“They” tell me that as we get older we have difficulty sleeping at night (not able to get a full 8 hours a night).

As much as I don’t want to admit the “getting older” part…,

I do have difficulty sleeping sometimes…

Unfortunately my wife doesn’t know how well I’ve slept the night before when she comes in to wake me up in the morning…

And because of her bubbly personality… she comes in saying;

“Good morning!” “Coffee is ready!!” “Rise & Shine!!”

If I haven’t slept well, I generally RISE and open my Bible to Exodus 20:13 to make sure it still says; “Thou shalt not kill”!

I’m just kidding of coarse…

I’m using that to illustrate the value/safety that exists when one chooses to live within the boundaries of God’s Holy Word.

2 Peter 2:2 - It is essential to nourish the “New Life” that God given us thru the death, burial & Resurrection of His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Let’s open our Bible’s on this first Sunday after the Resurrection to

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

God has led me to preach the next couple of weeks on the subject of the “new life”… that Jesus died & rose for us to live.

Some contextual background on this passage…

Christians in the church at Corinth that Paul had started had became apathetic (indifferent) about a situation that had happened in their church.

It was an immoral, adulterous relationship that was taking place in their fellowship between a man and his step-mother.

And because the believers had not dealt with the sin (cancer) in the church (body of Christ), the sin began to advance and spread.

The proof of that is Paul having to write to them about it.

He reminded those who professed to be genuine followers of Jesus, that the sin that had once marked their “pre-Christian” lives is supposed to stay dead & buried. It represents one’s B.C. Life… before Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

It’s important to note here that Paul isn’t writing to shame them.

No, in fact, he opened this letter by calling them “God’s Holy people” and “Saints of the Lord”.

God’s Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this letter out of a heart of love and concern for these Christians who had allowed themselves to drift off of the “narrow way” that leads to heaven. Therefore we should receive it that way ourselves.

The truth that Paul is conveying, is that the “new RESURRECTED life” in Christ will evidence itself in a “new RESURRECTED lifestyle”.

And when there is no evidence of a “new RESURRECTED lifestyle”, there is just cause for concern, and to question whether there is actually any “New Life”.

The Corinthians were very proud people… Proud of their

* Teachers
* Spiritual Gifts, etc…

And where there is self-focused pride, you can bet your bottom dollar that disputes aren’t far behind.

They lived in a beautiful seaport city. Many sailors and travelers brought different beliefs and lust-filled lifestyles to this place called Corinth (the sin city of their day).

God’s response to that, was to send Paul to plant a church there and begin proclaiming the “Good News” of Christ Jesus and Him crucified.

Paul’s question in V9a is a question for the ages that requires an answer...

Do you not know that wicked/wrong doers will not inherit the “Kingdom of Heaven”?

For those of you who were not with us some months ago when we learned about the “Kingdom of God” and the importance of being a “Kingdom builder”…

The “Kingdom of God” is defined as the “Spiritual realm that followers of Christ now belong”. It’s not a place that one can do good works to get to.

In my “pre-Christian” years…, I clearly remember that not only did I not belong to the “kingdom of God”, but I couldn’t see/understand “the kingdom of God”, nor did I have any hope of entering the “kingdom of God”.

And to be honest, I thought people who said they did, were living slightly left of center... call the twinkie mobile… book them a room at the hotel silly!!

And laughing (poking fun) at them, elevating myself above them made me feel better.

But one must ask themselves the question, since I don’t belong to the “Kingdom of God” what kingdom do I belong to? Ephesians 2:1-2

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

Gulp!

Again, God’s response to sin is to preach the “Good News”!

Jesus told His disciples this in Luke 4:43.

Think about the many other ways that mankind responds to sin… anger, hatred, bitterness, division, un-forgiveness, murder, etc…

God’s answer: Proclaim the “Good News of the Kingdom”!

The Father has made Jesus the King of that Kingdom, and those who would listen to His Words, bow their hearts and receive Him as their Savior & king, will follow Him as members (kids) of His eternal Kingdom (that was, is and is yet to come).

In John 3 we find the most direct statement from Jesus regarding how people see, enter & inherit the Kingdom of God…

Jesus, in speaking to Nicodemus, a teacher of the Law of God… - Someone who probably felt that he was already part of the “Kingdom of God”… as many “religious” people do today… says in John 3:3

Now… Those words may sound as welcome as a splash of cold water in the face to some…, because according to the terms established by Jesus, they may discover that they are not actually part of the “Kingdom of God”.

* Despite the fact that they were raised in the church.
* Despite the many Godly people that are part of their family tree.
* Despite the fact that they may live in a country that was founded on Christ and the Word of God.

I can tell you that I had been a “good boy”, was raised in the church for the first 14 years of my life. I even sang in the choir!

But when my mother told me she wasn’t going to force me to go with her to church anymore, I stopped! And I became a smoking, drinking, drugging little HELLION!

And I can remember when, by many miracles, God had allowed me to live to be 31 years old.

Even though I didn’t deserve it, He blessed me with a beautiful wife, beautiful family, a good job, making very good money, but my marriage was about to end…

Then, through a miraculous set of circumstances, I found myself doing the unthinkable!

I was sitting in a church service like this one, where the pastor spoke these same words from John 3:3.

It was then that I heard the still small voice of God’s Holy Spirit ask me;

“You want to go to heaven don’t you”? To which I immediately responded, “yes”!

Then the calm voice of God’s Spirit said; “then you need to figure out what it means to be born again”.

I understood that about as much as Nicodemus, so I’m glad he asked Jesus the question in V4…

“How can someone be born when they are old? Surely they cannot enter their mother’s womb a second time to be born!”

Jesus gives the answer in V5-6

He says that people who enter the “Kingdom of God” are born of water (via their mother) and the Spirit (Holy Spirit of God).

Why born of the Spirit?

Remember Paul’s question… Do you not know that wrong doers/wicked will not inherit the “Kingdom of Heaven”?

ONLY God the Holy Spirit can only produce a “new “Spirit filled/led life” that seeks not to please itself, not focused on building a kingdom for one’s self here…,

but seeks to see, understand and devote themselves to living for the building “Kingdom of God”.

I like what Jesus says in V7-8…

In other words, God moves in people’s lives in ways that are;

* Unique to their background.
* Unique to their experiences & their calling.

There is no one else like you in God’s Kingdom, serving King Jesus as you are capable of!

Unfortunately, our world today offers a menu of other religious options besides being “born again” as a means to entering heaven. Which may sound well and good until we open our Bibles…

That is assuming, of course that one believes the Bible to be the one and only book that God has given to mankind, to instruct them on entering His Kingdom.

The question before us seems to be…; is there any other valid way other than a “born again” experience thru God’s Holy Spirit?

I’ve read the Bible a time or two and I have yet to discover one…

If Jesus had said to Nicodemus; “there are THREE ways to enter the Kingdom of God…, ONE OF WHICH IS BEING BORN AGAIN… one might be justified in pursuing other options.

But since He said there is only one, it would be wise to listen to what the Son of God says.

We should probably ask ourselves, what did Jesus mean by that.

One page to the left in John 1:11-13 – *John explains* “11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (Kids of the Kingdom)— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, (you don’t become a “born again” Christian by the flesh) but born of God (Who is Spirit).

Everyone of us had ZERO control over our physical birth…

But when God brings a person into His Kingdom, we find that the one thing we must bring… is sin… our sin that we need Christ to save us from, and we cry out for His mercy/forgiveness. Turning from sin to God.

So until one comes to the place where they know they are sinful and they need Christ to save them…, They are dead to the Kingdom and cannot make themselves alive Spiritually… or enter into God’s Spiritual Kingdom…

Back to Paul’s question: “Do you not know that wicked/wrong doers will not inherit the “Kingdom of Heaven?”

That’s why genuine followers of Jesus (Kingdom Kids) are totally different and so peculiar to the rest of the world; we follow & serve a different King !

And it doesn’t matter what background we came from (religious or not), or how much money/possessions we have or do not have.

They one thing that unites all believers is that we have placed ourselves under the rule of “King Jesus”.

* We march to His instructions.
* We praise & worship Him with the rest of His troops!
* And it gladdens our hearts us to serve Him above ourselves.

It’s all pretty logical when we stop and think about what Paul and Jesus are saying.

They’re essentially saying the same thing. God is righteous/Holy, therefore unholy/unrighteous people cannot dwell in His kingdom.

The problem: Romans 3:23 – EVERYONE IS UNRIGHTEOUS/UNHOLY

The “GOOD NEWS”: God wants us all in His Kingdom (2 Peter 3:9 & John 3:16).

And many people have turned from their sin to become active “Kingdom Builders”.

So what is keeping many more people out? John 3:19-21

Jesus is that Light…

Unrighteous/wicked people choose their behavior… and as a result of their choice they exclude themselves form the Kingdom of God.

And if you want to choose what God calls an wicked lifestyle and keep yourself out of God’s kingdom, that’s fine… just do it without being confused… and claiming that it’s justifiably okay for God’s people to live such a lifestyle.

Because God is “just” and each one of us will all stand before Him in judgement one day to give an account for our choices.

But since God is also loving… He has unleashed His Holy Spirit on the world to convict mankind of sin, righteous and the judgement to come (John 16:8), Why? So you can enter into a “new, born again” relationship with Him before time is up...

And because He gives everyone a “free will” to choose. He’s not going to force you to devote your life to the Kingdom you desire to enter when life here is over…

And genuine followers of Christ should conduct themselves in the same way… loving people into the Kingdom of God. Remembering when we once stood outside the gates, living an alternative lifestyle.

We are all recovering sinners… and God has us together to hold each other accountable for staying on the straight and narrow path of His word, and continuing to serve King Jesus together. We need Him and we need each other.

It’s this “born again” perspective… and family of God accountably… that keeps sin in “in remission”… dead & buried in the tomb… This is what the church in Corinth with all of their abundance, wealth and sex were lacking.

Some of may be thinking, my goodness, I can’t live like that…

You’re right, that’s why devoting one’s life to Christ is so important…

* Galatians 2:20
* Philippians 4:13

Those are a just a couple of secrets for success… but they’re not really secrets if they are hiding in plain sight on the pages of God’s Holy Word.

Having said all that, what Paul is talking about in Corinth were not just isolated cases of sin… occasional slips & mistakes…

He’s He is talking to people who claim to be followers of Jesus, yet are pursuing a lifestyle that they know is contrary to God’s Word.

The kind of life that demonstrates;

* “I don’t want anything to do with God’s Word”.
* “I don’t want God interfering with my life, my time, my money, my desires, etc…

Paul says; “Do not be deceived”!

We’ll end today with V11

Let’s bow our heads this morning… (inspirational music – Easy worship)

What King might the people closest to you, say that your lifestyle represents or appears to be devoted to serving? King Jesus or someone else ?

The Lord is leading me to invite you into a “born again” relationship with Him today. So that you may have the joy of living for Him and serving Him now, thru a “New Lifestyle”.

You can come to an altar right now and leave your sin buried with Christ.

If your watching at home, cry out to Jesus right now, seek His forgiveness… He is waiting with arms open wide right now;

* To forgive you
* To wash away the filth of your sin
* To heal your hurts
* To relieve your pain
* To help you through your problems…

He’s waiting to sanctify you wholly for service and make you white as snow, just as if you had never sinned a day in your life.

You can’t do it, but He can… will you let Him today? We are living in very uncertain times… no one is guaranteed tomorrow.

Don’t gamble with where you will spend eternity…

Let us repeat a sinners prayer together:

Dear Father in Heaven,

Thank You for Jesus!

Please forgive me of my sin.

I am done with my old life.

Fill me with your Spirit.

I gladly receive Jesus.

Make me new

Give me new birth.

Yours is the Kingdom I long to serve.

In His name I pray! Amen