

Intro: In the beginning of Ch 8 Paul had started his answer to one of the questions that the church in Corinth had posed to him. *“Can we eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol, even though we’ve come to grow in our knowledge of the Lord and His grace, that those idols mean nothing?” “Should we be as concerned as our ‘weaker’ brothers are about it?” “ Or don’t we have the freedom to eat as we want?”*

Paul’s answer was *“Of course we have the freedom. We know that those idols, are images of false gods that aren’t real. But if in our attempt to live out our freedoms, we are stumbling a weaker in the faith brother, then we are sinning against not only our brother but Christ”*. He said, **“Beware lets somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak”**. Reminding them that **“knowledge puffs up but love edifies”**.

- If what you know hasn’t conformed into love for your brother, then how little we actually know.
- Jesus said **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**
- John said **By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

So Paul was just simply reminding them that sometimes....many times.... the Christian life is one of sacrificial love.

Then in Ch9 Paul began to put his money where his mouth was. He lovingly showed them an example of this sacrificial love he had told them about. He made himself a model of this principle of laying down ones’ freedoms or rights for the sake of others.

He said “Am I not an apostle....? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus? Are you not my work in the Lord? Even if others try and claim I’m not an apostle on direct commission from the Lord, doubtless I am to you. You and the work God has done through me for you, are the seal of my apostleship. All the validation I should need. And so as an apostle don’t I deserve the right to be supported in food and drink as do the others? Not only that but to have my family supported as I tend to the needs of the

body here? Of course I have that right, that freedom to be supported financially. Even Jesus said that **those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.** Even farmers don't muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.

But though I have this right, this freedom, I've not used it with you. Because in this case, you are that weaker brother! I've seen how this principle of giving has stumbled you so I refused to take anything from you, while other churches supported me when I ministered to you, I worked with my own hands around you. Not taking a dime from you. You were the weaker brother and I applied this sacrificial love towards you. So that I wouldn't stumble you till the Lord grew you in that area.

It seems as though Paul is done with answering that question but he really isn't till we get to the end of Ch 10. So then Ch 8 9 & 10 all still deal with the question "*Can we eat meat sacrificed to idols?*". Because asking that question reveals something deeper than what appears on the surface.

And so tonight we dive into the 3rd part of his answer as Paul gives us some Old Testament examples to warn us about living in the freedoms or gray areas of life.

1-13 I. OUR OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

So again Paul is continuing on in this discussion the heart of what he's saying is not to be missed. **"Moreover brethren I don't not want you to be unaware** that as we think about our lives and where God has brought us out from let us be reminded that it's not so much the here and now that matters for "us" but for the unbeliever because all they have is now. Jesus said *If you seek to gain your life here you'll lose it and if you lose your life here you'll actually find it.*" (meaning what?)

Being Kingdom minded. That's why Paul was able to say (vs19) **"though I am free from all men, I've made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more"** Then he says **"don't you know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize? Run in such a way you may obtain it"** Meaning think of your life as a race to the finish line. Not only to

just finish the race but to win! Not a perishable crown but an imperishable one. Rewards that will last forever. (expound)

Think about those who compete. **They are temperate in all things** he said. They're focused. They're disciplined. (expound)

Now as we compare that type of life with the lives we're living let's take a look at those who have gone before us and see if there's anything to which we can learn.

1-5 A. A look at the unappreciated work of God

So Paul takes us back to the O.T. to draw some examples. To serve as reminders if you will.

- Sometimes our inkling is to live in the N.T.
- Gravitate towards scriptures that inspire and motivate.
- Or put more time into areas of the bible we understand.
- Or maybe we just simply love Jesus' message of love and grace better.
 - But did you know that God's grace didn't just show up in the N.T.
 - God's love and mercy was in those sacrifices and sanctuary services. His love and His mercy was revealed all through out His dealings with His children Israel.
- And here's where we can draw the similarities. That as we live in the grace of God, walking with Him throughout life, enjoying our freedoms..... that we don't allow ourselves to forget what God has done; nor forget His work and desire for our lives.
 - As did the children of Israel.....

1 So Paul says **"brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea"**. It's interesting how he says **"all our fathers"** yet he's not talking to Jews here, he's talking to Gentiles.

a. That's because as he taught in Galatians 3

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- i. So when Paul says all "our" fathers he's telling these Gentiles that's your family too! (lol)

1b

2. They **"were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea"**. When the children of Israel were told to leave their lives of slavery behind and step into this new life of freedom; they were never made to leave alone.

- a. God went with them and His shekinah glory showed up in their midst. As a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
 - i. When it moved, they moved.
 - ii. Teaching them how to wait on God.
- b. Not only that but the cloud shielded them from the desert heat.
- c. The fire lit up the lonely scary desert night. (like a big night light for adults)
 - i. God was with them

3. And he says **"they all passed through the sea"** Remember that the biggest scariest trial they had ever faced happened when they first stepped out.....(explain)

- a. Sometimes it's hard enough just making that first step; then it seems like the first trial after making that first step is the one that tests your faith the most.
- b. God's not trying to destroy you. To wreck your faith from the jump. There's something else He wants to reveal at the start. His power to deliver you in any circumstance!

c. And God was teaching His children this. As Pharaoh and his army crept behind them, the Red Sea before them, they were left with nothing left to do but to cry out to God. And God split the sea.

i. Do you remember a time?

2

4. **"all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea"**

Meaning they were all brought under the authority of Moses' leadership.

a. Leaving Egypt as a sign of life in the world or the flesh. And being brought through water (sea) and led by the cloud unto Moses' leadership.

b. Look at us today! We are brought out of the world or flesh to be baptized in water, signifying our death to the old, to be led by the Holy Spirit.

3-4

5. **all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.** All experienced God's supernatural provision. (Exound)

a. God gave them manna but they grew unhappy with it. **Go to Numbers 11:4-20**

b. Did we catch the point? See I used to think "Wow God, wasn't it kinda harsh to make them eat the same thing everyday?" Not the same 3 things but one thing.

c. But here's the point God wasn't upset because they wanted something different. He was upset because they began to say it was well with them in Egypt. They began to say "Why did we ever come out of Egypt?"

i. That's what happens when you yield to intense craving. (vs 4)

ii. Yielding to the intense cravings of the flesh will always make us unsatisfied with the place God has us.

d. It's not that God wants to withhold or make us make do with little. That's not our gracious Father at all. Jesus said **Luke 12:32** "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." But where's your heart? If the children of Israel would've shown their appreciation for what they had when going to God for more, rather than going to each other in complaints, maybe they would've gotten what they wanted without loathing it.

4 e. **and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**

5 6. **But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.** They all experienced God's supernatural provisions. They all experienced God's overwhelming power to pull them out and protect them from the enemy. They all experienced God's grace. **But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.**

a. Out of around 600,000 men not including women & children (2.5 mil) only 2 from that generation were allowed to go into the promised land. Only 2!

b. They never got to go to the place God had really pulled them out of slavery for! They never reached their purpose. The Promise Land.

i. What about us? Is that how we want our lives to look?

ii. Getting pulled out of a life of slavery and sin, only to be wondering in a life of wilderness experiences but never going into our calling and purpose.

iii. Some think the "Promise Land" is heaven. I don't think so.

iv. Some of us are saved but still wandering around the same mountain.

6-10 B. These Things Became Our Examples

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

6 1. God allowed all this to happen and be securely documented so that they serve as examples for us. **"That we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted"**. How often do we tell our children "If you would just learn from other people's mistakes your life wouldn't be so hard" (God tells us the same)

2. And what's the lesson he wants us to learn? Well there's a few of them here.

6 a. First he says **"that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted"**. And you may be saying "How does wanting something different to eat become a lustful evil thing?" Again this was "their" evil thing. Why? Because of the attitude of the heart. They wanted fish, leeks, garlic, cucumbers etc..... things from Egypt. Stuff from their past. These are not 'evil things' in themselves but they became so to the Israelites when they lusted after what God withheld, and were discontent with what God provided.

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- b. Some of us were making better money before we got saved. Maybe at a job that was not glorifying to God. And money is not evil but the love of it is.
 - c. Maybe some of us had relationships that God had to prune away and yet we look back at Egypt.

When these little things that don't seem to be bad in themselves become lusts; then we find ways to excuse them as our rights and when God puts His finger on it and says "I want you to give Me that" , we refuseit becomes then an idol.

7

3. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. Now when Paul tells the Corinthians not to become idolaters, that should've gotten their attention. They knew what that meant.

- a. And some may have thought "wait a minute Paul, I no longer worship idols". But Paul's point in telling then this is saying "Look I know you don't worship, bow down and serve false gods, but when you put your freedoms up on a pedestal and demand your rights when God asks you to stop for the sake of your brother, that's now a little god your bowing to."
- b. Sometimes this may seem petty, but we don't know when God may be working in someone else's life and while we are free in some area, their not. So he puts a burning desire in our hearts to give it up, so that person who's not telling you their struggling may find strength to put it down.

i. But if we just refuse when God's knockingit becomes an idol.

7b

c. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." One more note on this verse. Paul's quoting Ex 32 when they didn't know what had happened to the man of God. Moses (explain)

One of the other warnings given here is in vs 8.....

8 **4. "Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;"** So here Paul's referencing back to what was written in Numbers Ch 25. And again this is all for examples for us to take heed to. What happened then.....?

a. (children of Israel camped outside of Moab) (Balak King of Moab sends messengers to Baalam to curse Israel) (Baalam is unsuccessful, but comes up with another plan Numbers_31:16) "God's hand is on His people, the only way your gonna affect them is send your women to them to commit sexual immorality"

b. Read Numbers 25:1-9

So again we're warned by the examples in the O.T. to not lust after evil things. #2 That we don't become idolaters. #3 not allow ourselves to fall into sexual immorality. And the 4th thing listed here is vs 9

9 **5. "nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;"**

a. **Go to Numbers 21:1-9** (expound)

i. (:2-3)

ii. (:4 Become very discouraged on the way)

iii. (:5 detest this worthless bread)

iv. (:6-7 the people knew they sinned)

v. (:8-9 the very thing that was killing became the healing)

vi. Jesus became flesh (whats killing us) and put on a pole, so whoever looks at Him will live. **John 3:14-15**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

b. Let us not tempt Christ like they tempted God.

10 6. **"nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer."**

11-12 C. **These Things Written For Our Instructions To Take Heed.**

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

1. We're given all these examples to learn from therefore **"Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall"**

Wow Paul, I didn't realize this desire to have my way over my brothers weaknesses could really uncover so much. I just wanted to be able to eat my meat no matter what it was offered to. Really honestly I just wanted to be right. But now that I realize it's a freedom I can't give up and therefore an idol in my life I'm a little frightful.

After remembering Israel and what happened with them I'm concerned over my life. Because I have even more temptations to worry about than meat sacrificed to idols.

13 D. **Closing Encouragement**

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.