

1Corinthians – Week 32

I. Review

A. 1Cor. 8

- i. The Corinthians had a question regarding meats offered to idols.
- ii. Food will not make us more or less acceptable to God!
- iii. Therefore, a Christian is no better or worse if he eats meats offered to idols.
- iv. However, love says, “Don’t do anything that may cause others to stumble.”

II. Continuation

A. In chapter 9, Paul uses himself as an example of one who waives his freedoms for the good of others...

B. 1Cor. 9:1-3 (ESV), “*Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ²If to others I am not an apostle, 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.*”

i. Paul, as usual, uses rhetorical questions to make his point:

1. Am I not free? Don’t I have the same freedom as every person in Christ has?
2. Am I not an apostle?

a. The qualification: I have seen the risen Lord! (Acts 1:21; 9, 22)

b. The fruit: You, Gentiles, are my workmanship!

i. He was called to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).

c. In 2Cor. 12:12, Paul further explains that his apostleship was authenticated signs, wonders and mighty works done among them (cf. Acts 2:43).

3. Why did Paul ask these questions?

a. Because the Lord’s apostles had the right to get financial support from those who believed and received their message...

b. 1Cor. 9:4 (ESV), “*Do we not have the right to eat and drink?*”

i. In other words, “Don’t I (and Barnabas) have a right to accept support from the “*workmanship*”?”

ii. He continues to say...

c. 1Cor. 9:5-6 (ESV), “*Do we not have the right to take along 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?*”

i. In other words, the other apostles and ministers had wives accompany them on their journeys and the Lord’s people supported them!

ii. Peter, the great apostle, had a wife, and the Church supported them as a family!

1. Paul may have mentioned Cephas separately because he has a strong following at Corinth (cf. 1Cor. 1:12)

iii. Therefore, as an apostle, Paul asks, “Don’t I (and Barnabas) have the right to marry and receive financial support for us and our wives?”

iv. By the way: It is good to note that:

1. Jesus had physical brothers (cf. Matthew 13:55).

a. Some say that Mary remained a virgin after Jesus’ birth.

2. Peter (Cephas) had a wife.

a. Some say that Peter was the first pope.

b. Popes are supposed to be celibate.

- d. Paul now uses human affairs to further make his point...
 - i. 1Cor. 9:7 (ESV), *“Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?”*
 - 1. The work of the church is like warfare (fighting the enemy); agriculture (caring for God’s vineyard) and shepherding (feeding and serving God’s sheep)
 - 2. Paul’s point: Since nobody does this, shouldn’t Barnabas and I be getting financial support from you!
- e. Now Paul goes from human authority to scriptural authority...
 - i. 1Cor. 9:8-11 (ESV), *“Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? ⁹For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.’ Is it for oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. ¹¹If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?”*
 - 1. Paul quotes Deut. 25:4
 - a. Even an ox is to be allowed to eat as it works.
 - b. And since God cares about an ox, how much more does He care about the ministers who labor in His field?
 - 2. Is it too much if we reap material things from you? (notice how Paul, in his tone, shows that material things are less valuable than spiritual things).
 - 3. His point is simple: I have the freedom to acquire financial help from you! BUT... I don’t exercise this right and Paul explains why...
 - ii. 1Cor. 9:12 (ESV), *“If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even 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.”*
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas waived this freedom so that no obstacle is placed before the way of the gospel!
 - a. This dismantled any evil suspicion that Paul and his companion were preaching the gospel for financial gain.
 - 2. We endure anything implies they rather go through hardships than to put an obstacle in the way of the gospel (see 2Cor. 11:9, where Paul said he was in need, yet did not burden the Corinthians.)
 - 3. Paul’s point: In the same way, do not eat meats that will put an obstacle in the way of your brother!

- iii. **1Cor. 9:13-14 (ESV), “Do 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 the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.”**
 - 1. Paul appealed to the common Jewish practice, which was also prevalent in pagan religions, of allowing those who minister in religious matters to gain physical support from those they serve.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus even commanded that ministers get paid for their spiritual service:
 - a. **Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7**
 - i. Both of these passages imply that those sent out to preach are to have their needs met by those who benefited from their message.
- f. Paul further explains why he waived his rights for financial support
 - i. **1Cor. 9:15-18 (ESV), “But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. ¹⁶For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”**
 - 1. What was Paul’s boasting? That he presents the gospel free of charge!
 - a. He did not want anything, like getting support from the Corinthians, to take that boasting away.
 - 2. Paul cannot boast in the fact that he preaches the gospel.
 - a. For those who choose to carry the gospel to the lost should get their support from those who believe.
 - b. However, Paul implies, “I was commissioned by the Lord Himself, and therefore, I am a steward”
 - i. Paul implies: “Should a steward boast in what he does?” (cf. Luke 17:10).
 - ii. But, if I preach the gospel without cost, dismantling any potential obstacles, including accusations that I am all about the money, then I have something to boast about!
- g. By the way...
 - i. Paul did receive financial support from other churches but did not want to put a stumbling block to the Corinthians:
 - 1. In 2Cor. 11:7-9, he received help from other churches as to not burden the Corinthians, and even when he was in need, he did not ask help from them and continued not to.