

I Corinthians 9:15-27
Marketing the Gospel



“The ideal product is designed in Germany, manufactured in Japan, and marketed in the USA!”

Concerns

- ✓ **Nickels and Noses**
“Show me the numbers.”
- ✓ **Culture worship**
“Show me the poles.”
- ✓ **Relevant but insignificant**
“A little Jesus with a big guitar.”

What are legitimate and illegitimate means to “win all” to Christ?

- False advertising?
- Emotional manipulation?
- Worldly values?
- Physical force?
- Social pressure?
- Fear?



Three tests for those marketing the Gospel.

How do you define **fruitfulness**?

How do you define **flexibility**?

How do you define **faithfulness**?

I Corinthians 9:15-27

“¹⁵ But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things that it may be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. ¹⁷ For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. ¹⁸ What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, **I may offer the gospel without charge**, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

Marginalize our personal agenda, not the ministry.

- ✓ **The issue was the cross of Christ not the comfort of Paul.**
- ✓ **We must make it clear that we are not motivated by personal comfort or gain.**

I Corinthians 9:15-27

“¹⁹ For though I am free from all {men,} I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. ²⁰ And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; **I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.**”

Meet people at their place not ours.

- ✓ **The messenger, not the message was changeable.**
- ✓ **The culture must not dictate the message.**
- ✓ **We must go to them so that they can come to Christ.**

“First you belong, then you believe.”

Non believers included in the church to bring them to faith

Is different than

Disciples identifying with non believers so as to remove any offense but the Gospel

I Corinthians 9:15-27

“²³ And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it. ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but {only} one receives the prize? Run in such a way **that you may win.** ²⁵ And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then {do it} to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as **not without aim**; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Define winning by what we do not by what others do.

- ✓ **Paul’s focus was faithfulness not fruitfulness.**
- ✓ **We must not measure our success only by the response of others.**

The point of this text

We have the ability and responsibility to influence the response of others.

But we must do it responsibly.

- ✓ **Marginalize self-interests not the ministry.**
- ✓ **Meet people at their place not ours.**
- ✓ **Measure success by our actions not theirs.**

Lessons from this text

- ✓ **Paul separated his personal issues from the message.** His joy was in giving up his rights for the Gospel.
- ✓ **Paul met people at their place not his.** He was willing to flex with culture without accommodating the message to the culture.
- ✓ **Paul’s idea of success was defined by his faithfulness not the response of his audience.** His focus was on being faithful in running the race.

Observations

- ✓ **Language is cultural not scared.** Adapt the language not the message.
- ✓ **We need not communicate all the truth at once.** Be sensitive to what is meaningful in the moment.
- ✓ **Check your motives.** Don't assume you are not self serving in your ministry.
- ✓ **Measure the right stuff.** Authenticity is better than dramatic numbers.

***In preparation for the next class
look at 10:1-13***

What are the dangers
in trying to balance
flexibility and
faithfulness?