

Sermon 51: Selfless Service for the Glory of God: 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:23-33 "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: ³³ Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved..."

Introduction: 1 Corinthians 8-10 and the need for balance in the Christian life.

- **We need to develop a healthy conscience: 1 Corinthians 8:1**
"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth..."
- **We should not compromise it:**
 - **1 Corinthians 8:7** "Some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled..."
 - **1 Corinthians 10:28** "If any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof..."
 - **Romans 14:23** "Whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin..."
- **We should live in a distinctly Christian way: 1 Corinthians 10:14, 21** "My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry...Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils..."
- **Do not misapply general principles:**
 - **1 Corinthians 6:12** "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any..."

- **1 Corinthians 10:23** "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not..."

Principle 1: Be a selfless person: 10:23-24 "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth..."

- **The word "wealth:"**
 - It is italicized in the AV and translated wealth, but it really has the idea of a person's well-being or a rich quality of life.
 - It means, do not put your own interests before the wellbeing of others.
- **Our tendencies:**
 - We want to know our boundaries.
 - We want what is best for ourselves regardless of how it will affect others.
- **The significance of the Corinthian slogan:**
 - Their slogan focused on the fullest extent of what was permitted.
 - Paul's response focused on what was best for others.
- **Application:** Rather than constantly looking for the boundaries look for what promotes growth and edification in others.

Principle 2: Do not overcomplicate your circumstances: 10:25-27

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake..."

- **Three Scenarios:**
 - **Scenario 1: Do not participate in pagan feast 1 Corinthians 10:20-21** "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils..."
 - **Scenario 2: If you go to the market to get meat, do not ask unnecessary questions 1 Corinthians 10:25** "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake..."
 - **Scenario 3: If you are invited to someone's home for a meal, do not ask unnecessary questions 1 Corinthians 10:27** "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake..."

- **His use of the OT:** We are to live consecrated lives, but not because God is lacking or needs something from us.
 - **He owns everything: Psalm 24:1** "The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein..."
 - **He does not need anything: Psalm 50:12** "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof..."
 - **Since He owns everything the meat is ultimately His meat provided for our enjoyment despite the rampant idolatry.**
 - **Since He is the ultimate provider of this meat, it should be eaten with gratitude to Him.**
- **Application:** Live a conscientious life, but do not overcomplicate your daily tasks.

Principle 3: Make adjustments when necessary: 10:28-29 "But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other..."

- **Fourth Scenario: 10:28** "But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols..."
- **Appropriate Response: 10:28** "Eat not..."
- **Reason for this response: 10:28** "Eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake..."
 - Not because it is inherently sinful to eat.
 - Not because your conscience is bothered by this action.
 - For your neighbor's good, because it violates his conscience or because he misunderstands the significance of that action.
- **Reminder: 10:28-29** "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other..."
 - This is God's world
 - The meat is His provision.
 - It is completely permissible to eat.
 - You are refraining for their benefit.
- **Application:** Make adjustments when necessary to promote edification.

Principle 4: Do all the to glory of God: 10:29-32 "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? ³⁰ For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? ³¹ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God..."

- **A natural question to ponder: 10:29** "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?"

- **The reason for the question: 10:30** "If I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?"
 - If God has freed me from enslavement to these worldly superstitions, then why am I putting myself back under these superstitions?
 - If I can eat this food with gratitude to the glory of God, then why should I limit my rights?
- **Paul's reminder: 10:31-32** "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God..."
 - We should be more motivated to live for God's glory than to expand our liberties.
 - We should have a ministry mindset toward the lost as we seek to point them to the gospel.
 - We should have a ministry mindset as we seek to promote edification within the local church.
- **Application:**
 - We should desire to glorify God in everything we do.
 - Sometimes glorifying God means putting our rights to the side to promote the good of others.

Principle 5: Desire what is best for your neighbor: 10:33 "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved..."

- **The chiastic structure of the section:**
 - **Liberty is limited by edification: 10:23**
 - **Liberty is limited by the glory of God: 10:33**
 - **For the sake of another's edification and the glory of God, limit your freedom: 10:28-29**
- **We should desire people's salvation:**
 - **Salvation for the unbeliever is focused on salvation from the penalty of sin.**
 - **Salvation for the Christian is focused on a full reward at the Judgment Seat and a vibrant quality of life.**

Final Thoughts:

- Work to cultivate a healthy conscience.
- Refuse to compromise.
- Be selfless.
- Do not make things unnecessarily complicated.
- Be willing to adjust when necessary.
- Do all things for God's glory.
- Consider what is best for your neighbor.