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MAY 5, 2021
1 CORINTHIANS 8-10 – Winning By Losing

LAST TIME -- 1 CORINTHIANS 5-7

QUESTIONS OF SEX, MARRIAGE & LAW COURTS

SUMMARY

1. (5) “All things may be lawful” (we live under grace not law) BUT
 - There is NO “liberty” to bed your father’s wife!
2. (5) Church Discipline is vital – but ultimately for helping the person AND the community; not punishing
3. (6) Lawsuits between Believers in secular courts is “defeat”!
4. (6) What we do with our bodies matters
 - “What” we allow to enter is not so important as . . .
 - “Who” we allow to enter in → primarily God (the body is God’s temple)
 - Sex is like a “sacrament” – not just a physical joining of a man and a woman but signifying a deeper permanent union.
5. (7) Sex in Marriage –
 - Assumed by Paul to be part of the relationship
 - Not necessarily just for procreation;
 - Takes place by mutual consent (Paul advocates repeatedly for mutuality)
6. (7) Divorce for those married to an “unbeliever”—(not a situation addressed by Jesus)
 - “Stay” if possible BUT “Go” if asked . . .
 - Remember Christians in general
 - do not *contract* purity/unholiness,
 - but *convey* purity/holiness (remember Good Samaritan?)
6. (7) Want to Marry? . . . *slow down* before taking action . . .
 - Remember the urgency of the times,
 - Remember your primary calling and ministry

- Remember that singleness and marriage are both equal callings
- Remember the responsibilities of a family
- BUT ALSO -- Remember the temptations of the society around you

7. (7) Want to remarry after spouse death? . . . Sure . . . but *slow down*!
 - seek blessing where you are

LAST TIME: MY BIG QUESTION

Q. Where Does Paul’s Teaching Come From?

1. A. Old Testament Scripture/Hebrew Bible
2. A. Jesus! . . . “The Lord” . . .

e.g. Themes in 1 Corinthians 5-7 that can be seen in the Gospels

Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)

1. Jesus’ words are more important than the Law of Moses –
 - yet he speaks of a higher, not a lower standard (internalizes the 10 Commandments)
 - Exceeding the morality of non-Christians
2. Being a Healing Community of Reconciliation & Justice
 - Passionate to sort out broken relationships (more important than worship)
 - Establishing processes for community reconciliation
4. Being willing to suffer injustice if necessary (turn other cheek)

Matthew 18:15-20, 19:28

5. Church discipline with Jesus present!
 - Processes for reconciliation
 - Processes for . . . “excommunication” from the community as a last resort
6. The Moral discernment Jesus expects of his followers as legitimate “judges” (in heaven, so on earth) – 19:28

Matthew 9:10-17

7. Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners (does not judge those outside the church)

1 CORINTHIANS 8--10

Matthew 15:18-20

8. Morality List, purity and the body (linked to the 10 C's)
... *what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.*"

Matthew 19:3-6

9. Jesus on marriage—primacy of creation/Genesis 1-2 –
- Male and female
 - Joined as One flesh--Divorce not option except adultery

Luke 12:1-2

- 10 Jesus on hypocrisy – our witness to others (leaven of the Pharisees)

Matthew 24

11. Jesus on the Impending crisis/sense of urgency,
- the stress on families,
 - the need for constant vigilance/"watchfulness"

Gospel Equality between Men & Women?

Jesus' disciples are all men

– but is there a trajectory? E.G.,

- Support *from* Women (Luke 8:2-3)
- Care of Women
 - Samaritan Woman at well (John 4)
 - Mary/Martha – close friends (John 11; Luke 10)
 - Woman with hemorrhage (Matt. 9:20-22)
- Women as witnesses at the empty tomb (Matt.28:1-10)

Continuing . . .

PAUL'S "MOTIVATING FACTORS"

The Basic General Question is:

If we do not live under the law of Moses, but under grace,

- What is the shape of Christian liberty?
- What does this life of grace "outside" the law of Moses
 - look like?
 - Is it the same as 'libertinism'?
 - Are there no constraints?

I. WHAT DID JESUS SAY AND DO? AM I "FOLLOWING HIM?"

1. Love:

- a. The primacy of love over all else – including "knowledge";
- b. Love for "Little Ones" Place no stumbling blocks in front of "little ones"
- c. Love for "Brothers" in the family

2. Jesus' Resurrection & Relationship:

- a. If Jesus is alive – am I pleasing my living friend or disappointing him?
- b. Am I stretching the relationship to the limit or strengthening it?

3. Jesus' Death: Who did Christ die for – can I love them less?

4. Our Witness: Be . . . salt of the earth, light of the world, etc.

Specifically in 1 Corinthians 8-10 . . . Paul thinks the Corinthians should be motivated by the following questions . . .

1. The Family Jesus says we are in
 - What do I owe members of my family?
 - Who do I ultimately want to please?
2. The Choices Jesus Made and calls us to make:
 - Am I person who insists on (and needs to insist on) my rights,
 - or do I experience a freedom to serve – to focus on my love and responsibilities?

3. Our Witness: What promotes the Gospel/Jesus Among Gentiles?
4. Our Concern for other's well-being – their growth: What builds someone up? Instead of destroying them?
- 5.

A Second (but related) Motivation

II. WHAT DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT (LAW) SAY?

... not "Authoritative Law" but still "God's Word"

See 1 Corinthians 9:8-10

Does not **the law** also say the same? [also, Jewish]

⁹For it is written in the law of Moses,

"You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."

Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

¹⁰Or does he not speak entirely for our sake?

See 1 Corinthians 10:1-6

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that "our ancestors" were [DR: all set free]

- 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 drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did.

LET'S READ ...

Remember Paul is responding to a report or letter

... so we have to guess at ... (I'll give you my opinion!)

- what the Corinthians are saying
- what Paul is saying

CHAPTER 8

¹Now, Concerning Food Sacrificed To Idols:

CORINTHIANS

we know (as you Corinthians have said)

that "**all of us possess knowledge.**"

KNOWLEDGE -- Background in Corinth

- Culture I which education & knowledge is prized
- Greek (philosophy)

KNOWLEDGE -- Paul's Motivating Influences

-- Paul's own background – Biblical and Religious Knowledge

Galatians 1:14 *"I advanced in Judaism more than any of my contemporaries, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."*

-- Paul's Own Experience

Yet he got it wrong about Jesus! -- *The cross turns human wisdom upside down* (1 Corinthians 1:20-25)

-- Paul's view of history – There's more to come!!

1 Corinthians 13¹²⁻¹³

"Now we see through a mirror dimly, but then, face to face.

Now I KNOW in part, but then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

YET ...

He does want the Corinthians to KNOW

- Jesus' Teaching
- The Old testament/Hebrew Bible

QUOTE: (David Brooks, NYT, April 16, 2021

When wisdom has shown up in my life, it's been less a body of knowledge and more a way of interacting, less the dropping of secret information, more a way of relating that helped me stumble into my own realizations. People only change after they're understood.

The really good confidants – the people we go to for wisdom – are more like story editors than sages. They take in your story, accept it, but prod you to reconsider it so you can change your relationship to your past and future ... It is this skillful, patient process of walking people to their own conclusions that feels like wisdom ...

PAUL

1. *(here's what I think)* **Knowledge** puffs up, but **love** builds up.
2. ² Anyone who claims to **know** something does not yet have the necessary **knowledge**;
3. ³ but anyone who **loves** God is known by him. (Rom 5:6)

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols,

CORINTHIANS

(as you have said) we **know** that

1. **“no idol in the world really exists,”**
2. **and that “there is no God but one.”**

⁵ [Yes]Indeed! even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords — ⁶yet for us there is

- *one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and for whom we exist,*
- *and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we exist.*

PAUL

(But what about the church as a whole? Your Church family? Are you thinking of them too?)

⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this **knowledge**.

(in head, maybe; but heart? . . . not sunk in)

- Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now,
- they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol;
- and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

1. *(Remember Jesus' teaching on the food laws)*

⁸Food will not bring us close to God.

2. *(Remember Jesus; example of true liberty: the power to push an issue OR to let it go and serve)*

- We are no worse off -- **if we do not eat**,
- and no better off -- if we do.

3. *(And remember Jesus specific teaching about caring for the weaker brothers and sisters)*

⁹But take care that this **liberty** of yours does not somehow become stumbling block to the weak (sick).

¹⁰For if others see **you, who possess knowledge**, **eating in the temple of an idol**,

might they not, since their conscience is weak (sick), be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols?

¹¹So by your **knowledge**

1. those “weak ones (sick)” **for whom Christ died!** are destroyed.
- 2 ¹²But when you thus sin against **members of your family**,
3. and wound their conscience when it is weak (sick),
4. **you sin against Christ**.

¹³Therefore,

if food is a cause of their falling (**skandalizo**),

I will never eat meat,

so that I may not cause one of them to fall (**skandalizo**)

1. WHAT Teaching of Jesus is Paul referring to here?

Caring for the Weak/sick

Matthew 18:5-6

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

“If any of you become a cause to stumble (**skandalizo**)

for one of these little ones who believe in me,

it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Matthew 25

^{36/43}I was sick (weak) and you took (no) care **of me**,

^{40/45}As you did (did not do) it to one of the least of these, **my brothers**, you did it **to me**

Choosing not to do something” or “not exerting rights” for the sake of love

Philippians 2:6-7 . . . Jesus' Incarnation!!

Jesus . . . “did not count equality with God as something to be grasped/ exploited, but emptied himself . . .

PAUL CONTINUES in Chapter 9

- By EXPLORING true Christian “Liberty” – the liberty to “Let Go”
- while addressing
 - The issue of PASTOR COMPENSATION!!
 - The “strange” accusation of “not taking pay”

CHAPTER 9

Am I not free?

- Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?
- Are you not my work in the Lord?
- ²If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you;
- for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³This is my defense to those who would examine me.

(see the chain of authority below)

- ⁴Do we not have the right to our food and drink?
- ⁵Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do
 - the other apostles
 - and the brothers of the Lord
 - and Cephas?

⁶Or is it only **Barnabas** and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? (see Acts 15:39)

The Human Authority of Common Sense and Everyday Experience

- ⁷Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service?
- Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit?
- Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?

⁸Do I say this on human authority? [e.g., Paul’s, or Greek]

The Authority of the Old Testament

Does not the law also say the same? [also, Jewish]

⁹For it is written in the law of Moses,

“You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.”

Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

¹⁰Or does he not speak entirely for our sake?

It was indeed written for our sake,

for whoever plows should plow in hope and

whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop.

- ¹¹If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?
- ¹²If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?

Nevertheless, WE HAVE NOT MADE USE OF THIS RIGHT,

but we endure anything

rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

[*DR: The Example of the Old Testament & Greek Temple*]

- ¹³Do you not know that
 - those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple,
 - and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar?

The Authority of Jesus

- ¹⁴In the same way, **the Lord commanded** that
 - those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

Matthew 10:9-10 . . . Jesus said . .

⁹Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; *for laborers deserve their food.* (also Luke 10:7)

¹⁵**But I have made no use of any of these rights,**

nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case.

Indeed, I would rather die than that—no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting!

⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for [*in my case*] an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!

¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission.

¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this:

that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as **not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.**

¹⁹For *though I am free* with respect to all,

I have made myself a slave to all, (Why? See Philippians.2)

so that I might win more of them.

- ²⁰**To the Jews** I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.
- **To those under the law** I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law.
- ²¹**To those outside the law** I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law.
- ²²**To the weak I became weak,** so that I might win the weak.

Paul then gives his summary explanation – the source of his power: a higher calling that gives him enormous personal flexibility . . . and liberty)

- I HAVE BECOME **ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE, THAT I MIGHT BY ALL MEANS SAVE SOME.**
- ²³I DO IT ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, SO THAT I MAY SHARE IN ITS BLESSINGS.

A HUMAN ILLUSTRATION OF PAUL’S SINGLE-MINDEDNESS

[The Isthmian Games]

²⁴ Do you not know that **in a race the runners** all compete,
but only one receives the prize?

Run in such a way that you may win it.

²⁵ **Athletes** exercise self-control in all things;
they do it to receive a perishable wreath,
but we an imperishable one.

²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly,
nor do I **box** as though beating the air;

²⁷ but I punish my body and **enslave it**,
so that after proclaiming to others
I myself should not be disqualified.

CHAPTER 10

A BIBLICAL (Old Testament) EXAMPLE

- OF IDOLATRY
- & OF THE DANGER OF TAKING GOD’S GRACE CHEAPLY

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that
“our ancestors”

-- *Our family by faith even if we are not Jews but Gentiles*

-- *The ones set free from slavery, and living in God’s grace*

- 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 drank from the spiritual rock that followed them,
and the rock was Christ.

⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them,
and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us,

so that we might not desire evil as they did.

⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did;
as it is written, “*The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.*”

⁸ **We must not** indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and
twenty-three thousand fell in a single day

⁹ **We must not** put Christ to the test (*playing fast and loose with grace*) as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents.

¹⁰ **And do not** complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by
the destroyer.

¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example,
and they were written down to instruct us,
on whom the ends of the ages have come.

² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall.

¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

¹⁴ THEREFORE, MY DEAR FRIENDS,
FLEE FROM THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS.

¹⁵ I SPEAK AS TO SENSIBLE PEOPLE;
JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES WHAT I SAY.

[An Example from Jesus/Communion; Israel/Sacrifices:
What Table do you belong to?]

¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?

The bread that we break,
is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we
all partake of the one bread.

¹⁸ **Consider the people of Israel;**
are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?

PAUL’S “TRUE KNOWLEDGE”

¹⁹ What do I imply then?
That food sacrificed to idols is anything,
or that an idol is anything?

²⁰ No!

I imply that what pagans sacrifice,
they sacrifice to demons and not to God.
I do not want you to be partners with demons.
²¹You 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.

²²Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy?
Are we stronger than he?
²³“*All things are lawful*,” but not all things are beneficial.
“*All things are lawful*,” but not all things build up.
²⁴**Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.**

[DR: SPECIFICS: The Marketplace]:

²⁵Eat whatever is sold in the meat market
without raising any question on the ground of conscience,
²⁶for “the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.” [Ps.24:1]

[DR: SPECIFICS: An Unbeliever’s Home]

²⁷If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go,
eat whatever is set before you
without raising any question on the ground of conscience.
²⁸But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,”
then do not eat it,
out of consideration for the one who informed you,
and for the sake of conscience
— ²⁹I mean the other’s conscience, not your own.

For -- “why should **my liberty**
be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience?”

³⁰[DR: far better to think this way:]
If I partake with thankfulness,
why should I be denounced (*blasphemed*)
because of that for which I give thanks?

CONCLUSION

³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do everything for the glory of God:
³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks
or to the church of God,

³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do,
not seeking my own advantage, but that of many,
so that they may be saved.
^{11:1} Be imitators of me [DR: only insofar] as I am of Christ.

EXPLICIT MOTIVATION PASSAGES

EATING “IDOL MEAT” Ch.10

³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God:

³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks
or to the church of God, [**salt, etc.**]

³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do,
not seeking my own advantage, but that of many,
so that they may be saved. [*Jesus' death*]

^{11:1} Be imitators of me [DR: only insofar] as I am of Christ.

⁸So by your **knowledge** those “weak believers”

1. **for whom Christ died** are destroyed.

2 ¹²But when you thus sin against **members of your family**,

3. and wound their conscience when it is weak, (Matt.18:6)

4. **you sin against Christ.**

Matt. 18:5-6: Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

WILLINGNESS TO LET GO OF RIGHTS Ch.9

¹² . . . **We have not made use of this right**, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

¹⁹For *though I am free* with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, (cf. Phil.2) so that I might win more of them.

- ²⁰**To the Jews** I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.
- **To those under the law** I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law.
- ²¹**To those outside the law** I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law.
- ²²**To the weak I became weak**, so that I might win the weak.
- I have become *all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.*

²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

NOT TESTING CHRIST Ch. 10

⁹**We must not** put Christ to the test, as some of (our ancestors escaping slavery in Egypt) did, and were destroyed by serpents.

Issues of eating and drinking in Jesus (Mark 7:19; Rom 14:7)

Last Supper

Tax Collectors and sinners

Drunkard and glutton

All things clean

Caring for the we in faith

- [DR: *better if a millstone*: Matt.18:6]
- For whom Christ died v.11

Earning your living

- 9:14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that
 - those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (Matt.10:10; Luke 10;7)

Serving

⁹For *though I am free* with respect to all,
I have made myself **a slave** to all, (cf. Phil.2)

THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES – 10:1ff