

Intro: We are now closing up Chapter 10 tonight and also with it closing up a 3 chapter long answer to a question the Corinthians had asked Paul. (Does anyone remember what that question was?) *“Can we eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol?”* Now the answer to that question could’ve been a short one. *Yes we have freedom because those idols mean nothing.* But Paul wanted to take the opportunity, and I believe because the Holy Spirit saw fit to address deeper concerns, to deal with the heart of the matter.

What the Corinthians wanted to know is why should my freedoms in the Lord be governed by other weaker Christians? If their conscience bothers them but mine doesn’t bother me, why can’t I do what I’m free to do? Don’t we live in grace? Aren’t we free from the law, aren’t we free from the do’s and don’ts of the law to enjoy the grace of what Jesus has done for us at the cross by fulfilling the law?

The answer to that question was a lot beefier than “yes”. It was more explanatory than a mere “no” could give. Paul began to teach them what they didn’t understand about living in the grace of God. Now, they ‘understood’ the grace of God, and they obviously ‘experienced’ the grace of God, but they didn’t know how to live in the grace of God. Or how to apply it. And I wonder if at times that may be our problem as well. Where we understand the grace of God and we’ve experienced the grace of God but we misunderstand how to apply the grace of God in our everyday living out of our faith in Christ. Do we understand how grace is given to us so that we can build each other up? Do we understand that we can use grace to reach out to those who may be on their way to hell?

You see living in the grace filled freedoms we have in Christ allows us to say yes to a few things..... But it also requires us to say no to other things.

Grace is so powerful. On one hand it can free you from the condemnation you may have been under for years. It’s the tool against the enemies attacks on the mind toward past sins and behaviors. You are under grace. On the other if not rightly understood it

can be used to encourage a sinful lifestyle of compromise. Encouraging a believer in the wrong direction.

- ***** We learned this in Romans Ch 6 when Paul said What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

- vs 4 even so we also should walk in newness of life.

***** Grace gives us freedom to walk in newness of life. But not to be used as a cloak. Cloak? Yeah that's what Peter said 1 Peter 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men — 16 **as free**, yet not using liberty as a **cloak for vice**, but as bondservants of God. (vice means wickedness)

So again, in addressing this question Paul has taken his time to deliver the answer. So, if it seems like we've covered this for the last 4 weeks its true we have. But what have we learned for our own lives through it? Let's not run the risk of missing the lessons for our lives by thinking "*we've already covered this*". If it sounds repetitive just ask the question... "*Have I changed anything in my life because of what we've been learning through this repetitiveness?*" Here's the end of the chapter and the end of this topic so lets see how much of the best the Holy Spirit has saved for last. Amen?

14-22 I. FLEE FROM IDOLATRY

14 A. Therefore Flee From 'the' idolatry **14 "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry".**

This chapter can be split up into 2 sections. We just read the first. This is where understanding background and culture help us in reading the bible to put things in context. Remember the reason they asked Paul whether or not they can eat meat sacrificed to idols was because at that time there were many temples throughout Corinth where people worshiped and brought animals to sacrifice to these false gods. With many temples to many gods and many people to worship, this made meat coming from these temples much cheaper when sold at the meat market than other sources. Because

there was a lot. So much that many temples had a restaurant or banquet hall attached to them that also sold this meat, cheap.

So their question was one of freedom for convenience sake. They didn't want to lose out on the really good meat sales nor stop eating at their favorite temple restaurant even though they didn't worship those gods anymore.

Paul starts off vs14 by saying **"Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry"** But what's not here in the English but is written in the original language is the word "the" in front of Idolatry. So Paul is saying **"Therefore my beloved, flee from 'the' idolatry"** What idolatry? He's talking about the idolatry of the temple worship or specifically eating at the temple restaurant. That's what this first section is talking about.

1. So Paul says **"Therefore"** and whenever you read the word "therefore" in scripture you find out what it's there for. In this case its referring directly to what Paul said in verse 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. Therefore, my beloved, flee from "the" idolatry.***

a. All of us in one way or another have temptation. We will until we leave this body. But there isn't anything that God will allow us to go through that our common man or human nature just simply cannot overcome.

b. He's faithful.... And will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. But with the temptation will always be a way of escape. A way out if we don't shut our eyes to it.

c. And Paul's just simply telling them "Here's your open door, just flee". Run from it. Don't stay and play around with it. Or keep looking at it to give it time. (Kid trying to find a way not to take the candy story)

2. So what does this have to do with eating a steak at their favorite restaurant? Well would you agree that some things that are a strong temptation to you, may not be to someone else?

a. What's foolish to me may not be to you and visa versa.

b. We all have temptation in different areas.

3. To the some of the Corinthians this eating at the temple was a strong temptation or freedom they didn't want to give up easily.

a. Paul's saying "You may have the liberty to eat the meat, to buy it at the meat market but when it comes to eating at these temple restaurants ... flee the idolatry.

b. It may not be a place of worship for you.... anymore. But it is for others. So how will you ever influence others to come out, when your liberty says its nice here.

i. "I'm so glad you guys worship here, it gives me a great place to eat"

ii. That's horrible right? When we know someone is living in a harmful state but we stay neutral for our own benefit.

iii. It's like buying something stolen....

c. Some could be thinking Wow Paul your making a bigger deal than you should about it. But there's others reasons he goes into as if to say it's not as innocent as it seems.

15-22

B. The Reason: It's Not As Innocent As It Seems

"15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread."

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- 15a 1. **"I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say"** Paul says "You pride yourselves in your wisdom, so then I should be speaking to those who would understand this simple example.
- 16-17 2. **"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"** He's talking about what we now a days call "Communion". The taking of the elements (the bread & wine or grape juice) as we remember what Christ did for us at the cross. He said "Take this in remembrance of Me".
- a. In those days they would call it the Eucharist (to give thanks) or (Love feast describing the fellowship that surrounded the table of the Lord). And we have to remember the culture in which this is done. When you had a meal with someone the Jewish culture seen it as being "one" with the other. (eating the same thing together)
- b. So when the Lord instituted the breaking of the bread the wine together they all understood what this meant. We are becoming one with Him. That's Paul's point. " Is not what we're doing the **communion** of the blood and body of Christ?
- i. And that word **"Communion"** is the word Koinonia in the Greek. And it means to come into partnership with. Social intercourse. Come into union with. Fellowship. Vincent's Word Comm reads it as meaning a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and mutual, active participation in that interest and in each other.
- ii. We are in an intimate social relationship with Christ and we are reminded of that when we take the cup of blessing which we bless and the bread which we break. Is it not the

communion of the blood and body of Christ? (is it not the fellowship, the koinonia or ***being one*** with Christ?)

17 c. **"For we, though many , are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread"**

18-20 3. (read 18-20) Look at the Nation of Israel and their sacrifices. Aren't those who eat of the sacrifices "sharers" of the altar?

 b. **"partakers of the altar"** basically co-worshippers

19 4. And He goes on to say "I'm not saying those idols are anything, but demonic spirits take advantage of idol worship to deceive and enslave people. Without even knowing it, idol worshippers are glorifying demons in their sacrifice.

 a. Anything they can do to draw people away from worshipping God.

 b. How much of that is true today? In so many forms and in so many fashions we see the influence of demonic worship. Or do we?

 c. Have we gotten desensitized to the influence the enemy is having today in our nation? In our music. Movies. Even things that seem to be small. Like clothes designs , Logos or commercial ads. (Illuminati designs, All seeing eye, Baphomet, 666 symbol over one eye.) All that is symbolism. And these movie stars and recording artist all wear this stuff take pictures like that.

 d. *"Its no big deal! It's just a movie. It's just a song.... It's the style today! It's just a steak at the temple restaurant.... 'I'm' not worshipping there!"* Get the similarities? I wonder what Paul would tell our generation today? **"I'm not saying that an idol is anything or what is sacrificed to an idol is anything but rather the things which these unbelievers sacrifice they**

sacrifice to demons and not to God, and 'I do not want you to have koinania with demons'

i. They are messing with the Satanic, it's not as innocent as it seems.

21-20

5. **"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"**

How would you feel if you loved someone so much and they continued to visit their ex?

a. Worse yet what if you were the one who helped them get out of that harmful relationship?

b. Paul says are we trying to **provoke the Lord to jealousy?** Our God is a jealous God. And some would say "Is that right? To be jealous? I think a healthy jealousy comes from love.

i. When you love someone you don't want anyone else to have their affection, devotion or intimacy. **God's jealous for you.**

So when it came to the eating of the sacrificed meat while at a temple Paul's counsel was what seemed to be innocent wasn't so innocent at all. He wanted them to understand the connection that these sacrifices had to demons. And how that would hinder the worship and Koinania they had with God through Christ. So staying away from it for them was the answer when it came to the places of worship. But that's not the only place you could run across meat sacrificed to an idol. You could also come across it at the market or as a guest at someone's house. What then?

23-33 II. DO ALL TO GLORIFY GOD

I love that first verse here. **All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.**

Where have we heard that before? Well back in Ch6 Paul was talking to them about sexual immorality. Many in the Corinthian culture had lived very sexual promiscuous lives. It carried into the church and Paul needed to straighten some of that out. They're sayings back then were something like "Hey man, foods for the stomach and stomach for foods" (explain). And "All things are lawful for me, right Paul? Not under the law anymore!"

And Paul said **1 Cor 6:12-14** **12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**

- Now not all things are lawful but even of the things that are, note how Paul says I won't be brought under the Power of any!
- Some things, though they aren't given a command in scripture to stay away from, in and of themselves they may have the power to enslave. And Paul says I won't let anything bring me under it's power again.
- So here in Ch 10 he brings it up again but with a slight different ending..... He says

23-24

A. Don't Just Avoid What Is Harmful But Pursue What Is Good

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

1. Don't just pursue what's lawful but pursue what's helpful and edifying.
 - a. We can ask ourselves the question is what I'm wanting to do , is it helpful? Is it edifying to others?

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- b. Can we get to the point where we're not just seeking our own but the others well being.
 - c. "But Wenses I avoid evil at all costs....." Great but can we also get to the point where we aren't just trying to avoid what is harmful but pursue what is good?
 - d. **Seeking** someone else's well being! What does well being mean? a good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity; welfare:
 - e. We all know people that are not doing so well. Can we live lives that are lived in a direct way to influence them? See that's sacrificial. That takes determination to hand our will and desires to the leading of the HS to live Jesus' life through us.

Within two verses Paul gave us a foundation from which we can live our lives. That's the purpose in a purpose driven life. That's a road map or a template to go by. After laying that down he now can go into possibilities that would confront them.

25-27 B. As For The Meat At The Market Or At Home

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." 27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.

So Paul says "Look if you go to a meat market and like a nice looking tri tip or ribeye, buy it, no problem **for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."** God's given all that's His here to you to enjoy. Just don't ask where it came from. And if anyone who is an unbeliever invites you to dinner and you desire to go, eat what they put before you and just don't ask questions about where it came from.

For conscience sake. What does he mean about that? He goes on to explain.

28-30 C. **But If It's Been Told You; Refrain**

(explain)

1. vs 29 **"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other."**

2. vs 29b **For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?**

a. The Believers Commentary paraphrased this verse like this "*Why should I selfishly display my freedom to eat the meat and in so doing be condemned by the other man's conscience? Why should I expose my freedom to the condemnation of his conscience? Why should I let my good be evil spoken of?*"

b. Is a piece of meat that important that I should cause such an offense to a fellow- believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?

And here's the point that I believe sows it all up

31-11:1 D. **Do All To Glorify God**

31 1. Whatever you do Christian, should be done in a way that can bring glory to God.

32 2. (Give no offense. To NoOne.)

33 3. My focus is to please so that they may be saved.

11:1 4. Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ! Powerful way to counsel them. Just do as I do.

a. **Eph 5:1-2** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma

5. Lets live our lives to glorify God.
