

Letters to the Church



MAY '23

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

My wife rarely sends me on grocery store runs, but on the off occasion that she forgets a crucial ingredient for dinner, I may get commissioned. However, we've noticed a funny thing sometimes happens when I get sent out with a one-item shopping list. I charge out with all bravado like her knight in shining armor to save the day. I soar into the big lot with the focus of an eagle on the hunt. I bob and weave between minivans, shopping carts, and pedestrians like a running back dodging defenders.



Suddenly, my eyes lock on the perfect parking spot and I capture it like a chess master sliding his bishop across the board to take a rook. I stride up to the sliding doors feeling ten feet tall and enter into that suburban citadel of every entrée, cuisine, victual, foodstuff, and fare.

Yet gradually my one-task mission begins to fade into the back of my mind as I begin to wander up and down the eighteen aisles gazing wide-eyed at the seemingly limitless selection of nourishment, nutrition, subsistence, and sustenance. *Oh wow, did you know they still made these? Whoa, this is a new flavor! Huh, what's the difference between trans fat and saturated fat? We should make homemade pesto. What are all the marshmallow shapes in Lucky Charms, again? Heart, stars, horseshoes, clovers... Is that a good deal on NY strip steak? Are these avocados ripe? Oreos!* Then suddenly my phone starts buzzing in my pocket. It's my wife. I pick up and she asks, *Honey, where are you? It's been forty-five minutes! Did you remember to pick up the mozzarella cheese?*

I'm sure I'm not the only husband this has happened to, but as humans, we all have a tendency to forget "why we are here." Fortunately, the consequences in the grocery store are easily mitigated. At worst dinner is a little late, but in the church, if we forget why we are here the potential damages are far more severe.

Paul was similarly sent on a one-thing assignment as an apostle of Christ. In Corinth, there were many distractions, diversions, and dissensions. In a church consumed with controversies regarding baptisms, who's whos, flashy signs, and lofty speech - Paul kept the main thing the plain thing.

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1ST CORINTHIANS 2:2

Much like how I should have been in the grocery store, Paul did not forget his one-task mission. He didn't get distracted, he didn't get diverted, and he didn't get caught up in the dissensions. Paul lived and preached the gospel and the gospel alone.

As humans, we have such a tendency towards imbalance and overemphasis. We can do this with even good and godly things that were never supposed to take the highest prominence. As Christians, the dying, the rising, and the returning of Jesus Christ is to be all our life and doctrine. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the great subject of the Scripture. May his gospel be the great emphasis, priority, and center of all that we are as PA Bible. If someone walks in our doors at 700 Market Street let them see and hear one thing - Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

COLOSSIANS 1:28

As Christians, we believe and we proclaim a living person! Paul wrote, "him we proclaim." We don't proclaim a formula, or a Bible teacher, or a series of Bible teachings, or our church, but the Savior. We make much of his person, his work, and his lordship. Note here Paul says "everyone" three times. Warning *everyone*. Teaching *everyone*. So that *everyone* may be presented as mature in Christ.

All our fellowship is in the gospel. All our faith is in the gospel. All our hope is in the gospel. At PA Bible, Jesus Christ is our message, our aim, our affection, and our Lord. So don't miss the forest for the trees. Don't forget the "mozzarella cheese."

Every time we assemble (both now and in glory)
don't forget - the gospel is why we are all here.

YOUR PASTOR & SERVANT,



SHAWN WEIR