



VINTAGE**CHURCH**

Jesus is Worthy of Your Life

Discussion Guide // 8.20.17-10.29.17

SERIES INTRO

At Vintage we strive to make disciples who know the gospel, live the gospel, and advance the gospel, and throughout 2017 we've focused in on that second rally cry: Live the Gospel. In the spring we camped out in 1 Corinthians to study how divisions in the church, brought about by following cultural beliefs rather than Jesus, lead us away from living according to the truth of the gospel. Through May we studied 1 Corinthians 13 to learn about Jesus's immense love for us so that we can better understand how to live in light of that love. Most recently over the summer we studied gospel passages in which Jesus displayed and founded aspects of Christian community, the context in which we align ourselves with the implications of the gospel.

This fall we turn to the foundational assumption by which we can call one another to live according to the gospel: Jesus is worthy of your entire life. In his transcendent essence as the immortal God he is worth every ounce of worship. In his death on the cross in our place he is worthy of your devotion. In his love for you he is worthy of your affection, in his might he is worthy of your trust, in his grace he is worthy of your gratitude, and, as we'll see throughout this series, in his authority he is worthy of your submission.

Each week we'll address a different component of our lives of which Jesus is worthy. While it's easy to agree in a broad sense that Jesus is worth your entire life, the devil is in the details. We'll drill down into the nitty-gritty aspects of our lives that we tend to withhold from Jesus. We'll look at how Jesus is worthy of our rights, our sexuality, our reputation, our resources, and more. Our hope is that this series helps us agree with the Apostolic fathers of the Church, the martyrs, the famous prophets and preachers of the faith, and the diligent saints whose names are lost to history, to this cornerstone confession of Christian faith: Jesus is worthy of your entire life.



1. Jesus is Worthy of Our Rights

August 20, 2017 - 1 Corinthians 9:12

What to focus on:

- 1 Cor. 9:12 "...we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ."
- 2 Cor. 5:14-15 "...he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

Here in the Western world, rights are a part of our daily life. We see them mentioned in news headlines all the time: civil rights, freedom of speech, equal access, etc. We think of rights as inherent to humanity (some we even call *human rights*) and primarily existing within the civil sphere. These rights protect us from oppression, either from other people or from government. Feasibly we have the "right" to tons of things that might not otherwise be available to us in a more restrictive setting, like reading a novel, participating in local government, buying something from another country, living where we prefer, or lounging in our time off. So how does this intersect with living according to the gospel?

We saw last week in verses 24-27 that Paul lays down his rights to the benefit of his spiritual well being. Talking within the metaphor of an athlete, he would lay down his "right" to sit on the couch every day for the sake of being ready for race day. Throughout 1 Corinthians 9 Paul also talks about laying down his rights for the sake of gospel transformation in the lives of others. In 9:12 he says he would "endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel." We see Paul here confessing a stronger allegiance to the gospel than the right to exercise his own freedoms, especially if those freedoms get in the way of himself or others living according to the gospel.

Discussion

- **Read 1 Corinthians 9:12**
- What's your initial reaction to this passage?
- What do you think Paul means by "an obstacle in the way of the gospel"?
- What kinds of things could be obstacles?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 8:13.** What's the attitude of this verse?
- What is challenging to you about 1 Cor. 8:13?
- Look back at 1 Cor. 9:12. How does the attitude of this verse remind you of Jesus?



2. Jesus Is Worthy of Our Sexuality

August 27, 2017 - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

What to focus on:

- 1 Cor. 6:13 "The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord."
- 1 Cor. 6:19-20 "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Take note of the quotes in this passage. Here Paul addresses two slogans that had cropped up in the Corinthian church: "all things are lawful for me," and, "food is meant for the stomach." The Corinthians used these phrases to talk about sexual freedom, and they clearly took their cues from the culture around them. Essentially the Corinthians thought that gratifying sexual urges, even visiting brothels to do so, was just meeting a bodily need akin to eating when you're hungry. They saw it as no big deal, just a thing that people do.

Sound familiar? It's amazing the relevance of "food is meant for the stomach" in explaining modern secular beliefs about sex. Those beliefs are incredibly wide ranging, and they appear from the outside to be liberating. But this free-flowing ethic screeches to a halt when faced with this biblical truth: you are not your own. (1 Cor. 6:19) Your body is meant for the Lord, and you are meant to glorify him with your body. As we consider how Jesus is worthy of our entire lives, we need to assess the implications of that when it comes to our sexuality, to lay down our sexual brokenness, and to take heart that the Holy Spirit lives within us "both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13)

Discussion

- **Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20**
- What questions does this passage raise for you?
- How does the slogan "food is meant for the stomach" in verse 13 help us understand secular beliefs about sex?
- What is seductive about giving into your desires?
- How does verse 19 provide a basis for biblical beliefs about sex?
- In what ways do you need to grow in giving your beliefs about sex over to God?
- How does verse 19 give you hope in trusting God with your beliefs about sex?



Live 2017 Sermon: Luke 8:40-48

September 3, 2017

This week we'll take a break from our series in 1 and 2 Corinthians to look at a story from the gospel of Luke, in which Jesus heals a woman of her illness. Her condition (scripture calls it a "discharge of blood") would've made her perpetually unclean according to Jewish law, meaning she couldn't go in the Temple in Jerusalem, worship with other Jews in a synagogue, or engage in other community events. She was an exile among her own community, and most people would've avoided her as a pariah.

But Jesus stopped everything he was doing to speak with her. While she was trembling in fear, he called her daughter and said, "Go in peace." When he healed her, he took away her disease and her uncleanness, bringing her back into community with others and giving her access to worship God in the temple. We should see in this clear echoes of the gospel: through his death and resurrection Jesus cleansed us of our sin, which had divided us from God and from others. In this woman's fear and trembling we should see ourselves, but most importantly through the gospel we should see Jesus calling us his child and making us whole.

Discussion

- **Read Luke 8:40-48**
- What do you think the moment of verse 47 was like for the woman in this story?
- Why do you think Jesus stopped to talk to this woman?
- What did you learn about Jesus from this story?
- What parallels to the Gospel do you see in this passage?
- How do you better understand your own need for Jesus in this passage?



3. Jesus Is Worthy of Our Dying

September 10, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

What to focus on:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10 "On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again."

In 2 Corinthians 1:8 Paul mentions his time spent in Asia planting churches, likely in reference to his stay in Ephesus. It sounds like he had a pretty rough time; Paul says the persecution was so bad it felt like he'd been sentenced to death. But, in response to that feeling, Paul gives a confession of faith: "But [that death sentence] was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead...On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again." (2 Cor. 1:9-10) In the face of the threat of death, Paul could trust God who can reverse death itself.

1 Corinthians 15:26 calls death the last enemy. Fear of death is one of the strongest, most ubiquitous fears we experience as humans; we fear what death can take away from us and we fear not knowing what lies on the other side of it. But in this passage Paul talks about facing down that fear with faith in Jesus, who conquered the grave. Being confronted by the threat of death forced Paul to rely on God alone, which in turn allowed Paul to be courageous in his ministry and to not let fear of death get in the way of dedicating his entire life to making much of Jesus.

Discussion

- **2 Corinthians 1:8-10**
- What do you think it was like for Paul while he was in Asia?
- How did God use this situation to build up Paul's faith?
- What is scary to you about death?
- How does fear of death hinder your faith?
- How does Jesus give us hope in the face of death?



4. Jesus Is Worthy of Our Reputation

September 17, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

What to focus on:

- 2 Corinthians 6:8-9 "We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live."

Often in his epistles Paul gives the kind of list we find here in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10. At first glance, it sounds like bragging, much like Philippians 3:4-6 or 2 Corinthians 11:22-33. But Paul sums this kind of talk up in 2 Cor. 11:30: "I will boast of the things that show my weakness."

Here in 2 Corinthians 6, Paul talks about the many things he and the other disciples have endured while doing ministry. Back in April we looked at this passage and discussed how Paul sacrificed much in his life so that others might believe in Jesus. One of the things Paul sacrificed, which we'll focus on this week, was his reputation; he endured slander, being called an imposter, and more so that others might follow Jesus. What other people think of us has huge sway over our behavior, priorities, and the efforts we put into our lives. Yet Paul talks about sacrificing all of that to a higher priority: proclaiming the gospel.

Discussion

- **Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-10**
- Based on the section, how has ministry affected Paul's reputation?
- Why was Paul willing to risk his reputation?
- When does worrying about your reputation or image get in the way of talking about Jesus?
- How does fearing the loss of reputation inhibit your spiritual growth?
- How could giving your reputation over to Jesus be an act of worship?



5. Jesus is Worthy of Our Joy

September 24, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

This is a familiar passage for many; "when I am weak, then I am strong" is kind of a Christian bumper sticker phrase. But this section reveals a core disposition of the Christian life: trusting in God's strength despite our monumental weaknesses. Those weaknesses include our inabilities and lack of skills, but they also include our moral failings and disobedience to God. Thankfully God's grace covers the whole lot of it, from our inabilities to our rebellion. That statement from God in verse 9, "my grace is sufficient for you," will utterly change your life.

As followers we're called to confront our weaknesses, to be humble and honest with our failings, and to confess our sins to one another. (James 5:16) As scary as that might seem, we have a far greater hope in the strength of God almighty. Also, the practice of confronting our weaknesses is important in helping us repent from ways we haven't been trusting the sufficiency of Jesus and in leading others to do the same.

Discussion

- **Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**
- Paul seems pretty comfortable talking about his weaknesses. How do you relate to that?
- Why do you think boasting in weakness allows the power of Christ to rest on Paul?
- How do you feel about confronting your weaknesses?
- When have you experienced the sufficiency of God's grace in your life?
- In what ways can you grow in being honest about your weaknesses?
- In what ways can you grow in relying on God's strength more?



6. Jesus is Worthy of Our Resources

October 1, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

For some background, the church in Jerusalem was undergoing some intense persecution at the time Paul wrote this letter to the church in Corinth. Many of the churches throughout the region were sending money to the Jerusalem church to help with lost income, homes, and loved ones. So, when Paul mentions the Macedonians giving abundantly in this passage, they were sending their money to hurting Christians in Jerusalem.

Paul uses the example of the Macedonians giving generously, despite their poverty, to urge Corinthian believers to give similarly to the benefit of the kingdom. He ties generosity to God's grace in verse 1 because the resources from which we give were given to us by God out of his undeserved kindness towards us. Thus giving to the work of the church, and doing so generously, is an act of worship out of faith in God's provision and gladness over his abundant kindness.

Discussion

- **Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4**
- What is this passage talking about?
- How do these verse describe the Macedonians' attitude and beliefs?
- What is convicting about this passage to you?
- How does being generous reflect Jesus's character?
- How is God calling you to worship him with the resources he has given you?



7. Jesus is Worthy of Our Rest

October 8, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

What to focus on:

- 2 Corinthians 4:8 "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed."

When someone goes through hardships and suffering, it can be incredibly hard to give them credible reasons for hope.

However, Paul draws on a powerful source of hope in this passage: the resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus was dead, God brought him back to life; he is so powerful even death can't stop him. So, as followers of Christ, when we're faced with hardship and it feels like we're dying, we can still hope, knowing that God has already conquered the grave. This hope allowed Paul, who was publicly beaten multiple times, to say that he is never driven to despair because he trusts in the surpassing power of God.

Discussion

- **Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12**
- What questions do you have after reading this section?
- Why do you think Paul is talking about affliction and death here?
- How does Jesus's resurrection show God's power?
- How does the "surpassing power" of God help you face hardship?
- In what ways could trusting God's power transform your life?



8. Jesus is Worthy of Our Gifts

October 15, 2017 - 1 Corinthians 12:7

At the beginning of this chapter Paul uses a phrase we've seen earlier in his letter, "Now concerning..." Paul is addressing a specific question from earlier correspondence with the Corinthians. Folks in the church were pretty confused about spiritual gifts, and they were saying some gifts were more important than others, to the detriment of their church body.

So Paul starts laying out what spiritual gifts are, where they come from, and why God gives us gifts. As we read this, it should direct us to think about how God has gifted us uniquely to serve him and his church. However, the most compelling aspect of this passage is in verse 7: to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit. God gives us himself in the form of the Spirit to dwell within us, equip us for his work, and lead us back to himself. The God of the universe comes to dwell within our tiny mortal selves. That should fill us with awe and joy.

Discussion

- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7**
- What stands out to you from this section?
- Why does God give us his Spirit?
- How does this passage change the way you think about yourself?
- How has God gifted you to serve the kingdom?
- How can your gifts help others worship and serve Jesus?



9. Jesus is Worthy of Our Grace

October 22, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 1:15

What to focus on:

- 2 Corinthians 1:15 "...so that you might have a second experience of grace."

Take note, this passage might take some explaining to really have a conversation as a group about it. Paul is in the middle of his own conversation about why he didn't visit the Corinthians; thus he says, "I wanted to come to you..." After that we get this brief bit, only a sentence fragment, that provides the basis for study this week: "...so that you might have a second experience of grace.

Now, we need to understand the word grace here. This isn't talking about the saving grace we receive from God. Here the word for grace is also translated as benefit; Paul is talking about how his second visit to Corinth (his first one having happened when the church was founded) would be of benefit to them as a church. However, Paul isn't the only Christian that can be of benefit to fellow believers. In fact, God's grace towards us compels all of us to love others as we have been loved by him. 2 Corinthians 2:14: "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."

Discussion

- **Read 2 Corinthians 1:15**
- What do you think Paul meant by a "second experience of grace"?
- How is this similar or different from the grace we receive from God?
- How does God's grace towards you affect the way you relate to him?
- In what ways can you trust God's grace towards you more fully?
- How does God's grace help you be of benefit to others?



10. Jesus is Worthy of Our Risk

October 29, 2017 - 2 Corinthians 5:20

What to focus on:

- 2 Corinthians 5:20 "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us."

In the broader context of the passage, Paul talks about how we participate in God's ministry of reconciliation, in which God is redeeming the world to himself. (2 Cor. 5:19) What a huge thing to be involved in! But God works with us, in us, and through us to accomplish his cosmic mission. As we reflect on this, we should rejoice that God would entrust us with his work.

In a similar vein, Paul calls himself an "ambassador for Christ" in verse 20. This concept is what we'll focus on for our discussion, the fact that all followers are representatives of Jesus on earth. Scripture calls us citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), thus we represent the kingdom to which belong. Sometimes that's easy, other times it carries with it an inherent risk. It's often an unpopular decision to be the Christian in the room. But, as we've seen throughout this sermon series, Jesus is worthy of the risk of social ramifications. Also, as we tell others about Jesus, their eternal need for Jesus is similarly worth that risk.

Discussion

- This is the last week of the "Jesus is Worthy of Your Life" series. How has God worked in your life through this sermon series?
- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:20**
- How does being an ambassador describe the expectations of being a follower of Jesus?
- In what kinds of situations would you rather not be identified as a Christian?
- In those situations, what does that reveal about your concerns or desires?
- How do we balance the high standard of being an ambassador with the grace we find in Jesus?

