

Remember Who You Are

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. Lovely to see you. My name is Graham. I'm the pastor here at the church. Just let me welcome you in particular off the back of Craig's. If this is your first Sunday with us, it's great to see some new faces amongst us. Know that you're so welcome.

So this is the portion on our service. We return to the Bible, to God's Word. So if you've come with a Bible, wonderful. You can turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 6. If you didn't bring a Bible, you can grab one in the pew roundabout.

I think from memory it's page 1162. If that's wrong, somebody shout it out. Or I'll let you away with looking on your phone as well, as long as you promise not to be interrupted by any messages.

You can do that. But 2 Corinthians chapter 6 is where we are today. So what we're going to do is we're going to jump in at verse 3 and read all the way through to verse 1 of chapter 7.

And then we're going to pray and we'll get into this passage together. So we'll get back into this series. Paul, writing to these Christians in Corinth, he writes this.

[1 : 07] We put no stumbling block in anyone's path so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God, we commend ourselves in every way.

In great endurance, in troubles, hardships and distresses, in beatings, imprisonments and riots, in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger, in purity, understanding, patience and kindness, in the Holy Spirit and sincere love, in truthful speech and in the power of God, with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left, through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report, genuine, yet regarded as imposters, known, yet regarded as unknown, dying, and yet we live on, beaten and yet not killed, sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing and yet possessing everything.

We've spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We're not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.

As a fair exchange, I speak as to my children, open wide your hearts also. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

[2 : 55] For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.

Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

And this is God's word. And Father, we just ask that you would bless this reading to us today.

Thank you that when we open the Bible, we hear you speak. And so Lord, we pray that you would be with us today. Give me the sensitivity, the wisdom, the clarity.

Lord, give us the responsive hearts that we need as we take in what you, our great God and maker, would say to us today. Thank you for Jesus. Lord, help us be captivated by him, we pray in his name.

[4 : 06] Amen. Well, to try and set us off in the right direction this morning, let me tell you what a man called John Owen, church leader and one of the greatest theological minds of the 17th century, and Mufasa from the Lion King have in common.

Now, I'm going to go out on a limb and say you're probably more familiar with Mufasa from the Lion King. So we'll start out there. Mufasa delivered arguably the most famous line from the most

famous scene in the Lion King.

See if you agree with me on this one or not. It's the one where Simba's out in the middle of nowhere and he's disillusioned with his life and he bumps into Rafiki the monkey.

And Rafiki takes Simba to the water where he sees in the reflection his dad Mufasa. And Mufasa's voice in this moment thunders from the sky and he says that line.

Do you remember it? You can find it on coffee cups, you can find it on posters, you can find it all over the place. Simba, remember who you are. Iconic.

[5 : 12] Classic line. And who I am. Who are you? You don't really get a more modern day question than that. Everybody wants to know who they are. And what this is about today really simply is who a Christian is.

Maybe you're here today. You wouldn't call yourself a Christian. You're just investigating the things of the Christian faith. Maybe you took an inclination to walking off the street this morning. Love that you're here. Maybe have a think this morning about how what you think a Christian is in your mind ties up with this passage.

And maybe you're here this morning and you're struggling, you're doubting, you're wondering what on earth is going on. Friends, come and be reminded of who you are. And so let's move seamlessly from Mufasa to John Owen, who church leader observing his own life and the lives of the everyday people who are under his care made this profound observation about the Christian life.

And let me just say, before you switch off at this point, getting my head around this as a young believer was a total game changer for me. Here it is. He said, our greatest hindrance in the Christian life is not our lack of effort, but our lack of acquaintedness with our privileges.

Now, can I paraphrase? You're begging me to paraphrase that, right? If we want to progress in the Christian life, we don't start by trying harder.

[6 : 44] If we want to make progress and grow in our love for Jesus, we start by remembering who we are. Now, we're going to touch on some nitty-gritty real-life issues today.

Trigger warning. And I hope this sparks amongst us some honest, loving, and caring conversations and reflections for what else is a church family for?

But we've got to ensure that we put the horse before the cart. And to get us to do that and to help us forever remember this, have a think about that alphabet song that we sang at school before someone thought it was a good idea to introduce the phonetic alphabet and completely ruin it, okay?

Someone give me the next three letters. A, B, C, D. Right. Here is the EFG of the Christian life.

Ready for it? Our ethics are fueled by the gospel. Say it again. Our ethics are fueled by the gospel.

[7 : 55] EFG. Now, here's the logic of this passage. Flowing, if you've got it there, from that word salvation that Paul uses at verse 2 of chapter 6.

This is the gospel here. This word salvation. This is short for accepting Jesus as your Savior and your King and what He's just written there and being reconciled to the God who made us.

Paul says there is no delay. Do it today. And that is no small thing. Okay, I've got a friend Trevor Archer who lives down in London. He always says to be a Christian, he says, isn't it a wonderful thing?

And it really is a wonderful thing. Verse 17. Just take these in of chapter 5. This is where JT took us last week. What is going on?

The old you has gone and the new you is here. It has come. This is what Jesus has done through His life, death and resurrection. That life is now ours because God's is gracious.

[9 : 01] Where has that change happened? Not on the outside. When we become a Christian, where does that change happen? It happens on the inside. This is who we are.

Now, do you want to hear my favorite Greek proverb? The fish stinks from the head down. I thought about a PowerPoint image and I thought we'll just leave it.

Okay. The fish stinks from the head down. Now, what's that all about? It's about how the fact that what happens at the top affects everything else.

That's what this passage is saying. Okay. Who are we now? Verse 16 of chapter 6. Who are we now? What does it mean to be a Christian? In a city like Corinth where temples and shrines and places to go and worship all sorts of deities and gods are a bit like McDonald's.

Today, they're on every single street corner. These people are familiar with temples. Where does Paul say the real temple is? It's us. We are the temple of the living God.

[10:09] Do you see that? We are the temple of the living God. Notice it's not we are temples of the living God. Although that is true. He's thinking corporately. As a people.

We are the temple of the living God. See the accompanying promises that go with it? That give substance to it? God lives in us by his Holy Spirit.

And God's perfect knowledge and care of us is comprehensive. He says, I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters.

That is total knowledge, total care. How we like a car and home insurance. It is comprehensive. It covers everything. And that's where we get the therefore.

In verse 1 of chapter 7. Do you see it? He's saying in light of all of this. Who we are. Who God has made us to be. Therefore, this is how we should live. What does he say in verse 1 of chapter 7?

[11:09] Let's live lives of holiness. Perfecting holiness. That's what he means. He's living out it. And a reverence for God.

So that word holy means set apart. Do you see the logic? For the Christian. Saved by God. Indwelt by God through the Holy Spirit.

Empowered by God through the Holy Spirit. To live for God. And that is always how it's been. For God's people. All the way through scripture.

God calls out a people by his grace. To live for him. And worship him. And in so doing. Be a light to the nations. That they would look in and say.

What kind of God do they have? See nothing like this. God says be holy. Because I am holy.

[12:07] Or let me try and put it another way. What's going to transform a city like Corinth. Where the temple of Aphrodite.

The goddess of love. Beauty and sexuality. And everything. All the bells and whistles that would go with that. You can use your imagination. Where she was worshipped in the city.

The city where to Corinthianize. Was a verb that people invented to describe loose living. That accompanied life in the city. This is kind of like what we would say today.

That what happens in Vegas. Stays in Vegas. What is going to transform a city like that? It's the presence and witness. Of a community of ordinary people.

Who represent and embody. A radically different system of values and ethics. From their neighbours and friends. Who they rub shoulders with every day.

[13:07] Let me put it another way. What is God's big picture will for our lives? Some of you are asking that question right now. Just about to come to a junction in life.

What is God's will for my life? Can I give you the big picture? What is God's will for our lives?

Holiness. How are we going to be lights in the world? How are we going to be a city on the hill?

Holiness. Where is true life to be found? Holiness. Or in the words of J.I. Parker. Who puts things a lot better than I do.

The way to be truly happy. Is to be truly human. And the way to be truly human. Is to be truly godly. We turn towards Jesus.

We embrace the call to live for Jesus. Friends. Know that we are turning towards life. Just like the sunflower. As it responds to the sun.

[14:08] And turns. When we turn towards this God. When we are reconciled to him. That is where we will walk in life. Some of you might remember that old hymn by William Cowper.

To see the law by Christ fulfilled. And hear his pardoning voice. Changes a slave. Into a child. And get this.

And duty. Into choice. Holiness. When God transforms our hearts. Holiness. To live for Christ. That is where life is to be found.

It is not duty. It is choice. And I think in the context of this letter. That is precisely what Paul is writing. To convince the Corinthians.

Of at this point in this letter. Because I reckon they are being duped. Into thinking that they can have. When it comes to holiness. Their cake and eat it. I reckon they are being duped.

[15:06] Into thinking that they can worship God. On the Sunday. And then they can go to the temple. On the Monday. And just live how everyone else. In the city lives. And God is okay with that. And not only here will he say.

That is not okay. But he said. You are missing out on life. You are turning towards sin again. No, no, no. Turn towards. The Jesus who loves you. And has saved you. What is holiness going to look like?

Let's just try and break down. The orange of this passage. Into two manageable bites. Firstly verses 3 to 13 of chapter 6. And we will spend more time on the second half.

But firstly this section. Inwardly it is going to mean pursuing integrity. The compass of their consciences. Paul is commending himself.

Do you see him use that word? At verse 4. Commending his life. And how he lives. And just like he did back at chapter 4. He is unashamedly commending.

[16:06] The pattern of his cross shaped life. And do you notice as we read that through. Just scan your eyes over it. The contrast that he draws all the way through. And they are so striking.

So striking. 18 phrases I counted. He uses to describe the reality. Of what life is like for him. On the outside. As he seeks to follow Jesus daily.

Do you see them? And with each of those phrases. He almost counters it. Again I counted with 18 phrases. To help them understand.

What life is like for him. Now on the inside. As he follows Jesus. And it's worth in your own time. Just reflecting on those things. Because in our culture today.

I think that we don't think these two things. Can be true at the same time. How can you be sorrowful. Yet always rejoicing. Is there a question? We're asking. And what's striking.

[17:04] Is just how raw and honest he is. Probably more than anywhere else. In this letter.

Arguably probably more. Anywhere else. In all of his letters. And you've got to ask yourself. Why?

To the Christians who are being duped. Into expecting. A cost free. Christianity. I wonder whether Paul is saying. Here is. Normal Christianity.

Ever been. Genuine in your motives. Yet somebody has. Regarded you as being. Dishonest. Paul says.

I know what that's like. You ever experienced. Endurance. Sorry. Troubles. And hardships. And distresses. Because you follow Jesus. It's normal Christianity.

We're parking this. Where we're going to end. This morning. But I wonder. Whether it's also Paul. Trying to convince them. That it's not despite. These hardships. But it's through.

[18:06] These hardships. That we come. To know. Jesus. Better. How else could he write.

Sorrowful. Yet always rejoicing.

Having nothing. Yet possessing everything. That really is a puzzle. To modern day listeners. Isn't it? But I tell you what. Whatever he's got. I want it. Holiness.

And secondly. Verse 14 of chapter 6. To verse 1 of chapter 7. Inwardly pursuing integrity.

Outwardly pursuing purity. And here's really the question here friends. Does our purity puzzle people? Does it puzzle people? Remember Paul.

He's opening his heart. All wide to them. Do you see that? Verse 11. He's speaking in love. But we've got to understand. That this love.

[19:02] Confronts. And he longs for them. Not to receive. The grace of God in vain. Verse 1 of chapter 6. He doesn't want them to drift. And so see the image here.

That he uses. At verse 14. One that he takes. From everyday. Agricultural. Life. One that God's people. And I'm sure the Corinthians. Were familiar with.

Because God. Had spoken. About this kind of thing before. Got to get the metaphor. Okay. God had spoken about. Yoking. In Deuteronomy 22.

He'd. Told them about. A yoke. And the yoke. It's on the screen there. So you can picture it. It's that wooden beam. That you'd put around. The animals next. To bind the two of them together.

So that they'd help each other. And they'd direct each other. But God had said. Said. Deuteronomy 22. Don't do it with an ox. And a donkey.

[20:00] That's what he'd said. And here's a simple logic. When you combine. Those two animals. The strength of one. Will dominate.

Overpower. And direct. The other. Why? Because they're different. Animals. That's the logic. And in the context. You read it and think. It just seems such a strange thing.

To say. But I think God. All the way through. The Old Testament. You see it. He's weaving into the lives. Of his people. The fact that they're different. All sorts of ways.

He's weaving that into. The fabric of their understanding. They're distinct. They're different.

Because they're God's people. And again. Let's put on the lenses. Of this passage.

Remember. Remember. Who. You are. Paul is saying. When you. Allow yourself. To be yoked. To a non-believer. Who has a totally different set.

[20 : 56] Of values. And ethics. And who sees the world. Through completely different lenses. It will dominate. Overpower. And direct. You.

Of course. Living in Corinth. These Christians. What has happened? They have been saved. Out of a life. Of idolatry. And worship. But what's the temptation? As they rub shoulders.

I'm sure. With the same people. Who they did in a previous life. What's the temptation? Is to. Go back. And be influenced. By the people. Who used to influence them. Paul's saying.

You're radically different. And that's the command. And do you see. How he. He asks. Five rhetorical questions. To show them the logic. For what do. Righteousness. For what do.

Righteousness.

And wickedness. Have in common. Or. What fellowship. Can light. Have with darkness. Again. It's just really stark. What harmony. Is there. Between Christ. And Belial.

[21 : 52] Belial. There just been the Hebrew name. For the wicked one. Who I think. In the context. He must be thinking. About the devil. Or what does a believer. Have in common. With an unbeliever. What agreement.

Is there between. And notice. He's picked his phrase here. The temple of God. And idols. So there's two temples. Competing against each other. In the city of Corinth. There's the.

The temples of Aphrodite. And all the other worship. That's going on in Corinth. And yet. Paul is saying. The real temple. The real action. Where God is showing his wisdom. Is when you meet together.

As his people. That's the real temple. In Corinth. So Paul asks these. Rhetorical questions. What's the answer. Of course. To them all. It's none.

Because these. Things. Don't. Mix. And see how God. Has saved us out of that. And he's called us. To be a people.

[22 : 47] For his own possession. A people who declare. His praises. And it all comes down to. Do you see the logic? It all comes down to. Who you think you are. Now he's not talking here.

And we've got to be clear. He's not talking here. About coming out of the world. And being separate. Neither is he talking about. Going into the world. And just being like the world.

This is what Jesus prayed. For his disciples. In John 17. That they would be. In the world. But not. Of the world. And so here's the question.

That all of us have to ask ourselves. This morning. From this passage. As we think honestly. About the people. In our everyday circles. Who influence us. And you can apply that really broadly.

We'll see you in a minute. So you think about your friendship groups. So applying this socially.

Think about your work life. And the colleagues. And maybe what you're asked to do at times.

[23 : 46] Apply it. In your work life. Apply it. I think as well. Relationally. Relationally. Who are the people. Who are up close. And personal with us. And here's the question.

Is who you're involved with. Drawing you away from. Or is it spurring you on towards. A greater devotion. And love. For Jesus.

Is it drawing us away. Or is it spurring us on towards. Do you know why my hoovering.

Has got a lot better recently. It's because we switched. From a Dyson to a shark. Okay. And here's the thing.

I love about the shark. If you've got a shark. You'll know. It's just got lights on the bottom. Yeah.

And. The thing about that light. Is it exposes. All the darkness.

[24 : 42] In the room. That you didn't know was there. And that's what we need to do. With this section of this passage. As God shines his light. Into our hearts.

We've got to allow him. To expose and search us here. Okay. And so just as we sit on this. And know that I'm saying. All of this in love. And God is saying.

All of this in love. As we just stew on it. For a little bit. Here's three quick. Application questions. As we let this passage. Do its work in our lives. Okay. And wherever you are.

Hear this today. That God's heart for you. Is that you would come out. And be different. And you would know life. As you do that. Here's question number one. Friends.

Are there lines. That we need to take. Have you thought about the lines. In your life. That you are not prepared.

[25 : 38] To cross. Because to do so. Would mean you. Compromising. On your pursuit. Of Jesus. And your witness. For him. Now whatever that looks like.

In your context. In your situation. In the lecture hall. At work. In the sports club. Whatever that looks like. In the context. We all know what we mean. Have we thought about the lines.

That we need to take. Can I encourage you. Just from experience. Can I encourage you. To do your thinking. About the line. Before you get to the line. You see. When you get to line. And you haven't thought about the line.

You'll cross the line. Isn't our church family. A wonderful thing. That we do not have to do. All of this. Because this is really complicated. And hard. We do not have to do this alone.

Have we understood. The wisdom. And experience. In the Christian life. That exists in this room. And exists out this room as well. Where we can encourage each other. With the things. Saying I remember what that was like.

[26 : 37] Can I tell you what I learned. If you need to seek out somebody. This morning. Friends. Are there lines. That we need to take. Question two. And this may be a little bit more raw. Are there ties.

That we need to break. Are there relationships. That we are in. And this morning. God is calling us. To make the brave call. To unyoke ourselves.

From them. And to pursue. Purity. And that word. Purify there. It's an active verb. When you look at it.

In the original. It's actually where we get. Our word catheter from. Now Paul uses that word.

Everything that defiles. Do you see that there. In verse one. Everything.

So he's thinking really broad. Everything that defiles. But the business end here. I imagine for most of us. Is going to be in our romantic relationships. Now you might be married.

[27 : 34] To someone who. Doesn't follow Jesus. Like you do. And there might be. All sorts of different reasons. And again. I say this sensitively. And in love. There might be all sorts.

Of different reasons. Why you've ended up. In that position. Passages like. 1 Corinthians 7. And 1 Peter 3. Are primarily going to be. The ones that are going to help you.

And you're going to have to think about. But the wonderful thing is. You don't do this alone. The question for us. As your church family. Is how can we help. In that situation. How can you be.

The best witness. For Jesus. Where you are. But some of us. May well be going out. With someone. Or sharing that kind of level.

Of relationship. With somebody. Who doesn't share your faith. In Jesus. Friends. Can I say in love. That that's more than just doing. An unwise thing. Been there. More than doing an unwise thing.

[28 : 28] Actually. You're dabbling. In disobedience. Maybe off the back of this. Some of us need to make. Some brave. Godly. And costly calls.

For the sake. Of following Jesus. I don't hide the fact. That it's going to be hard. I don't hide the fact. That it might cost you a lot. And be very unpopular.

Taking up the call. Of verse 15. Of chapter 5. To no longer live for ourselves. But to live for him. Who died. And rose again. If you do that.

You will most likely. Find yourself. In the ordinary. Christian life. That Paul describes. From verse 3. Onwards. Of chapter 6. Right.

Troubles. Hardships. And distresses. But here's what you need to know. That you are not alone. That that is the promise.

[29 : 24] Paul's talking about here. God is with you. By his Holy Spirit. That you can worship him. With your everyday life. You think no one sees that decision.

Maybe the devil's in your ear. Telling you it won't be worth it. Let me tell you it will. But you also are surrounded. By a church community. Who will have your back. When you find yourself in that place. What else is church community all about? But a place where you can run. For love and friendship. At the hardest of times in your life. You know my kids ask me.

Every day on the walk to school. Dad have we got toothpaste on our face? And they asked it. Every day for so long. And then we just reached the agreement.

That listen. If you've got toothpaste on your face. Can you believe me? That I'll tell you. But here's the thing friends. Are there people in our lives. Who we have given permission.

[30 : 20] To tell us the things that we need to hear. Is there someone in your life. Who you know would step in. And tell you if you were drifting. Who loves you enough.

To have that awkward conversation. Because the skin in the game. Is your pursuit of Jesus. When was the last time. And this is what I asked myself. Off the back of this. When was the last time.

When we changed something that we did. A decision that we made. Because somebody said something. From the outside. And it changed us. See if that's never happened before. Can I suggest that perhaps. What we've been looking for. Is confirmation. Rather than loving challenge. Are there people in our lives. Who you know. When the rubber hits the road. That they will be there for you. And they love you. When they tell you. That something might not be right. Is there someone. In your life. Who you can be that kind of friend to. And question three friends.

[31 : 17] Are there habits that we need to make. And here's what I mean. How can we help ourselves. And each other. Remember. Who we are.

Right. Have you ever thought about. That's what we do on a Sunday morning. When we gather. Because during the week. All of us out there. Will have what. Leaked gospel. Right. Just the rubber. Rubber hitting the road. Of everyday life. Coming in here. Is like an oasis. Isn't it. We remind ourselves. Who Jesus is. We remind ourselves. Of what he's done for us. We remind ourselves. Like Craig did at the start. Where he is. And what he's doing right now. And we remind ourselves. Of the future. How can we. Help each other. How can we.

Individually. Remember. Who. We are. Here's an idea for you. Why not set your phone alarm. This week. To go off at 616. In the morning. And 616.

[32 : 13] In the evening. Now look at the verse. And you'll see what I mean. Okay. Some of you. Kind of get your heads around. At 616. In the morning. Can you. It's great. But I found that really helpful.

Do you know why? To wake up each morning. Start the day. And to. Not quite go to bed. But to start the evening. At 616. Wake up each morning. Begin each evening.

Remembering. That we are the temple. Of the living God. How can we remind ourselves. Remember. Who. We are.

Because let me tell you. When we try and do this. In our own strength. When we try. It just becomes moralism. With no reasons. And no wonder. A generation go by. We pass it on. And that generation say. Why? Remember.

Remember. Who you are. Remember. Our ethics. Are fueled. By the gospel. Just as we close. Let me tell you. About a good mate of mine. I had in halls. At uni.

[33 : 12] I remember telling this story. Years and years ago. But. He walked off the pages. Of this passage. This week for me. We had four Daves. In our halls. At university. Up in Aberdeen. Four Daves.

And we used to. To differentiate them. We gave them nicknames. Based on what. We saw. They were all about. So. We had Disco Dave. Disco Dave. Loved to party. We had Army Dave.

Army Dave. Loved the OTC. And he talks about nothing else. Other than the OTC. He was Army Dave. We had Scary Dave. Scary Dave. Had a big scary beard.

And this was 2003. Well before big scary beards. Were ever in fashion. And then we had my mate Dave. He was six foot six. Could have easily been.

Big Dave. That's what I would have gone for. He was from Inverness. He could have easily been. Highland Dave. But. That wasn't what people called him. Right. Particularly at the end.

[34 : 06] Of Freshers Week. When those nicknames. Are kind of. Branded about. People talk about. What. A different person. Is all about. With all the temptations. And opportunities. That that week brings.

Over 400 of us. And Halls. Saw what his life. Was all about. They saw what made him tick. And they saw what he did. And they saw what he didn't do. Do you know what we called him?

Christian Dave. Christian Dave. And Christian Dave. Christian Dave. Was such an influence. In my life. Friends.

Don't underestimate. What God can do. By his spirit. Through your everyday. Ordinary. Witness. You have no idea. Who's watching. You have no idea. Who's looking on.

What's going to convince. Edinburgh. Of the reality. Of Christianity. Is seeing. Convinced. Committed. Distinct. Disciples. Of Jesus. Who are not conditioned.

[35 : 04] By the world. Around them. But who dance. To a different. Drumbeat. And who are serious. Serious. Serious. And rejoice. In the holy call. That our God.

Has made. On us. Remember. Who. We are.