eternity separated from him.
 - And just because someone goes to church does not mean they are saved.
 - Statistics tell us that nearly 50% of church attenders have not biblically responded to the Gospel.

- But since, we are culturally Christian, most Christians believe that there is no need to evangelize...
 - And thus they have no responsibility to evangelize – or present the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – to those around them.

Russ Illustration:

- This is a conversation I had many, many times over the years with my dear friend and mentor Russ Rosser before he passed earlier this year.
- Russ was a pastor for well over 50 years, with over 30 years in the Northeast US, most of which in New York City.
 - Russ would always say that evangelism and the gospel ministry was much easier in New York than in Charlotte.
 - At least in New York, you know where people stood...
 - Whether they were Christians or not...
 - But because Charlotte is so churched, it is normally assumed that everyone is Christian and thus there is no real reason to share the gospel with them.
- ***And I have to tell you; this is a mindset that must change!***
 - It is blatantly disobedient to our Lord's commission to take the gospel to everyone!
- Does anyone else find it strange that we will regularly give thousands of dollars to mission agencies...
 - Or the church cheers when we commission a new missionary to go overseas.
 - Or when people go on a short-term mission trip...
- But rarely do we celebrate or even see our people pick up the mantle of missions in an attempt to reach the very city in which we live!
 - It is as though there are only a select few have been chosen in our midst to do the work of evangelism in our own city.
 - Again this mindset must change!

The Gospel is the Church's Gift to our City:

- Friends, we live in a city that is in desperate need of Christ, despite what you may think...
 - Like Corinth, we live in a city that has many engrained cultural sins:
 - Sexual immorality...
 - The sin of self...
 - The sin of instant gratification...
 - The sin of entitlement to personal preference...
 - The idols of money, sex, power...
 - And we even idolize good things, like our spouses or children...
- And these are sins are **not** just in the non-Christian culture around us, but in our very church...
 - And we must be aware of them...

- And the answer our city is looking for is **the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - **The Gospel is Our Gift to Our City**
 - This good news of Jesus that says there is hope for tomorrow.
 - There is forgiveness of sin.
 - There is full, abundant life now and life eternal...
- **We must be a gospel-saturated people if we hope to see Charlotte become a gospel-saturated city...**
 - That means we must be a people that **constantly contends for the gospel!**
 - The gospel is constantly under attack by false teachers, heretics, liars, and most importantly by Satan.
 - And here is the irony... The gospel is often under attack by the church of Christ as well...
- *Have you noticed throughout this series, that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to every issue that Paul addresses to the CHURCH in Corinth.*
 - Problems arise in the church when we get away from the one central message that unites us as a people.
 - So when we repent and refocus on that gospel of Jesus Christ, the problems divide us go away...
 - And not only that, we see revival break out in our midst...
 - And this is obviously our hope at Carmel.

Transition to Defining the Gospel:

- For us to be a gospel-saturated people, we first must understand the gospel...
 - We must all be playing from the same playbook if you will.
 - Especially when it comes to the absolute foundational belief of our faith.
- In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul gives us probably the clearest and most succinct definition of the gospel in all Scripture.
 - This section of Scripture is known to be the earliest Christian creed used by the early church.
 - We have evidence that this was being used within three years of the resurrection of Christ.

- Lets read from **1 Corinthians 15:1-4:**

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- So what is Paul doing here?
 - He is identifying the core essential truths that form us as Christians.
 - **Jesus came... He lived... He died... He was buried... and He rose on the third day... And that only by receiving this gospel message can you be saved...**
- Thus, this is the gospel that we must preach whenever, wherever, and however we can...

Transition to 1 Corinthians 9:

- Which leads us to our main text of the day: **1 Corinthians 9:19-23.**
 - *If 1 Corinthians 15 tells us **WHAT** we are supposed to say, then our 1 Corinthians 9 explains both **HOW** and **WHY** we are supposed to say it...*
- Because each line of this text is so important, we are going to be going through it line by line to see the full picture of what Paul is trying to teach us...
 - Please open to 1 Corinthians 9:19 and follow along...

[Pam and Ben– Just leave this text on the screen as I teach through it line by line.]

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

¹⁹ *Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.* ²⁰ *To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.* ²¹ *To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.* ²² *To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.* ²³ *I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

To Win As Many as Possible:

- In verse 19 we see both Paul's core **motivation** and **strategy** for the advancement of the gospel...
 - First his strategy – **He says, though I am free, I make myself a slave...**
 - His point here is to make us see that our freedom as Christians is **not** freedom to do or live however we want...
 - But instead, our freedom in Christ is FOR our service to God and the advancement of the gospel.¹
 - That though we are free, we are willing live **with, among**, and in certain situations **like**, the non-believing world around us.
 - That our freedom is actually for the benefit of non-believers.

¹ NT Wright – 1 Corinthians For Everyone, p. 114

- We also see Paul's core motivation, which he says is "***to win as many people as possible!!!!***"
 - This is Paul's heart.
 - And it must be our heart as a church.
 - Remember, we live in a city that is in desperate need of the gospel and has absolutely no clue of its need.
 - We have churches on every corner, but rarely working together for the advancement of the gospel.
 - And we have members that look around them in the community and think there is no need to evangelize...
 - Again, all this must change...
 - Our core motivation as a church MUST BE TO WIN AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE...
 - That is what we do. That is the business we are in...
 - This is the Great Commission our Lord gave us...

To Win the Jew and Those Under the Law:

- Next, we see Paul fleshing out a number of different examples in his context on how to win as many as possible... In verse 20, he says...

²⁰ *To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law... to win those under the law.*
- Here Paul is essentially identifying the same group of people...
 - Jews and those under the Mosaic Law.
 - Basically, he is talking about Jewish people and their Leaders...
- This is a very ironic statement for Paul to make, seeing as Paul was himself, already Jewish.
 - *Why would he say such a thing?*
- It's because Paul was declaring to this early church that Christianity was not a sub-branch of Judaism.
 - But instead Christianity was a new thing...
 - A fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets.
 - That when one is in Christ, their identity is now found in him,
 - No longer in their ethnic or geographic identity, as with Judaism.
- So Paul, being of Jewish decent, now found his true identity in Christ.
 - But because he was still of Jewish decent, he was able to go back to the Jews and "*become like a Jew, to win the Jews*" for Christ.
 - This means that presumably that Paul would go to the synagogue and take part in the prayers and the liturgy.
 - And that he would use that opportunity to share the gospel with them.
 - When Paul was outside the synagogue meeting with Jews, this would have meant that he would keep the Sabbaths and food-laws.
 - Paul knew that his salvation did not depend on observing these rituals, but he was willing to keep them, in order to save as many Jews living under the Law of Moses as possible...

To Win Those NOT under the Law:

- In verse 21, Paul shifts his focus to those NOT having the law... *so as to win those not having the law...*
 - This is the vastly majority Gentile world... Basically, he's talking about **us**.
 - We must take note of this...
 - That we live in a vastly majority Gentile city and world.
 - Made up of many different races, cultures, languages and people groups.
 - Each of which have the exact same need for Christ.
 - And it is our responsibility to bring them the gospel of Christ, so as to win the Gentile culture, or as Paul says, *those NOT having the law...*
 - With this in mind, Paul's final two commands in this passage of scripture make a lot more sense...

To Win the Weak:

- Paul, next says: ²² *To the weak I became weak, to win the weak.*
- A few weeks ago, Dr. Poplin preached from 1 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 10 on gray areas or disputable matters in scriptures.
 - He referred to those who are weak in conscience.
 - Or those that struggle with things that the Bible may not condemn, but that might be culturally gray.
 - In Paul's time, he used the example of meat sacrificed to idols.
 - Today, it might be things like dancing, Rated R movies, alcohol, or smoking.
- An if you remember, Dr. Poplin gave us a list of qualifiers, or questions to consider before partaking in these "culturally gray" areas... Questions like:
 - Is it legal?
 - Is it profitable?
 - Will it make my brother stumble?
 - Is it loving?
 - Does it glorify God?
- What Paul is saying in verse 22 is another key qualifier that we must add to this list: **Does it advance the gospel???**
 - This is Paul's ultimate motivation!
 - He is saying that before you engage in any "culturally gray issue" around those who are weak in conscience...
 - Ask how it impacts your witness for Christ...
 - Or does it help you advance the gospel...

I have become ALL THINGS to ALL PEOPLE...

- And then Paul ends this series of statements on how to practically evangelize your city, with a catchall teaching.
 - He says: *I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*

- Paul is showing here that he will do anything at all so that people might come to spend eternity with Christ.
 - Nothing else was even an option to this guy.
- He would freely give up his rights and freedoms if it meant people were being won for God,
 - He would let nothing stand in his way.
 - Ultimately, we see in this text the missionary mindset to which all Christians are called.

Paul's Example:

- Paul was so laser focused, that at times, he was very a frustrating character to those around him...
 - I mean, you couldn't get this guy down if you tried.
 - He was so focused on Christ and his mission, he wouldn't let anything distract him.
- He had a unique ability to turn every situation into an opportunity to share the gospel...
 - Persecute him – He talked about getting to share in the sufferings Christ.
 - Give him thorn in the flesh – It reminded him to look to Christ.
 - Put him in jail – He would convert the guards.
 - Kill Him – And he gets to go be with Christ, which is much better by far.
- Again – You really can't get this guy down.
 - He was the ultimate optimist - “Mr. Cup Half Full”
- He really meant it when he said, he would *become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some...*

What Would Paul Say Today?

- So what does all this mean for us today?
 - *What would the Apostle Paul write if he were writing directly to Carmel Baptist Church?*
- I think it would sound something like this:
 - *To my coworkers I became like my coworkers, to win my coworkers.*
 - *To my neighbors I became like my neighbors, to win my neighbors.*
- Or even more specifically, he might say something like this:
 - *To the bankers in Uptown, I became like the bankers, to win the bankers.*
 - *To the suburban housewife, I became like a housewife, to win the housewife.*
 - *To the fellow students at school, I became like the students, to win the students.*
- Paul is showing us that wherever you are...
 - Whatever sphere of influence you are in...
 - You have an opportunity to bring the gospel into it...
 - That you might win as many people as possible...

For the Sake of the Gospel:

- And then Paul ends again on his core motivation:
²³ *I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*
- This is a clarity statement for the Christian life.
 - We live FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL!
 - We live for the advancement of this good news about Jesus.
 - We live to both display and proclaim Christ in every part of our life.
 - With all that we are.
- And when we live for the sake of the gospel, we share in these unbelievable blessings that come with the gospel:
 - The blessings of Grace, Hope, Love, Acceptance, Salvation... and most importantly CHRIST HIMSELF!
 - This is VERY GOOD NEWS...

CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL:

- But the problem is that throughout the years, some people have twisted this passage of scripture to say that Paul was just a pragmatist, saying he will say anything to anyone to get his way...
 - NOT THE CASE.
- Notice with Paul, that the MESSAGE always remained the same...
 - It is only the methodology that changed based on the audience.
- We must take note of the Biblical model Paul gives us:
 - That while the truth of the gospel is unchanging...
 - The methods by which it is communicated are constantly changing.
- In other words... And this is very important:
 - **The Gospel Must be Contextualized** to our culture, if we hope to see our city come to Christ.

The Gospel's are Contextualized:

- Again, this is clearly the biblical model...
 - For example, lets look at the four Biblical Gospels:
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Each of the four gospels that tell us about Jesus were written to communicate most effectively to a specific cultural group:
 - Matthew was written primarily for a Jewish audience.
 - Mark for the Romans.
 - Luke for Gentiles.
 - John for Greeks.
- Each contextualizing the gospel message so it could be best understood by that people group.

Paul at Mars Hill:

- Another example is when Paul was in Athens, immediately before coming to Corinth...
- In Acts 17, Paul is speaking to Athenian philosophers at Mars Hill, which was the religious and cultural center of their city.
 - On Mars Hill, there were many altars and statues to the Greek gods.
 - And there was one altar to an “unknown God.”
 - Paul uses this altar as an opportunity to describe his God, the one true God, which leads to Paul preaching the gospel to them.
- Paul went into their culture. Learned their customs and beliefs, on their turf, and used this opportunity afforded to him to share the gospel.

The Incarnation:

- Probably the greatest example of contextualizing the gospel is the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ itself.
 - Jesus left his place in Heaven at the right hand of the Father and stepped down into the culture of earth 2000 years ago.
 - He learned the language.
 - He took part in the customs.
 - He built relationships.
 - And he both displayed and preached the gospel wherever he went.
 - And in His case, He literally was the gospel!
- And then Jesus tells us in **John 20:21 – *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you!***
 - Jesus is calling to follow his example of stepping into the culture where we are and bring the good news of Him...

Individual and Corporate:

- And this plays itself out on both an individual and corporate level.
 - We as a church are committed to contextualizing the gospel to the culture around us.
 - We will try new things... And we will fail at times.
 - Honestly, I would probably stand on one leg and bark like a dog if it meant someone would listen to this good news I have about Jesus!
 - But let me be clear, although our **methods** may change...
 - Our **message** never will.
- But we as individuals must also be committed to contextualizing the gospel.
 - The main focus of Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 9 is to the individual.
 - He is showing his example of changing his methodology to reach individuals and people groups he would come across.

How to Engage Culture - The 3 R's:

- This process of engaging culture with the gospel requires great discernment.
 - We must be able to know **how** and **how not** to engage the culture that we live in.
- That is why we as Christians, as Christ's Ambassadors, must constantly seek to better know and understand the culture in which we live.
 - But we must show discernment in engaging culture because there are aspects of culture that are NOT compatible with Christian living.
- One pastor that I have followed throughout the years has created an easy-to-remember alliteration on how to discern culture.
 - You simply need to remember the THREE R's...
 - **Reject**
 - **Receive**
 - **Redeem**
- **First - Reject:**
 - Some aspects of culture are simply sinful and should be rejected by God's people outright.
 - In our day, this would include sexual sins, like fornication, pornography, or adultery...
 - Illegal drug use,
 - Or the pluralistic notion that every religion is an equal path to salvation.
- **Next, Do I Receive it?**
 - Some aspects of culture are the result of common grace and should be received by God's people.
 - Examples in our day would include taking care of and enjoying God's creation...
 - Building meaningful relationships in community,
 - Or participating in community-service organizations such as food banks, or hospices, or foster care that seek to serve those in need.
 - Again, these can be freely received by Christians...
- **And finally... Can I Redeem it?**
 - Some aspects of culture are, in and of themselves, morally neutral but can be used for both evil or redeemed for good.
 - An easy example would be the Internet.
 - It can be used to advance the gospel.
 - But it can also be used for internet pornography.
 - In situations like this, you have the opportunity to redeem culture.
- Again, as you think about how to engage your culture and your sphere of influence, I ask that you think about these three filters:
 - **Do I reject?**
 - **Do I receive?**
 - **Can I redeem?**

Remove Your Excuses NOT to Evangelize

- Finally, I want to encourage you to **remove your excuses not to evangelize.**
 - To share the good news of Jesus.
 - Again this is the core belief that forms us as Christians.
 - And yet Christians find every excuse under the sun **not** to share the only good news that can save people's souls...
 - I honestly don't get it!

Common Excuses:

- I hear excuses all the time, but a couple of my favorites are...
- **"I don't have the gift of evangelism..."**
 - That may be true...
 - You may not have the gift of evangelism, but you do have the Great Commission!
- **"I don't have a good story..."**
 - If you don't think you have a good story, then you have a very low view of the gospel.
 - Because if you believe the biblical gospel, then you were once DEAD in your sin, and now you are alive...
 - I would say that makes for a pretty good story.
- **"I will show them the gospel instead of telling them..."**
 - Some people don't feel they need to tell people the gospel. They will just show them the gospel with their lifestyle...
 - They like St. Francis of Assisi's philosophy... *"preach the gospel, and if necessary use words..."*
 - Don't get me wrong. I actually like St. Francis. And yes, you do need to show them the gospel with your lifestyle, but friends, you need to use words!
 - To biblically respond to the gospel, means hearing it and understanding it.
 - *So to say you will preach the gospel, and if necessary use words, is like saying you will feed the poor, and if necessary, use food!*
- Again, whatever your excuse is to not share the gospel... Get rid of it.
 - And realize the more you share it, the more passionate you will become about it.
- Paul says in the book of Philemon:
I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.
 - Paul is saying that the more that you share this good news about Jesus, the more you come to know and understand the good things, or the blessings that are associated with the gospel.
- Remember – This is the core motivation for the Christian life.
 - As Christians, we live FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL...
 - And it is about time we start acting like it.

The Gospel:

- We live **for** and **by** this Gospel that says:
 - God loves you. That He created you.
- And that even though you have sinned against God countless times...
- In His great love for you, He sent His son Jesus to die on a cross for you.
 - To pay the price for your sin that you could never pay for yourself.
- And that if you BELIEVE in Him. If you TRUST in Him.
 - If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead...
 - If you believe that the resurrection happened...
 - The single most important event in the history of history...
 - **Then you will be saved.**
 - That the eternal separation from God that you deserve, has been washed away.
 - And you have been declared righteous before a Holy God.
 - And you now live in the hope of spending eternity with Him.
 - And now because of these blessings of the Gospel, you have been commissioned to go out and proclaim this Good News to ends of the earth...
 - Baptizing those who would believe, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
 - And you are to teach them everything that Jesus has commanded you.
 - And know that when you do it, you are experiencing the full, abundant life that God wants for you...
 - But most of all, that God is most Glorified in You...
 - Which, by the way, is the reason you exist!

Invitation:

- If this is new information to you today, I want you to hear me clearly that this is the most important news you will ever hear in your life...
 - This is news that you must hear, believe, and trust, if you want to spend eternity with Almighty God...
- This is the news that binds all true believers in Christ together, and we want nothing more for you repent of your sin, and trust Christ as your Savior and Lord.
 - I cannot emphasize enough how important this is...

Run as to Win the Race:

- Paul ends this teaching on how to live for the sake of the gospel, with a practical illustration.
- One that seems to be very fitting as we find ourselves in the middle of the London Olympic Games.

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul writes:

²⁴ 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. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷ No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Olympic Illustration:

- Notice what Paul is NOT saying here:
 - He is not telling us to live a happy life and as things come your way, you might want to share the gospel with a few people.
 - But don't worry about putting yourself out there too much...
- No - Paul is saying that you are to **live intentionally**.
 - That you are to train like the Olympic Athletes train, so as to ready yourself to live for the sake of the Gospel.
 - That you will be ready and not be disqualified from the prize on game day.
- I saw that **Michael Phelps** just won his record 21st career Olympic Medal...
 - Do you think he just jumped in the pool as a kid, did a little doggie paddle with water wings on and said, okay, I am ready to go for the gold?
 - No this guy has been training all day everyday for his entire life, so that on game day, he is ready to race for the gold.
- And that is exactly what the Apostle Paul is asking of us...
 - This is what we are called to as Christians.
 - This is what it means to live **For the Sake of the Gospel!**
- **Friends – Run your race like you are trying to win it!**

Closing Prayer

- *That we might be a people that live For the Sake of the Gospel...*

Invitation

- Have you ever Biblically responded to the Gospel?

Lord's Supper Instructions:

- Because we live for the sake of the gospel, our Lord Jesus instituted two ordinances for His church that consistently bring us back to the gospel.
 - When we partake of these elements, it allows us to remember and participate in the good news of Jesus.
 - It allows us to remember his body broken and his blood shed on the cross for us.
 - And it instills hope that he is coming again...
 - This is the gospel. This is why we come to this table...
- This table is only for those who have trusted in Christ as Savior and Lord.
 - And if that is you, the scriptures are clear that you are to examine your own heart before taking these elements.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28 – For Reference

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.