

## **Sermon Draft**

**Text: 1 Corinthians 7:29–31 (32–35)**

**Sermon: Wheeling for Jesus**

If you ever lived on a farm you are probably familiar with silos. You chop the corn grown, stalks and all, into small pieces and put it in the silo. It's called silage. During the winter, you fed it to the cows, along with hay and grain.

A silo is designed to hold one thing like the chopped-up corn. The hay is in a loft in the barn. Straw is kept in a different part of the barn. The grain was in a different building altogether. Each crop was kept separate from the others.

In a way, we live our lives that look like silos. We segregate our lives by events, like our childhood, our collage years, when we first got married or when our first child was born. Or by jobs. One is our family life. One is for work. One is for church. One is our role as citizens as we live in this country.

Each separate from the other. The people at work may not be the people we meet at church. What we do at home is different from when we're at school or out in the community. How we use our money when out shopping could be different from when the collection plate goes by. What we consider fun may not line up with how we feel about work. Do you see how this works? We live in silos.

The problem with silo living is that it too often leaves Jesus out of so many areas of life. We can go to work and Jesus recedes into the background. We pull out our credit card at a store and forget about how Jesus wants us to save or be generous for those in need. We can get so caught up in our fun activities that worshiping Jesus is left at home while on vacation or how we're acting at a ballgame.

Family time or when we're at home becomes so filled with errands, cleaning, television, and "me time" that time for devotions gets squeezed out. Politics certainly don't reflect the Christian faith right now, not from what we sometimes read on social media. Jesus is relegated to the church silo, and that means he's not guiding the other areas of life. That's not good. It's never good to leave Jesus out of any area of our lives.

The apostle Paul knew that: ***"The appointed time has grown very short," he says. "From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away"*** (vv 29–31).

In this passage from 1 Corinthians, Paul is calling us to live every day with Jesus and for him, no matter what part of life that might be. Why? Because the time we have left is "short."

Now, Paul isn't so much trying to predict when Jesus will come back on Judgment Day here. He may have believed that Jesus' return to bring an end to this world would come soon, but he's not focusing on when that will happen. Rather, he's emphasizing that the time we have left before Jesus ends time as we know it is a critical time. It's an opportune time. It's a time to live a certain way. He's calling for an urgency to live for Jesus in the days that are left for this world or in the time we have left in our personal lives.

Yes, one day Jesus will return. What a glorious day that will be! Tears will evaporate because sickness will be gone. No more cancers or heart attacks. Evil will be consigned to hell forever. No more shootings. No more injustice. No more violence. No more war. No more bullying. Instead, the dead in Jesus will rise from the grave.

A new creation will arise out of the ashes of this world. Our bodies will be whole and healthy. We'll fill our lungs with the cleanest of air to sing praises that lift our hearts to new heights. Our eyes will see clearly the beauty of God's creation in all the rainbow of colors. A joy wells up inside us as we're reunited with those we lost to death and hugs abound once again. And all creation will live in harmony as even the lamb will lie down with the lion in perfect peace and safety. We're looking forward to that day. Come, Lord Jesus!

And we live in that hope, that anticipation, because Jesus has already risen from the dead. On the cross, he took upon himself our sin and diseases, our tears and violence, our death and hell. He took all the evil and buried it in a tomb. Then on Easter morning, he burst forth in glory and life. He gives us a glimpse of what's to come with his body whole and glorified. He has paved the way for our eternity, and in his victory this world will one day pass away. A new creation awaits us. Our Lord and Savior will welcome us to his home forever. He brings joy to us and all his followers.

But we don't know when that will be any more than Paul did. So, we wait, and as we wait, we live in an opportune time. The days we have are critical for living with Jesus and for Jesus in every area of our lives. How do we live that way?

Listen to Paul: Live as though you were not married. What?!

No, Paul is not calling for us to disband our families. Later in this chapter, he says we don't sin if we do get married or if we do not. But we're not to live as if our family is all important. Paul is saying that there's more than family. Our life with Christ endures forever and calls for living for him now. We simply cannot leave Jesus out of homes.

Then Paul says: live as if you are not rejoicing or mourning.

What?! No, Paul is not calling for us to live emotionally detached from life like robots. Yes, we will rejoice at a birthday party, at a Christmas Eve dinner, on vacation swimming in the ocean, or just enjoying a meal at a restaurant. And we will mourn. Tears will stream down your cheeks when you stand before the casket to say good-bye to someone. But our emotions will change or fade as time passes.

We don't live just for the joys in life nor are we destroyed by the sadness. No, there's more than those times. Our life with Christ endures forever and calls for living for him now. We give our emotions to him in every circumstance of life.

Paul says to buy as though we had nothing. What?! No, Paul is not calling for us to give everything away. We will go to the grocery store and buy food for the week. We will pay taxes and our bills. We will go shopping for clothes. But all this stuff will one day be gone. We brought nothing into this world and will take nothing out of it. Paul is saying that there's much more to life than what we buy and call our own. Our life with Christ endures forever and calls for living for him now. We simply cannot leave Jesus out of what we buy, keep, and give away.

Yes, Paul says this world will pass away. But before that happens, he calls for us to live in this opportune time, this critical time, with Jesus in every area of our lives.

So instead of living in silos, we are to live as if life were a wheel. At the hub of the wheel is Jesus. The cross is empty. Our resurrected Lord is present here and now in our lives. He has guaranteed the life to come. Everything revolves around Jesus. He is the center of life.

The spokes are the various areas of life we live each day. Work is connected to Jesus and looks forward to his return. In the meantime, we work with Jesus right next to us. Honesty, integrity, and effort go into what we're doing, and not just for a paycheck. Our work is a way for us to live for Jesus.

Our money and stuff are not our own. It's all a gift from Jesus. What's in this wallet is not mine to do with however I please. My decisions come from my relationship with Jesus. Some will go for bills, eating out at Cracker Barrel. But those offering envelopes in the box from Peace are faithfully filled as well. So, are donations for those in need. One of the most important lines on our tax return is not how much we made or our refund or even what we owe. No, it's the amount of charitable contributions we've given away because Jesus is at the center of our money life too.

And the Bible tells us to respect our governing authorities. Do you see how it works? Live Life as a Wheel, with Jesus as the Hub, Eternity as Your Hope, and Every Spoke Lived with Jesus and for Jesus.

Jesus could come back tomorrow or a hundred years from now. I could live thirty more years or life could be gone in an instant. But the amount of time left is not the key question. The question is how. How do we live when life is short? Not as silos but as a wheel. The hub is Jesus risen from the dead and the end is glorious. And the time now is critical, opportune for living with Jesus and for him. Not silos but a wheel.

Amen