

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 19TH - 20TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE (1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-3)

Many within the church at Corinth before conversion were most likely a **part of religious sacrifices in pagan temples**.

- Worship to idols and everyday events went hand-in-hand at this time.
- The idea that Christians within the church were eating meat bought in the market **after being sacrificed to idols** would have been difficult for some to accept.

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE

Paul introduces this idea that, "...we all have knowledge." **Anyone who knows the teachings of Christ can claim this.**

- The true knowledge of Christ is of a much different quality though. It doesn't cause separation and division by "puffing up." **It generates a love that aims to build up.**
- Knowledge has had many benefits in society. Medical advances has decreased mortality rates from 25% for babies to 2.9% and youth from 46% to 4.6%
- Modern technology has helped **decrease extreme poverty globally** to one of the lowest points in history.
- Not to mention technology has given us access to more opportunity than at any time in history.
- All of these things are good things but when they become the means to an end in and of themselves the true value is lost.
- **Knowledge has a way of making us prideful** just as it was in Corinth. It can make us puffed up and give us an elitist view over others.
- **When we act in this way, we damage the Body of Christ, the Church.**
- To help diffuse any attempt for one to have pride and superiority Paul reminded the Corinthians that the **knowledge we have is only partial.** (vs.2)
- Christ alone possesses the full measure of knowledge and if we have relationship with Him, we will know only in part until His return.
- **Wisdom comes from humility before God, who alone knows all things.**

THE ROLE OF LOVE

It is only through love that knowledge finds its most desirable outcome.

- When we are growing in true knowledge controlled by love, **we are no longer concerned with how much we know about God**, but rather being known by God.
- This leads us not in pride about what we know, but **in humility about what we don't know.**
- The point Paul is wanting us to see is that showing off your knowledge to put on display, **will achieve nothing to build up the faith of fellow Christians.**
- Through our knowledge are people being brought closer to Christ?
- Are my fellow Christians being **strengthened in their faith?**

IDOLS (1 CORINTHIANS 8:3-6)

Paul begins to address the original question by **clarifying what an idol is and isn't in relation to God.**

- Idols in and of themselves were nothing but mere wood and stone. **They held no power especially over "The One" God who created everything.** (vs.4)
- Even the powers in which the idols represented held no power that Corinthians believed them too.
- **There is a freedom from knowing where true authority comes from.**
- This doesn't mean there are no inherent risks with idols - **there were demonic forces at work** behind the worship of these so called "gods."
- Because of this they could allow other influences in their lives as they **relied less on God's power and authority through Christ** (vs.6) and more on the authority of idols.
- As Paul will mention in chapter 10, **they should have no association with this**, as not to let demonic influence be present in their lives through idolatry.
- This may have been an issue for the Corinthians, but how does this affect me?
- **There are many things in our lives we can make idols**, giving them a place of authority over God's authority in our lives and allowing ourselves to be influenced by them.
- **Our hearts are idol making machines.** We may not use wood or stone, but we are very capable of finding our ultimate meaning, worth, and attributing value to many things besides God.
- **What are our idols? What are you invested in? Where does your money go?**
- All these things, just as in the times of the Corinthians, have no power over us except for what is given them.
- **An idol is nothing unless it becomes the object of your worship.**
- When we publicly advertise our allegiance to and testify of the power and worth of something in our lives, **we are worshipping it.**
- At some point in our lives we have been guilty of exchanging the glory of God for the worship of idols.
- **Anything we must consult before we obey and honor God in our lives is an idol.**

- Most of the things mentioned can have a place in your life as long as they don't become the object of your worship.
- **God alone is worthy of all worship, honor, and glory** - so don't give it to unworthy things.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM (1 CORINTHIANS 8:7-13)

APPEALING TO THE WEAK CONSCIENCE

For Corinthians at this time they had become **accustomed to meat always being a part of some form of idol worship.**

- Some realized that there was nothing inherently wrong with meat in and of itself and it was ok to eat.
- **Others couldn't get past the idea of its role in idol worship.**
- Though it is the weak conscience that has the problem, **Paul does not try and fix that conviction.** (vs.7)
- Paul instead addresses those who claim to have more knowledge in the matter and calls them to action, by reminding them that their rights and freedoms **do not make them a better Christian** in any way. (vs. 8)
- **On the contrary it may be a stumbling block, and cause others to sin.** (vs. 9)
- Some of us can be destroyed by doing things before our conscience is ready. Part of the reason is that we have **too many associations to that object or action** that causes us to relive our past sin. (vs. 10-11)
- So those of us who are free in this manner should not do things that we know our brother or sister can't handle or else **we are sinning against Christ.** (vs. 12)

OUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST

As a Christian **we have all freedom**, but because of that freedom in Christ, we have the freedom to give it up. (vs.13)

- We are called to love one another, just like Christ. (John 15:12-13)
- We should be willing to **give up anything that we know can cause others to stumble.** Just as Paul said, "I will never eat meat if it makes my brother stumble."
- **What are some things we should be willing to give up around people so as not to make them sin or be tempted in sin.**
- It is better to show someone you love them in Christ by doing everything in your freedom to keep them from sinning against Christ.
- John 13:12-17 and Philipians 2:1-11
- **No servant is greater than his master**, and if Jesus served and sacrificed his entire life on Earth by becoming a servant to all and pouring himself out as a sacrifice; **we should not expect a different outcome in our lives.**

HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE RELYING ON CHRIST TO FURTHER HIS KINGDOM BY NOT BECOMING A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR ANYONE?

- **First, we have to make sure that we are not blatantly sinning in the first place.**
- We need to search the Scripture and see what it says.
- **We need to seek council from other believers.**
- **Second, we need to be truthful with ourself and make sure that we are not in direct opposition to our own conscience.**
- Should I be doing what I am doing or is it going to leave a door open for sin?
- **What is the heart behind the decision?**
- **Third, will I be affecting any one by my decision that could hinder them and their walk with Christ?**
- Does it break my heart to see the brothers and sisters broken by sin?
- **Am I willing to do everything in my power to keep them from being tempted by that sin?**

JESUS IS CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS GOING ON IN OUR HEARTS IN RELATION TO WHAT WE ARE DOING.

- **Jesus told the rich young ruler to give up all and follow him, because he knew that his riches stood between him and his relationship with God.**
- Are we going to allow our freedoms stand in the way of our relationship with God?
- **We are called to take up our cross and die to ourselves daily, not to please ourselves.**
- True Christian Love is the only foundation to enjoy True Christian Freedom.
- **This is only found by "Knowing God" and being "Known By God."**