

Called to Belong

Power to Accept from Differences

Power to overcome GIANTS

2 Corinthians 4:7

Treasure in jars of clay – amazing - process

to show that this all-

SURPASSING POWER is from God and not from us.

Amazing thing is that God puts his greatest gifts in ordinary vessel

Even tho – ord vessels – still

a **PROCESS**

Kneads – beat tear press stretch – remove air – renew mind – avoid cracks in fut

Wheel – shape – round and round – personally shaped

Shelf

Process seems to be **wasting** time – boring – dry. **ENJOY** it by looking at Jesus – **Malta**

Furnace - heat to 500 degrees- **why**

Even the **promised** land has giants

God didn't send – why allow?

bigger houses – deeper wells - for God's people

The greater the problem, the greater the opp

Defeated – not giants - fear not root – wrong belief

1. Let God's Word remove every wrong **beliefs**

Galatians 3:13

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

What abt the NT teaching on sowing and reaping?

Gal 6:6-10

Context: sowing into those giving Word. Take care. Time – talent – finance.

2 Corinthians 9:13-14

14 And in their **prayers** for **you** their hearts will go out to **you**, because of the surpassing grace God has given **you**.

World – highly **impersonal** – large corp – know only by number

Tithed – done corporate duty - Paul – brings out the personal element – **personal** touch – personal prayer

Phil 4:16-20

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full ...

Paul already greatly **blessed** – still enc giving – knows the tre

blessing on the givers – God can trust givers with **more**

2. Keep your eyes on God's **power** and **glory**

Focus **giants** - died

Every time you **listen** – **negatives** – **even if FACTS** – a bit of your

vision die, dream, life die – without vision – **peo perish**

Those that saw **GRAPES** – God can do - lives

Keep seeing what **God** can do – inherit

Not live in **denials** – but focus on **INC** - Joseph Mr Inc

Shaking yes –

that those that cannot be shaken remain! Those that cannot be shaken

are those that keep focusing on God and His power

Many shakings

– **Tsunami** – God is setting the stage to bless Asia – **now** politicians

and economist are seeing it

ASIA the centre of world by 2033

Centre of **gravity** of world – move towards Asia – econ, finan, people, intellectual dynamics – **particularly**

SE Asia – echoed by both Europeans and US

Joseph – **INC** – key – see Jesus as key to INC

One of the greatest giants – **rel** prob – one key **rel prob** -

You have problem in accepting **differences**

Eph 4:3 Make **every effort** to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Effort: be prompt, earnest, diligent.

Bef ma: could see - positive After: all could see –

negatives - diff

Common complains:

I just don't understand him."

I don't know why he acts that way."

Diff (ma or bro/sis rel) – prod **heat** – heat can either burn or bake cake

Only per – no heat – **dead** people

How to **profit** from diff? Set many **free**

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Be wise in the way you act towards those that are different; don't miss but redeem and make the most of every **opportunity**. 6

Let your words be **always full of grace and kind**, seasoned with **SALT (tasty and interesting)**, so that you may know how to **respond** to everyone. JY

Apply the spiritual MSG, not monosodium glutamate

MSG

Make room for differences

State your differences graciously

Get over the differences

MAKE ROOM FOR DIFFERENCES

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. NIV

Realise: diff – God's wis – **God appointed**

Why did God appoint or allow the differences?

1. Differences because we are **unique beings**

We all have different tastes:

some like vanilla, some like chocolate or strawberry.

Some like Ford, while others prefer Mercedes or Nissan or Renault

2. Differences because of **different perspective**

Acts 15:36-41

38 but Paul did not think it **wise** to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a strong **disagreement** that they **parted** company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, **commended** by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

Paul – Bar – big **argu** – whether bring Mark – next mission trip

Paul – no this time – mission trip very challenging – need reliable

- not proven reliable this time – deserted them

Can und – conc enough enemy – don't want to have to watch over own team

BARNABBAS – give him ano chance

3. Differences because of **different calling**

1 Cor 12:4-6

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. NKJV

God appointed the differences

Psalms 133

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his

robes. ... For there the LORD commands his blessing, even life forevermore.

Unity brings in God's commanded blessings in every area of our lives.

So flow in line with the vision and purpose of the church.

- Wong

Not here by accident – divine appointment - born in WONG – don't simply change surname

Barnabas – despite diff – parted peacefully

God eventually **blessed** both Paul and Barnabas -

Next week: how to **benefit** from diff

4. Differences because the situation is *imperfect*

DIFF ways of dealing w the situation

Exodus 1:19

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." 20 So God was **kind** to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

What do you do when you are faced with tough choices - Lie or save life or disobey govt

There are different ethical systems:

Two **extremes:** **Antinomianism** (Situational ethics) and **Absolutism**.

What are the problems with the two extreme positions?

Problems for both:

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

The laws are perfect but the situation is not perfect.

Can't apply perf laws to **imperfect** situation

Whatever choice – **break** certain law

Two common evangelical(Bible believing) ethical systems:

Choose the lesser of the two evils. OR

What is the problem with the system of choosing the lesser evil?

Prob: Christ broke the Sabbath – if a lesser evil – did Christ sin?

Choose the greater of the two goods. (Graded Absolutism)

Graded Absolutism does not mean making subjective choices but choices based on values from the Word:

No making subjective choices by feelings - no condoning of: premar sex; adultery; abortion, etc

Higher **norm** not higher **end or result** (not the end justifies whatever the means)

Matthew 23:23

... more important or weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness.

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! ...But you have neglected the more **important** (weightier) matters of the law -- justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Matthew 22:37-39

The first and greatest commandment: Loving God above all.

37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the **first** and **greatest** commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

1 Corinthians 13:13

Greatest of the greatest virtues: Love over faith and hope.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Matthew 12:1-7

Corn fields – Sabbath – breaking!

David – hungry – eat consecrated bread – not lawful to them but priest

7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have **condemned the innocent.**

Abraham – according to **Soren Kierkegaard:**

Morally irresponsible – murderer

Religiously Ok – man of faith

Why was Abraham not condemned for murder?

Graded Absolutism – not sinned – duty to God over man

Abraham not to be condemned – obey higher duty to God

Proverbs 21:21

21 He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honour.

John 19:11

... the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

You may use these guidelines:

Love for God over Love for Man.

Mercy over veracity.

Discuss: Mercy over veracity

Veracity – truthfulness, accuracy, conformity to law

People over thing
Actual people over potential people

People that promote relationship(people) over people that don't

The lower moral laws are not cancelled but superceded by a higher law.

Why were the midwives and Jesus not condemned for breaking the lower moral laws?

Like flying against gravity

– that law is **overridden** (**transcended**) by ano – higher law

The laws not revoked but temporarily suspended – in view of higher obligation to human lives, p122, ethics – Norman Geisler, Zondervan

Not breaking the lower law but the higher law transcending and overriding it

Is **midwives guilty** of lying? No – performing a greater good – saving lives. Not condemned

Sabbath – Jesus guilty - condemned? No – doing greater good

Like a doc – amputate leg to save life is not to be condemned for cutting legs

BASED on these prin...

Rahab told a lie? – save spies and

Corrie Ten Boom lie – OK?

Killing in self defence – OK?

Spying – all the lying – sex - OK?

to win a just war – save more lives

Mercy killing of human vegetable – OK? Killing or allow merciful death?

Abortion – when justifiable
Anesthesia – felt bad – choose – who – be operated:

Baby – father – mother
Engineer – doc - teacher – pastor
Race?

A man with **six** wives got converted.

Now he says: what shall I do?

Afri – 1st? – children? – 4th Believer

A tribal chief would say: kill all, keep the most beautiful.

Get him to stay with the first wife?

This is in line with the principle of a biblically sanctioned monogamous marriage.

But what about the children born to the 2nd and third. The principle of responsibility.

What if the only wife who is Christian was the last wife?

No matter what he decides – no perfect choice – will break certain laws

Allow grace to *cover* the imperfect situation and move on in *peace*.

Led by Holy Spirit

Exodus 1:20

So God was **kind** to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

God was **kind** to the Egyptian midwives, even though they lied!

What is **meaning** of the word *kind*? Grace

Why must we not condemn those trying to work things out in their past life?

Namaan's question –

Elisha: go in **peace**

Allow new believers to grow up first – be strengthen in the word of His grace – God will with time – lead them to sort out things from the past.

Don't judge. People ask:

Such and such – doing this that – what's your comment? None of my business – **Miriam**

Numbers 12:-8

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ... 8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Why Miriam judged so

severely?

Why was Miriam **judged** so severely?

Judged Moses - taken God's job

She had taken over God's position in Moses' life.

If I can **accept** Moses' weaknesses – **who are** you to **stir** up issue

Moses' weakness was real, but God says, "I am well able to handle my own servant without you interrupting.

*Rom 14:4 **Who are** you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And **he will stand**, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

God: I **know how** to handle – give me **time – not finished with him yet**

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time ...

Mushroom

When God wants to make a mushroom, He takes six hours.

When He wants to make an oak tree, He takes sixty years.

Question is, Do you want to be a mushroom or an oak tree?

Romans 15:7

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

1 John 2:2-3

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. NKJV