



Sunday October 13, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9

CHAPTER EIGHT

The apostle Paul turns his attention to another matter of question and a problem in the Corinthian church, which had to do with food offered to idols. Given their background, culture and location, this was something they had to face regularly.

Knowledge Must Be Held In Love (8:1-3)

1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

The Corinthians came from a deeply idolatrous background. They were so steeped in idolatry, that Paul mentions in chapter 12: "*You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.*" (1 Corinthians 12:2).

Side Note:

Please keep in mind that in the Bible, there are two kinds of idols:

idols that are objects - there are physical things that are worshipped as God or in the place of God.

idols of the heart - these are things we hold in our hearts that take the place of God and so obtain the attention and reverence that God alone deserves.

In this chapter, obviously Paul is addressing idols that are objects.

"things offered to idols" Greek *eidōlothuton* refers to anything offered in sacrifice to idols, also specifically to the flesh left over from the sacrifices that was either eaten at the feasts or sold (by the poor and the miserly) in the market. So the scenario is that in the market where meat was sold, there were meats that had previously been offered as a sacrifice to idols. These meats were often (not always) marked as such, perhaps with a specific symbol, to indicate that this was actually offered to an idol before being sold. To those who worshipped idols, this was "special" meat. The question was, should a believer who went to the market, now buy and eat such meat that was offered as a sacrifice to an idol?

Paul addresses this matter of eating things offered to idols, here in chapter 8, and later on once again in chapter 10.



Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

The people had knowledge because they had been taught the truth about idols now, but they became proud about their knowing the truth instead of walking in love.

Knowledge of the truth has to be held together in love. This is so important. We don't go around condemning others who worship idols, often because they do not know the truth about idols. We must walk in love.

2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

Even if we know the truth, we must also realize we don't know everything. If knowledge makes us proud, it is a sign of our ignorance. We don't know as we ought to know.

3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Loving God and loving people is of prime importance. When we love God, God knows us. How great is that! to be a person who God knows.

There Is No Other God (8:4-6)

4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

The idol is nothing. The idols is a lifeless physical object with no power of its own. There may be many things that are "so-called gods" and many objects that represent things in heaven and earth that are worshipped. However, there is no other God but the one true God, the Father, and the one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and for whom all things exist. This is truth we know.

So we are not fearful of an idol or of things offered to idols.

Paul will address the issue later in chapter 10, of demon spirits that are behind the idol, who actually receive the worship offered to the idol.



Not Every One Knows The Truth (8:7-8)

7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

Some people do not know the truth we know. For them, an idol is their 'god' and the object of their worship. Hence they eat what is offered to an idol, with "consciousness of the idol" that is as their act of worship toward that idol.

But we know that eating or not eating what was offered to an idol, does not affect us or change our relationship with God. Paul addresses this with further details in chapter 10. In 1 Timothy 4:3-5 when we pray over something before we eat, that food is sanctified (made holy) by the Word of God and prayer.

Our Knowledge And Liberty Should Not Cause Another To Stumble (8:9-13)

9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

The important thing is that the freedom we have because we know the truth, should not cause another person to do something wrong. Paul explains that if there is another person, especially a "weak brother" (a believer who is young, new in the faith, who does not know the truth about idols and food offered to idols as you do) who still has reverential fear of an idol and food offered to idols - if he sees you eat the food offered to an idol will mistakenly think that you are also reverencing the idol and worshipping the idol. The truth is you are not doing so. However, because of their ignorance, and by observing what you do, they are encouraged to do something wrong - which is eat food offered to idols as an act of worship. My action in such a situation actually causes the weak brother to sin, and I am therefore sinning against Christ. Hence, in such a situation, it is best not to eat meat offered to the idol.

We will address this again in further detail in chapter 10, and also consider other related Scripture from Paul's epistles.



CHAPTER NINE

Another major problem at the Corinthian church was that there were people who disputed Paul's claim to be an apostle. We see Paul address this matter in both his epistles to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, here in chapter 9, Paul for the first time, points to specific reasons why he is a true apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

An apostle is a "sent one". Someone authorized and sent to fully represent the One who sent him and carry out the commission (the purpose) for which he was sent. As believers we are all sent ones. Jesus said, "Go" and this was to all of us. Jesus said "As my Father has sent me, I send you" and this was for all of us. As we read through Paul's defense of his apostleship, we get to learn what it means to really serve the Lord Jesus Christ. These are truths all of us can apply to our lives and ministry.

Paul Defends And Explains Apostleship (9:1-15)

1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?

5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN." Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

This is what Paul points to as he defends his apostleship:

1) You are my work and the seal of my apostleship



2) I have not in any way abused my power - in fact I have not even used my "rights" as an apostle:

- a) Chose not to have a believing wife
- b) Chose not to stop working - kept working while ministering as an apostle
- c) Chose not to ask for material things in support while he ministered

Serving God is about people. Paul pointed to the Corinthians, their lives that had been transformed as fruit and proof that he was sent by God. We must learn to look at fruit ("results") in terms of how people's lives are changed, and not in terms of other factors e.g. reputation, popularity, etc.

Serving God requires sacrifice. Paul willingly chose to sacrifice. He chose to let of things he could legitimately enjoy in order to serve God. Are we willing to do this?

Paul - Apostleship is Stewardship (9:16-17)

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

There is a "necessity" and a "stewardship" in serving God. In the call of God there is a great sense of **responsibility** to God and to His people. There is also a great sense of **accountability** to God and to His people.

Serving God is stewardship - there is responsibility and accountability. Are we willing to be good stewards of what God has given to us - the resources, gifts, grace?

Paul - Apostleship Is Becoming All Things To All Men (9:19-23)

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;

21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;

22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.



Serving God is serving people, by willingly entering their world, becoming as they are, in order to reach them. Are we willing to do this?

As we look at our city, demographics are very complex. There are all kinds of people in all kinds of situations and challenges. While we cannot address all kinds of people - are we willing to step into the world of some, whom God sends us to. Stepping into people's world will not be easy or comfortable. There may be risks involved. There may be cultural shifts involved. There may be social taboos that we have to break past. It may require us to stretch in terms of our efforts, time, resources, etc. And yet are we willing to do this, for the Gospel's sake?

Paul - Apostleship Is Self-Governing Ability (9:24-27)

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Serving God requires self-governing ability. We must watch over our own lives as we serve the Lord.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday October 13, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *1 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Discuss the issue of food offered to idols - the practical situations you may have run into. How did you respond? What new learning can you take away from chapter 8? (Remember there is more on this in chapter 10).

2, Discuss each of the following in terms of us serving God today:

- (A) Serving God is about people.*
- (B) Serving God requires sacrifice.*
- (C) Serving God is stewardship - there is responsibility and accountability.*
- (D) Serving God is serving people, by willingly entering their world.*
- (E) Serving God requires self-governing ability.*

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.



FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.