

A Letter to Messed Up People Part 21

“A Study of 1st Corinthians”

I Corinthians 10:23-33

All Scripture is the very breath of God therefore I will strive to know it and live in its truths.

Introduction: Let's begin with context

A. The church of Corinth is struggling

1. Idolatry, immorality, pride and ceaseless complaining has creep in and among the believers in the church.

= Paul who loves this church this is how he greets them 1 Corinthians 1:3-4 ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I thank ~~to~~my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,

- But he has received these reports concerning these things that are going on and because of his love for God and God's people he writes, under the inspiration of God, this letter to these messed up people which we can so readily identify with.

Transition: When we come to verse 23 Paul is wrapping up this issue concerning idolatry and doing things in Christian liberty just because we can when it is offensive to weaker believers.

- A. So in these last 10 verses of chapter 10 we have somewhat of a conclusion to some of these issues.
- B. Paul starts with four declarative phrases:

1. "All things are lawful" now how are we to take such a statement

- This statement alone is a great opportunity for the Corinthians to take out of context.

➤ There are some who would claim that because we have been saved by grace, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God that there is nothing that can't do, then to proceed to do anything that even the flesh desires with no fear of repercussion

- But that is exactly what God is telling us: There is no way to thwart the grace of God; there is no way to lose that which God has sealed in us.

2. But, next phrase, not all things are profitable!

- The Greek word is "sumphero" and it means to bring together.

= There is no argument made that there is something we can do to that would separate us from our relationship with God.

➤ Not the issue, the issue is that there are things that should not be done because it does not bring us together as the family of God!

= So now we have been given yet another reason not to do some things just because we can!

■ Church we would all agree that there is nothing wrong with telling the truth, Amen?

- So should we always tell the truth?
- Yes if we are going to say anything but what if the truth doesn't need to be told.
- What if not saying anything, particularly to someone outside of the situation would serve best to hold us together.

- There are times when the truth must be told hold the body together but there are times when it truly is best not to say anything because it will only serve to harm and not encourage!
 - We cannot hide behind Christian liberty to gossip and back bite our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Most often we only have a perception of the truth any way!
- **All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable** 1 Corinthians 10:23a
 - 3. Paul reiterates in next phrase: All things are lawful but 4th phrase but not all things edify.
 - Edify means to make things better: There are simply some things that we should not do not because they are wrong in themselves but it simply will not make things better!
- **24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.** 1 Corinthians 10:24

I. It is Better to Edify Another than to Gratify Ourselves verse 23-24

A. This fly's in the face of everything that the world teaches us.

1. Take the bull by the horns!
2. Be all you can be!
3. Do what it takes to get to the top!
4. Don't let anyone stand in your way!
5. On and on.

= We live in a culture where this mindset, which is really a heart set anything else is foreign to us.

- What would need to change if our lives were going to reflect the precepts of verse 23-24?

B. The whole way we think naturally is pride and seeks out self-gratification.

- But here is one of those live by verses: *³¹ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - The reason we seek not our own good but the good of our neighbor is not because we can somehow become good and unselfish but God is good and while we were yet sinners He sent Christ to die for us.
 - The purpose of our lives is not to be popular or successful in view of man but that our lives would in everything we do bring exposure to the glory of God!

Transition: With our guide do nothing out of self-gratification but seeking to build up others in God's kingdom it brings into clear view the liberty and freedom we have in the grace of God.

II. Leave behind Legalism and Walk in Christian Freedom verse 25-27

READ

- A. Through all this instruction there is no suggestion that man walk according to rule that man has established as God's rules.
1. That is legalism: When man decides based on his own feeling or wisdom what is right or wrong then he has turned to legalism as a way of life.

= Most of the time legalism only shows itself when we are looking at someone else's life!

- Paul relates if you go to the market you don't even need to ask if the meat was sacrificed to idols because it doesn't really matter, don't worry about it.
- God owns everything; everything on earth belongs to him!

- God did not give us the gift of salvation for us to feel guilty all the time because we do not measure up to what man has determined as right or wrong.

B. Jesus came and died that the guilt would be gone, far too many believers are living lives walking on egg shells as if there salvation is fragile and based on their ability to keep some set of rules.

- Church, God's salvation is not fragile: *13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, ^aElijah; but still others, ^bJeremiah, or one of the prophets." 15 He ^{*}said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are ^cthe Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon ^dBarjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 I also say to you that you are ^ePeter, and upon this ^frock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

Matthew 16:13-18

= **John Calvin wrote:** *The devoted mind does not dream up any god it pleases, but contemplates the one and only true God. And it does not attach to him whatever it pleases, but is content to hold him to be as he manifests himself; furthermore, the mind always exercises the utmost diligence and care not to wander astray, or rashly and boldly go beyond his will. It thus recognizes God because it knows that he governs all things; and trust that he is its guide and protector, therefore giving itself over completely to trust him.*

= Church the greatest danger in legalism is that it trust ourselves.

Transition: Now church the third and final point!

III. It does not Glorify God to Purposely Offend a fellow Believer Verse 28-33

A. Paul responds to his own question what does it matter what man thinks as long as I give thanks and feel good about it myself:

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

1. Paul's goal is not to man's whims but to share the glory of God to those that are struggling and those that do not know it or have experienced it.

= It is a man full of pride that says I can do whatever I want to do and if it offends then so be it!

➤ That is not the purpose of the Christian liberty that we enjoy in our relationship with God through Christ!

== The purpose of the freedom we have in the redemption through Christ is to glorify God in everything that we do!

• *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

2. Paul says I am not going to purposely offend the Jew or the Gentile or any of the church of God.

➤ Not because I can't but because I want to glorify God!

B. Here is the precept if I don't constantly seek my own agenda and care for my brother, it is the greatest witness to other of the glory of God.

1. Because church that is not simply something that we do within ourselves.

■ But what does it say to world around us when regardless of disagreement we look out for one another.

Closing: With this passage Paul puts a period to this eating the meat of idols thing.

A. God is not teaching us to be man pleasers, to go along with sin and to ignore false doctrine.

1. The precept is best illustrated in the 1 Corinthians 10:14-17 *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.*

= Church over the years I have seen so much falling out between believers over things that really have little if any substance just because one or both parties had to be right.

= One or neither was willing concede!

= No one was willing to go to the other and say I know we disagree but we have drank from the same Spiritual cup of redemption so can we let it go and glorify God!

= We say we want to be shining lights to a lost world that other would come to a saving knowledge of Christ yet we find ourselves offending one another over things that have no real relevance.

- *³¹ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 10:31