

correcting carnality

1 CORINTHIANS

Sermon Series Notes



"Christian Freedom" (I Corinthians 8)

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Intro: Paul had received a letter from the church at Corinth with questions on various issues. So far he's answered questions regarding marriage, divorce and singleness. And now chapter eight

v.2 Jer.9: 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD."

* Some in the church at Corinth claimed superior spiritual knowledge, especially regarding their "freedom" in Christ. They flaunted their freedom, looking down upon anyone who criticized them. Some were simply using their Christian freedom to indulge the sinful nature. And of course some tended toward legalism.

v.7 They cannot disassociate the food from it's connection to idolatry

v.8 Matthew 15: 11 What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

I. OUR RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

A. The specific issue of I Cor.8

1. What he's eating

- See I Cro.10:25; Some people were wondering whether they should even buy meat from the market, because it was leftover meat from the local temple.

2. Where he's eating

- Christians in Corinth still had personal associations with unbelievers. As a result, they might be invited to have a meal at an idol's temple, or accept an invitation to eat in someone's home, and the meat for the meal would be meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. What if your spouse's favorite place to eat was down at the temple of Zeus?

3. Who he's eating with

- Luke 15: 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

4. Why he's eating

5. Who's watching

B. Defining The Weak And The Strong

* The weaker brother is one who is young in the faith and has not had time to mature. The stronger believer is of course one who has been taught the truth and in time has grown in knowledge of the believer's freedom in Christ. Due to his lack of knowledge and maturity, the **weaker** brother is the stricter of the two.

* Note: The one who is writing this is Paul, once a Pharisee of Pharisees. He could have easily remained a weaker brother after his conversion experience; Things he had learned as a believer? See I Tim.4:1-5; Col.2:16-17; I Cor.10:23-30; Mark 7:19.

C. Issues Regarding Christian Freedom (Rom.14)

1. Meat verses vegetables (Rom.14:1-2)

- Some Jewish Christians in Rome came to the conclusion that a vegetarian diet was the safest because it was so difficult to be sure the meat was kosher in Rome. So an anti-meat-eating segment of the church was formed in Rome.

- Hallelujah Acres video, God never intended man to eat meat Ken Graves

2. Sacred days (Rom.14:5-8)

- Jesus was repeatedly accused of violating the Sabbath guy back at the Warehouse who stood and began preaching about the Sabbath.

- When I was growing up, mowing the lawn, fishing, etc were taboo on Sunday.

- Sunday and Monday dedicated to worship of the sun and moon. Tuesday named for the Norse god Tyr or Tiw, Wednesday for Wooden's day, Thursday was Thor's day, Friday the Day of Frige, the Norse goddess of beauty, Saturday was for Saturn, the Roman god of time. January is the month of the Roman god Janus, march for Mars, May for the Greek goddess Maia, etc.

3. Alcohol (v.21)

- Some teach that it is sin to ever partake of an alcoholic beverage.

- What about churches who use the real stuff for communion? At Brett's wedding, smell of wine in Germany, Navigator who had a beer with his lunch

- See Matt.11:17-19; Luke 1:15; Jesus' first miracle

- C.S. Lewis; Martin Luther

4. Tobacco

- Two of the most famous Christians in the Victorian Era in England were Charles Spurgeon and Joseph Parker. Early in their ministries they fellowshiped and even exchanged pulpits. Then they had a disagreement, and the reports got into the newspapers. Spurgeon accused Parker of being unspiritual because he attended the theater. Spurgeon was condemned by many because he smoked cigars. Who was right, and who was wrong?

- I think tobacco is unhealthy, but so is overeating, etc.

- Visiting Buck Biandbo at the theatre

5. Music

- Frank Garlock study at Emmanuel giving up my drums, having a hard time with any kind of music that had a beat ever listen to a heartbeat?

6. Dancing

- Traveling with Youth Aflame in College, high school where they had a dance class, Doug Warner thought it was great, but I had real problems with it; then began changing our high school program, adding what I considered dancing (they called it choreography). I went to our leader and told him I was really struggling with it.

- Pastor, can we dance at Calvary Chapel? Some can, some can't!

7. Playing cards

- I was told that one of our leaders had an issue with playing cards being used in the Rec area; We play No limit Texas hold em

8. Fashion

- Camp Freedom and jewelry, blue jeans, pants on women, earrings on men. Asking Ted Maphuis about his earring Deut.15: 17 then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your maidservant.

9. Bible translations, Easter eggs, Christmas trees

D. Responsibility For Both The Strong And The Weak (Rom.14:3-4)

1. The strong must not despise the weak

- the danger is that when God has shown us truth pride can lead to spiritual conceit and dogmatism, which is usually accompanied by contempt for anyone who thinks differently. (Redpath)

- We are not to be guided by knowledge but rather by love (see I Cor.13:1-3).

2. The weak must not judge the strong

* Rom.14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.

* Criticism does not necessarily = condemnation

* Jesus was criticized often

II. BIBLICAL GUIDELINES REGARDING CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

A. Maintain A Clear Conscience In Everything You Do

* I Cor.10: 31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

* Acts 24: 16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

B. Don't Use Freedom As A Cover Up For Evil

* I Peter 2:16; Gal.5:13

C. Live In Consideration of Weaker Brothers And Sisters

* Be careful what freedom you exercise publically (Rom.14:22)

* Charles Spurgeon, at the height of his fame, was one day walking down the street and saw a sign which read, 'We sell the cigars Spurgeon smokes,' whereupon Spurgeon gave up the habit.

D. Learn The Difference Between A Weaker Brother & A Bothersome Bigot.

* Bigot: One obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his own church, party, belief, or opinion.

* Dr. Kroll, Romans class have to determine who is a weaker brother and who is a pain in the neck.

* They express little or no joy & self-righteously look down on others who do not follow their standards.

* They are exclusive

- Group in Israel that refused to have communion with the group

* They do not mature beyond their legalistic opinions

- Matt.11: 17 "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners."' But wisdom is proved right by her actions."

* There is no mercy in their ministry

- Matthew 12: 7 'If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. (See Matthew 9:13, and context here in Matt.12).

* They strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! (Matt.23:24)

- They so focus on the external non-essentials & fail to examine the genuine fruit of someone's life.

- Matt.23: 25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

* They will not be led into sin by a Christian exercising their freedom, but will only become more self-righteous.

* Voluntary limiting of our freedom is not meant to subject us to the prejudices of Christians who are well established in the faith but persistent in sub-Biblical legalism.

E. Understand The Ultimate Goal (15:1-13)

* We will not be able to conform to everyone's opinions and standards on these issues. If the whole church was identified by the standards and opinions of the weaker brother, then the whole church would become narrow minded and legalistic.

CONCLUSION

* Some of us may have a hard time accepting some of the issues regarding Christian freedom. Don't worry, some of the greatest servants for Christ had the same challenge (see Acts 10:9-16ff; 11:1-3ff).

* Believe as I believe, No more no less, That I am right, and no one else, confess, feel as I feel, think as I think, eat what I eat, and drink but what I drink, Look as I look, do always as I do, Then, and only then, will I fellowship with you.

* In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love.