

From Sinners to Saints

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

- Earlier Paul stated that he did not want to hinder the gospel, therefore he was willing to forgo rights and liberties that he could have insisted upon, like being supported by the Church. Instead he and those who ministered with him worked so that his detractors couldn't say that he was only in it for the money and not The Lord.
- The unsaved world is convinced that most ministers are only in it for the money, to take advantage of innocent people who are too naïve to discern that they are being swindled by con men. Sadly some of that is true, there are those who have turned religion into a racket to exploit and control people, and you see this when there is an overemphasis on money and not the spreading of the gospel and discipleship.

V16-27

- **V16-18** Paul says in these verses that he didn't choose to be a preacher but that it was a calling, for had he chosen it then he could have demanded payment for the work. I believe this is so key when it comes to ministry, that we didn't choose this for ourselves but it had chosen us, therefore you can no more stop doing it than you can stop breathing, that's how much a part of your ministry should be when you're called.
- So three things to write down > **1.** Paul saw everyday in the ministry as a reward and not a punishment, **2.** He regarded ministry as a calling, **3.** He viewed serving others as a privilege. In these three things we see the proper view of ministry > seeing helping and serving others as an opportunity to be a blessing and not a burden.
- **V19** here is why? Because he had laid down his rights, and that made him free from himself and the judgment of others. When The Lord sets us free we then have a choice to make > **1st** either we can be a servant to all, **2nd** we can expect God and others to serve us, the first sets us free to be used mightily by The Lord, the second keeps you in bondage for when things don't go your way you're ready to shut down.
- Example of this is found in > **Lk 10:38-42**- Martha appears to be serving everyone, but in actuality her acts were self serving, and when she saw that her sister wasn't helping as she thought she should, it all came to light. She then tells Jesus what Mary should be doing, and then tells Jesus what He should do.

- No matter how hard you try you cannot serve others without first making a choice to be a servant yourself, for once you make that choice regardless of what others do your joy comes from what God is allowing you to do. Think about Jesus He wasn't concerned with being served, He was concerned with everyone being blessed.
- Notice Jesus told Martha she was **Distracted**- in the Greek it means to be dragged all around, this led to her being worried and troubled, which caused her to think that she knew better than Jesus and could tell Him what He needed to do.
- **V20-23** this allowed Paul to meet both the Jews and the Greeks exactly where they were, if someone needed him to relate to Jewish culture to show them Jesus he would, if someone needed him to relate to Gentile culture he would to win them to Jesus, as being a servant means you are flexible able to adapt to the situation.
- If you are the type of person where things have to be a certain way, your way, then you are not going to win too many people to Jesus, as your too busy trying to make mini you's. We are called to make disciples who follow Jesus not carbon copies of us, and that means I have to be flexible in my approach and my service to others. That's what it mean "to become all things to all men" that they might become saved.
- **V24-27** here we see that the believer doesn't run the race to be saved or to get to heaven, that is already a done deal, we are in the race because we have been saved, and this is an opportunity for us to accrue some rewards for glory.
- In order for this to take place I need self control and spiritual discipline, for without it I'll disqualify myself. Meaning I will cheat to get by, and like an athlete who trains for an event or sport, there are certain rules they must abide by, if not then there will be penalties given to them for not following the rules. In order to be a soul winner Paul says we have to give up our rights and embrace self control and discipline.
- Many people falter right here and fall right back into their sinful lifestyle, because they believe the lie that they can't change, its too hard, read here change is not happening through your own power its through the power of The Lord. But you do have to want it, and therefore put yourself in position to receive it, by reading The Bible, praying to The Lord, coming to Church regularly, and serving others.