

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

You don't have to look any further than the book that bears the Corinthian's correspondence to see how Paul is feeling emotionally. ³*I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. (1 Cor 2-NIV)*

Again, today I am going to provide for you a blueprint about how to **slay the dragon of sexual temptation**. If you have walked in moral freedom as a Christ follower, you are bringing untold pleasure to your heavenly Father.

If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

Each night temple priestess poured out of the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite's and into Corinth's streets soliciting all who were interested in sexual missteps. Misdeeds. Miscues. These women were called Corinthian girls and when a Corinthian was portrayed in a play, he was always drunk.

Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

Philosophers philosophized. Tourists toured. And sports fans sported big gambling bets as money waved in the air, like Kansas wheat waving at all passers-byers.

Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

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Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

You don't have to look any further than the book that bears the Corinthian's correspondence to see how Paul is feeling emotionally. ³*I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. (1 Cor 2-NIV)*

Again, today I am going to provide for you a blueprint about how to **slay the dragon of sexual temptation**. If you have walked in moral freedom as a Christ follower, you are bringing untold pleasure to your heavenly Father.

If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

Each night temple priestess poured out of the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite's and into Corinth's streets soliciting all who were interested in sexual missteps. Misdeeds. Miscues. These women were called Corinthian girls and when a Corinthian was portrayed in a play, he was always drunk.

Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

Philosophers philosophized. Tourists toured. And sports fans sported big gambling bets as money waved in the air, like Kansas wheat waving at all passers-byers.

Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

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If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

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Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

Philosophers philosophized. Tourists toured. And sports fans sported big gambling bets as money waved in the air, like Kansas wheat waving at all passers-byers.

Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

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Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

You don't have to look any further than the book that bears the Corinthian's correspondence to see how Paul is feeling emotionally. ³*I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. (1 Cor 2-NIV)*

Again, today I am going to provide for you a blueprint about how to **slay the dragon of sexual temptation**. If you have walked in moral freedom as a Christ follower, you are bringing untold pleasure to your heavenly Father.

If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

Each night temple priestess poured out of the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite's and into Corinth's streets soliciting all who were interested in sexual missteps. Misdeeds. Miscues. These women were called Corinthian girls and when a Corinthian was portrayed in a play, he was always drunk.

Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

Philosophers philosophized. Tourists toured. And sports fans sported big gambling bets as money waved in the air, like Kansas wheat waving at all passers-byers.

Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

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Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

You don't have to look any further than the book that bears the Corinthian's correspondence to see how Paul is feeling emotionally. ³*I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. (1 Cor 2-NIV)*

Again, today I am going to provide for you a blueprint about how to **slay the dragon of sexual temptation**. If you have walked in moral freedom as a Christ follower, you are bringing untold pleasure to your heavenly Father.

If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

Each night temple priestess poured out of the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite's and into Corinth's streets soliciting all who were interested in sexual missteps. Misdeeds. Miscues. These women were called Corinthian girls and when a Corinthian was portrayed in a play, he was always drunk.

Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

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...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...

The Holy Spirit

Pastor Ken

November 23, 2025

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you!

Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through the book of Acts. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Today we arrive in the ancient city of Corinth in Acts 18 and read how Paul survived living in the Las Vegas of the ancient world-Corinth.

From the intellectual, idolatrous world of Athens, Paul leaps into the frying pan of a sex-saturated and materialistic Corinth.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

Traveling alone from Athens, Paul enters the Las Vegas of Greece-Corinth. Corinth was about 50 miles on foot from Athens. A three-day journey.

Paul's arrival into Corinth is not characterized by hope and health, Paul is about to have a nervous breakdown. He is exhausted. He is fearful. He is lonely and isolated. Paul arrives in Corinth emotionally drained, physically exhausted, and financially busted. (1 Cor 2:1-3)

When you are emotionally broken, your resistance to temptation is compromised. It is so easy to fall into sexual sin when you are bruised, battered, and busted. Let me invite you to turn over your notes, make a list of how to slay the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point One - be careful when you are emotionally broken against falling into another's arms for comfort** or slipping into pornography or other sexual vices when you are emotionally drained. Ok, got that?

You don't have to look any further than the book that bears the Corinthian's correspondence to see how Paul is feeling emotionally. ³*I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. (1 Cor 2-NIV)*

Again, today I am going to provide for you a blueprint about how to **slay the dragon of sexual temptation**. If you have walked in moral freedom as a Christ follower, you are bringing untold pleasure to your heavenly Father.

If you have wrecked your life sexually or are currently bound up in the slavery of sexual immorality, you can find healing and help.

In so many ways the American church has become Corinthian-ized as Christians who love God but engage in all kinds of sexual activity in and out of marriage. That is not God's plan. It is a sin. And if you want to please God, make some changes.

In fact, on two different occasions Paul's announces to the Christians in Corinth, do you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 3 and 6)

¹⁶*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? (1 Cor 3-NIV)*

Before you were a Christian, you could do whatever you wanted with your life and body. And you did. But, when you became a Christian, you are not your own, in fact you were bought with a price. Christian start pleasing God with how you treat this temple, the Holy Spirit lives in.

To be called a Corinthian did not mean you were from Corinth, it meant you were addicted to pleasure and sexual excess.

Each night temple priestess poured out of the Corinthian temple of Aphrodite's and into Corinth's streets soliciting all who were interested in sexual missteps. Misdeeds. Miscues. These women were called Corinthian girls and when a Corinthian was portrayed in a play, he was always drunk.

Corinth was a world class city with natural beauty, waterfront resorts, amazing cuisine-bona petite and unlimited worldly pleasures.

Who likes Greek yogurt? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek salads? Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Gyros? Oh, “uroh’s” as Beka says. Welcome to Greece.

Who likes Greek pastry-Baklava? Welcome to Greece.

If you know very little about the world of Greece, watch the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

As a commercial center boasting a population of over a quarter of a million people to half a million residents which is massive by ancient standards, Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities in the world. Wealthy like modern day New York.

As Paul enters Corinth, he is mesmerized by a huge sports stadium that attracts Olympic-like athletic competitions. These Isthmian games began with a sacrifice to the sea God, Poseidon.

Horse and riders trot around the stadium as the equestrian part of the games began. Athletes, musicians, and theatre troops fill the streets as the mild Mediterranean climate welcomes all visitors and locals. These Isthmian games were named after a land bridge connecting mainland Greece to southern Greece were corrupt to the core.

Athletes broke training rules and sold themselves off for sexual favors to the highest bidder. The streets were filled with magicians and fortune tellers who bilked the gullible and naive. Every sort of charlatan and huckster applied their craft to those who had come from all over the ancient world.

Philosophers philosophized. Tourists toured. And sports fans sported big gambling bets as money waved in the air, like Kansas wheat waving at all passers-byers.

Paul stays in Corinth for a year and half and grows one of the great New Testament churches. More New Testament writings are attributed to the Christians in Corinth than any other NT book. When you add chapters of 1 and 2 Corinthians together you come up with 29 all told. Corinthians is longer than the book of Acts by 1 chapter.

Larger than the book of Romans, a towering manifesto written to believers not much different than the Corinthians.

Paul was clearly a sports fan, as his writings to the Corinthians years later would surely prove.

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. (1 Cor 9-NIV)

Like Corinth Paul's hometown of Tarsus was a thoroughly pagan and rancid city. But Paul was schooled under the moral teachings of Judaism, and the 10 commandments with its towering moral precepts-**do not commit adultery**. Paul was trained to be a rabbi and since his conversion to Jesus Christ Paul doubled down on his life of holiness, righteousness, and moral purity.

Paul asked God daily what his purpose was in Corinth. Paul was frequently accosted by prostitutes; he was approached by cheating businessmen and often bumped into by drunks and addicts. Probably every person Paul shared about Jesus' atoning death was filled with the lust for women, lust for money and the lust for power.

The Christians heart is filled with the Holy Spirit and is being trained and taught by God's word to be **sensitive to temptation, repulsed by sin** and possess a **heart broken by immorality**. The fact that so many were trapped in Corinthian vices contributed to Paul's deeply depressive emotional state.

8-11 We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. (2 Cor 1-MSG)

On death's door of depression, the apostle lived and worked for Christ for a year and half. God did not provide a way of escape from Corinth, but God did offer some personal and financial support.

God's providence provided relational support and employment at a time when Paul needed friends and finances. (Acts 18:2,5,7)

In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

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In the sovereignty of God, a couple whose names rhyme, Aquilla rhymes with Priscilla arrived in Corinth about the same time Paul arrives, and they connect. Hook up. These newfound friends go into business together and eat dinner together praying that God will use them to bring salvation to a city slain by the sex trades.

Paul arrived in Corinth tired emotionally and out of finances.

But God, at just the right moment, led Paul to a mature Christian couple, who offered Paul hospitality and a job making tents to replenish his empty bank account.

1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus. (Acts 18)

Paul did not like to work alone, and neither should we. Soon Paul's evangelism team swells to 5. Before Corinth, Aquilla and Pricilla were a part of the Roman church. The church in Rome was aggressive in sharing about Jesus' atoning death and came into direct conflict with the local synagogue. So, Christians were forced to leave Rome in 49AD when the Claudius issued an order banning Jews from Rome.

Paul, Aquilla and Pricilla had a common life experience as they were tent makers. **They are friends for life.** How do you know? Two insights: First, they sat together at church. What? In churches people often sat according to trades.

Paul sat in the tent making section and likely met Aquilla and Priscilla. **Also**, Paul thanks them at the end of 2 of his writings, 1 Cor 16:19 and *Romans 16:3, my coworkers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles.*

The 3 of them made leather tents from goatskin and wove goat fleece into waterproof cloth, which was used to make tents. When Paul was joined by his ministry associates of Silas and Timothy Paul went into fulltime work of preaching to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul also received a gift from the Philippian church that allowed Paul to replenish his ministry bank account. Again, the letter of 2 Cor 11:9 gives us a clue as to how Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half preaching without being a burden to the Corinthians.

⁹And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11-NIV)

Ok, turn over your notes and let me give you your second strategy for slaying the dragon of sexual temptation.

- **Point Two - become accountable to some friends**, accountability partners and recovery sponsors who will assist you in walking in freedom.

On the Sabbath Paul is invited to preach at the local synagogue. And preach Paul does telling Jews and Gentiles that over 17-18 years ago the long-awaited Jewish Messiah arrived, he taught fearlessly, he healed supernaturally and loved like no person ever loved.

...and then died an atoning death and was resurrected and is alive today in each of us. Today Jesus offers to each of you, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a new radically changed life through faith.

And the reaction was once again the same. This led to a rebellion against the message by the hardline Jews. In Corinth, Paul announces he is finished with the Jews, and he will turn his full attention to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

As the synagogue door closes, the house next door to the Jewish community center opens. Then shock waves are felt in the Jewish community as the ruler of the synagogue converts to Jesus.

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18-NIV)

These verses read like a Who's Who in Corinth. Titius Justice was a wealthy Roman whose house was large enough to hold the new church and one of the few believers Paul baptized-1 Cor 1:14. Then the local Rabbi comes to faith in Jesus, and this causes a snowball effect where many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Weekly more Corinthians filled the house Titius Justice. In 1 Cor 6:9-11 we see the family portrait of these new believers.

*⁹ - ¹⁰ Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6-NCV)***

An amazing aspect of the story about these converted Corinthians, God saw their faith potential long before it happened. The Lord Jesus dying on the cross looked at this wicked city of Corinth and saw a wonderful church that one day would be born, grow and impact this city for God.

The church had always existed in Corinth, waiting to be born if someone would deliver the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and the offering of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We see the church according to Acts 18:10, was waiting to be born, *"I have my people in the city!"* The church would grow not only among nice moral folks, but amongst the addicts, gays and lesbians, thieves, jail birds, prostitutes, and the worldly. Jesus is in the rescuing and redeeming business.

- **Point Three - God wants you in his family regardless of your past.** Today is your day of salvation.

From the beginning of time, God would offer Jesus Christ atoning death to rescue wayward sons and daughters in Corinth, in California, in Cabo San Lucas and in Kansas.

In Macedonia, where Paul has planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul is running on empty. We don't see any place where Paul takes a lengthy Sabbath. At the end of Acts 18, Paul blows right through Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem for some much-needed rest.

God's promises to Paul are the same promises to each of us: you will have God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Overscheduled. Anxious. Dissatisfied. It is an issue that impacts all. Young and old. Saved and Seeker.

Professionals and parents. Republicans and Democrats. This is a global issue. Although America may have a corner on the market, lead the way, in all corners of the globe people are struggling.

How do we simplify our lives? The very question seems to offer a breath of fresh air. Seems to put wind in our sails. Energy seems to flow back into lifeless bodies.

Scrolling social media. Neglecting your health. Enjoy a quick peak and pleasure of some hidden sin. Let's be honest looking inside is a little threatening, we would much rather look outside and judge, be impressed with others or just daydream.

To look inside, simplify, means what is going on is not working, and how in the world are we ever going to admit such bold face truth? When we do admit such a truth, we are exhausted, spiritually dry and running without purpose, thus we run the risk of having to give up the bold-faced lie we are living. Paul needs rest and so do some of YOU!

Back to Corinth and Paul. Paul faced opposition in every city-mob violence. Stoning. Beating. Imprisonment. Sickness. Isolation. Hatred. Verbal abuse. In Corinth Paul was confronted with the open sores of sin that was glamorized, morally degenerate and foreign to his way of thinking and living. Paul was on overload. Paul was overextended. Paul was overworked.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent."¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18-NIV)

Paul may have been tempted to move on to Ephesus before the job was done. Who has wanted to give up prematurely? The Lord provided 3 reasons why Paul could not cut and run. I am with you. No one will attack you. I have many more carnal Corinthians to convert to Jesus.

Let me make one final note for personal faith. The year and half are now over, and Paul is on his way to Ephesus, and he preaches 1 Sabbath and then leaves. Those who heard him preached begged him to stay longer.

Paul promises he will return if it is the Lord's will. We read this in verse 19-21. I am just going to read it right out of my bible. We must learn to surrender our plans to God. Your plans are subject to God's editing. Your love life. Your vocational life. Your choice of cities to live in and even die in. God ahead and make your plans but know that God might change them. In the Middle East today, Jews, Arabs, and Muslims all tack onto the end of any conversation-**God willing.**

I will say it in Hebrew- God willing- em yirtza hashemem.

God is doing everything He can today to let you know that God became a man. Even Socrates, centuries before Christ's birth, made the announcement," that if God were to save us from ourselves, he would have to become a man and identify with human frailty." So, he did that. This is what this table is all about:

...God made Him who had no sin...to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

On the cross and at this table, Christ reminds us he knows what it was like to be a thief, an abortionist, an outcast, even gay and lesbian. Jesus did not choose to become these things; he was on the cross out of obedience to His father.

...He felt what it was like to relapse back into alcohol.

...He felt the fear of a driven student trying to get the grades to please a perfectionist dad.

...He feels the strong pull of the Christian man attempting to reject internet pornography.

...He felt the rejection of divorce after a painful custody battle when all you are left with is the memories of what it was life to be a little girl.

He became sin. So many point their fingers at Christ and raise their voice in willful defiance when they ask the question, "Jesus, how can you ever identify with my pain and brokenness, since you never sinned?" What response does heaven make? Taking the bread and the cup and holding it up God says,

"Jesus may not have felt it in life, but He did feel it in death."

Jesus offers so much more than just substitution for our sin, He offers the power to transform your sinful humanity into His likeness. We can become the righteousness of Christ.

This table today is that invitation. How does He do that?

(1) The Lord's Table Is A Celebration of Victory

(10) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and power of the kingdom of our God, the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (11) They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:10-11).

Every time I take this cup it reminds of not only the victory that Christ *won*, but the victory *now* available. This victory was won when Christ said, "It is finished!"

This is a declaration that you can wield against every temptation that slithers your way. Every time you forget who you are in Christ and as you give thanks know that we have and can overcome by the blood of the lamb.

(2) The Lord's Table Is An Invitation To Redemption

(26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The Lord's table not only proclaims the redemption that's been *accomplished*, but the redemption we *anticipate* at His return. If this is all there is to the Christian life, we would be so satisfied. Forgiveness of sins. Freedom from the past.

Deliverance from addictions. Victory over temptation. Healing of our broken bodies. The mending of destroyed minds. But, friend, let's not forget what God has in store for us: a future that is unimaginable.

(3) The Lord's Table Is The Release Of Healing

(17) This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took our infirmities and carried our diseases (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus Invitation to Communion

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own that gives
you a right to come, but because you need mercy & help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love
Him with all your heart.

Come, because when you were a sinner, Christ died for you.

Lift up your hearts and heartaches above your cares and fears.

and receive today a fresh provision from the bread and cup. A provision that
includes healing...

A provision that *initiates* faith...

A provision that *invites* restoration...