

September 19, 2021 James Gallaher Series: The Heart of Freedom Fellowship: Simplicity

This series defines seven "non-negotiable" foundational aspects of Freedom Fellowship Church, describing our home at Freedom. We've discussed these three:

- Intimacy with God and intimacy with others.
- People are Priority.
- Seeking God's heart and not just His hand.

and today... Simplicity.

In church, we tend to take a simple concept of evangelism and discipleship and then add requirements and boxes to check. We drift toward complexity. Jesus' path for discipleship was a simple process given to simple men.

Matthew 4:18-22 *Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.*

Jesus' command was "follow Me." Complex? The Bible doesn't say Peter and Andrew contemplated it, got organized, or talked to family first but they left immediately. James and John followed immediately. Their father, Zebedee, was likely left with the fishing business. Jesus wanted to make clear the process of discipleship - "follow Me."

We tend to want clarification like the Israelites did with the 10 commandments. So they added laws and it became 613 laws. The relationship between God and man became heartless religion. The laws had no ability to save – but to condemn. Jesus came for redemption, the saving of His people.

Matthew 23:15 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.* Jesus told them exactly what the Pharisees were doing when the people only wanted to follow Him. They put undue burdens on people. Religion has no ability to save, restore, or mend the relationship between us and God.

I Corinthians 2:1-5 *And when I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come as someone superior in speaking ability or wisdom, as I proclaimed to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I also was with you in weakness and fear, and in great trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God.*

Paul held a unique honorable place and tremendous prestige with understanding of the priests and law. He persecuted the church. He has an encounter with Jesus and he sees the error of His ways. He could have come with superiority but he didn't (verse 1). *He determined to know nothing but Jesus and Him crucified.* All else in life is insignificant compared to this one truth - that the only way to salvation is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He is saying that we can be more consumed by the wisdom of men than we desire the power of Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 2:2 *For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

John 14:15 *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* Are these oppressive words? Trying to be obedient is not what Jesus was asking. He was asking us to know Him, to really know Him and love Him, then you would want to do whatever He asks - to follow Jesus. The gospel begins and ends with love. The more we know the love of God, the simpler our message becomes.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 *But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his trickery, your minds will be led astray from sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received or a different gospel which you have not accepted, this you tolerate very well!*

Paul's concern was that they would complicate the message and get distracted. We shouldn't go beyond what Christ presented. We tend to add clarity where the Bible is unclear.

Matthew 22:36-40 *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”*

Jesus clarified the greatest commandment. Everything about salvation and discipleship can be accomplished w/ 2 things: love God, love one another. *If you love me, you will keep all my commandments.*

We look at problems and relationships and ask how can we do this - it's so hard. Jesus says love God and love one another. Jesus confronts the ones asking about doing things on the Sabbath. **John 5:19** *Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*

John 14:15 *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* Asking who is our neighbor makes tension. What about the person that speaks poorly of me? Jesus loves them all. Love fulfills the law! Don't give up the simplicity of the gospel. Love God and He will reflect to us what it looks like to love one another. Simplicity is about presenting the gospel that's available to everyone! It's not about doing things. Christ died for us when we were yet sinners. **Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* That we would be cities of refuge for the gospel. **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* Let's be about the simplicity of the gospel.

What is the simplicity of the gospel and how do we complicate it?

Why would we at Freedom have simplicity as a core characteristic?

Of all the Bible verses in this lesson, which one most clarifies for you the gospel message?