

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians – Part 3 (early 54)

1 Corinthians 8–11

Knowledge and Liberty are Never an Excuse to Cause a Weaker Brother to Sin

8:1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.
 2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;
 3 but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.
 4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.
 5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,
 6 yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.
 7 However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat *food* as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.
 8 But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.
 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.
 10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?
 11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.
 12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.
 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

Paul Argues That as an Apostle He Has a Right to Receive Financial Support

9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?
 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.
 3 My defense to those who examine me is this:
 4 Do we not have a right to eat and drink?
 5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?
 6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?
 7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?
 8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?
 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." [[Deut 25:4](#)] God is not concerned about oxen, is He?
 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.
 11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?
 12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.
 13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? [cf. [Lev 7](#)]
 14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. [cf. [Luke 10:7](#)]

Paul Denied His Own Right in Order to Further the Spread of the Gospel

15 But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one.
 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.
 17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.
 18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Paul Put His Freedom Aside in Order to Win More to Christ

19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.
 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;
 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.
 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.
 23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

The Importance of Self-Discipline

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.
 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;
 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Israel—An Example of Apostasy

10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;
 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
 3 and all ate the same spiritual food;
 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.
 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.
 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.
 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.” [Exod 32:6]
 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. [Num 25:1–9]
 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. [Num 21:4–9]
 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. [cf. Num 11:1–3]
 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.
 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Paul Argues Against Participating in Pagan Festivals

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.
 15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say.
 16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?
 17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.
 18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?
 19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?
 20 *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.
 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

A Specific Example of How to Deal With Issues of Conscience

23 All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.
 24 Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor.
 25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake;
 26 FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. [Ps 24:1]
 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake.
 28 But if anyone says to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols,” do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who informed *you*, and for conscience' sake;
 29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other *man's*; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?
 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?
 31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
 32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;
 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.
 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Honoring the Authority Structure of the Church

2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.
 3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

- 4 Every man who has *something* on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.
- 5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.
- 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.
- 7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.
- 8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;
- 9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.
- 10 Therefore the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on her head, because of the angels.
- 11 However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.
- 12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God.
- 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered?
- 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,
- 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.
- 16 But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

Concerning the Lord's Table

- 17 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.
- 18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.
- 19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.
- 20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,
- 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.
- 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.
- 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;
- 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
- 25 In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." [\[Luke 22:19–20\]](#)
- 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- 27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.
- 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
- 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.
- 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.
- 31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.
- 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.
- 33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
- 34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

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