

1Corinthians – Week 37

I. Review: Chapter 10:12-22

- A. Paul is telling them to learn from Israel's mistakes.
- B. Keep a humble view of yourself: don't be thankless; don't grumble; flee immorality and idolatry (v. 14)!
- C. God promises to enable His people to overcome temptations that may come their way!
 - i. However: It is important to note that Israel tested God and were disciplined for it (vs. 9).
 - ii. Therefore, we are not to put God to the test by deliberately placing ourselves in tempting situations!
- D. Paul uses the Lord's Supper to explain why the Christians at Corinth should abstain from feasts dedicated to idols.

II. Continuation: Chapter 10:23-11:1

- A. Paul continues on the venue of meats sacrificed to idols...
- B. 1Cor. 10:23-24 (ESV), "*All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.*"
 - i. Earlier in 6:12, Paul used this phrase to show that not everything is helpful nor should we be enslaved by anything.
 - ii. Now, Paul uses this phrase to show the Corinthians that whatever violates the conscience of others or discourages others is not helpful and therefore, should not be done.
 - iii. Consider the attitude of Christ:
 - 1. Matthew 17:24-27 (ESV), "*When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, 'Does your teacher not pay the tax?' ²⁵He said, 'Yes.' And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?' ²⁶And when he said, 'From others,' Jesus said to him, 'Then the sons are free. ²⁷However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.*"
 - a. The sons of kings are exempt from tolls and taxes.
 - b. Jesus, being the Son of God, is exempt from paying temple tax since it is His Father's temple.
 - c. But as to not cause needless opposition, Jesus paid the tax, because Jesus was more concern with souls than with money.
 - iv. Paul's point:
 - 1. The well-being of one's neighbor is of primary importance.
 - 2. The exercise of all one's liberties is of secondary importance.
 - v. The Corinthians viewed their freedom as an opportunity to pursue their own interests. Paul viewed it as an opportunity to benefit and build up another person.
- C. 1Cor. 10:25-26 (ESV), "*Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶For 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.'*"
 - i. As Paul said earlier in 1Cor. 8:8 (ESV), "*Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.*"
 - ii. Food that is received with thanksgiving is acceptable for human consumption, assuming that it is wholesome (cf. vs. 30; 1Tim. 4:3-5).
 - iii. Paul quotes Psalm 24:1, showing that all that is in the Earth comes from the Lord, including meats.

- D. 1Cor. 10:27 (ESV), *“If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.”*
- i. The invitation in view must be to the home of an unbeliever for a meal rather than to a pagan temple for participation in a religious feast, since Paul already discouraged the Corinthian Christians from attending pagan feasts in the previous verses.
 - ii. This freedom may have been hard for many Jewish Christians to accept (cf. Acts 10:28; 11:2-3). Nevertheless they had the freedom to eat at an unbeliever’s home.
 - iii. For the sake of conscience, do not ask if the meat was offered to an idol.
- E. 1Cor. 10:28-29a (ESV), *“But if someone says to you, ‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’ then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—²⁹I do not mean your conscience, but his.”*
- i. But if you are told that the meat was offered to an idol, do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you.
 - ii. God is glorified when Christians define Christianity by what they do and do not do.
 1. Christians are not to conform to the pattern of world, but help the world conform to the pattern of Christ (cf. Romans 12:2).
 2. Christians must be careful not to do anything that will cause anyone to stumble.
 3. A Christian’s life ought to define what Christianity is! A bad example can cause others to stumble...
 - a. Consider the example of Peter:
 - i. Galatians 2:11-13 (ESV), *“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.”*
- F. 1Cor. 10:29b-30 (ESV), *“For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience?³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?”*
- i. Judging by the contents of chapters 8-10, Paul is not asking these questions as a personal complaint, but rather, he is denouncing the attitude that gives rise to such questions:
 1. Why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? Because a person’s spiritual welfare is more important than your Christian freedoms.
 2. If I give thanks to the Lord for the food I eat, why am I denounced? Because you are no longer acting in love when your actions causes others to stumble (cf. Romans 14:15; 1Cor. 8:1, 9-11).
- G. 1Cor. 10:31-11:1 (ESV), *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.^{11:1} Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*
- i. Let everything be done with this view in mind: that it may glorify God! (2Cor. 5:9)
 - ii. Let God’s love show through you when you are in the presence of Jews, Gentiles or fellow Church members.
 1. Consider the words of Peter...
 - a. 1Peter 3:15-16 (ESV), *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”*
 - iii. Paul calls his gospel children to imitate him as he imitates Christ!