

8/3/2024

[Connection] Good morning, Cornerstone! It is good to be with you. Thank you for joining us this morning. If this is your first time worshipping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

[Title] While you're doing that, we are going to dive back into our sermon series 'Church In Crisis'. Where we have been studying the book of 1 Corinthians. Picking back up where we left off, we are in week 14. We have been talking about the church in Corinth was being told how to grow spiritually and remain set apart from the world around them. This week we are going to be talking about bringing glory to God in everything we do.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there, if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one, we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of **1 Corinthians 10:31**. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in His Scripture.

[1] SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 10:31

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] So it has been a couple weeks since we were in 1 Corinthians, and I am excited to get back into it. We have been talking about this letter from the apostle Paul to the church in the city of Corinth. This church got a lot of things wrong. They thought they were so spiritual that they were arrogant and participated in religious syncretism. Which means they would take pagan practices and attempting to use them for Christian worship. They were allowing division, and immorality in the church and providing no discipline for the people involved in these practices. Paul in this letter corrects much of this behavior in the church, and he does it from the position of making the church better equipped for sharing the gospel. Paul desires for them to be set apart from the culture around them. To clearly distinguish who God is and who he is not, so that they can influence their city towards Christ.

In our passage today Paul is wrapping up a longer discussion from chapter 8, 9 and 10. The church has asked questions of Paul, and many of the questions concerned the line between their religious freedom and idolatry. One of the questions being about meat that was sacrificed to idols wondering if it is within their freedom to eat, or is it sinful? In ch. 9 Paul has changed the perspective to be less about the people that are actually eating, whether they are in sin by the act of eating, but to consider the newer Christians that may be witnesses, and how eating may be a sin toward them.

As mature believers, they do not want to cause their brother to stumble. Paul has threaded the needle here and talked about how engaging in idolatry is bad and a terrible thing for them to come even remotely close to. Consistently Paul has told them to avoid being in the pagan temple because it is a

temptation to go back to their old ways. But there is some sense of it being permissible to eat the meat from the temple while they are in the privacy of their own home because they are engaging in their freedom, but not setting an example to a weaker brother or sister.

BODY

Paul in our passage this morning, is wrapping up this topic of what the church does outside of the community with a nice pretty bow before he dives into the practices that are within the church. Paul points out this overarching principle that he applies to all these things. As Christians we are to live to bring God glory. In everything that we do, that is our purpose, to glorify him. This section of scripture is all building and addressing that principle.

[3] 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

"All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor"

This is something that Paul has addressed before in chapter 8, even if something is permitted it does not mean it is good. It might be permitted but might not be helpful for someone else's spiritual health, and it does not help someone to grow spiritually. In chapter 8, he showed that he was willing to abandon all his religious freedoms, if it meant that he would not harm someone else by practicing them. Because he does not seek his own good but the good of his neighbor. Some in this church had taken their own desires and elevated them over God's desire for them and would justify it by saying 'they had freedom in Christ'.

The things that are permitted or lawful, doesn't mean we have the green light. We should engage in the things that are lawful as long as they also are helpful to spiritual health of ourselves and others or are beneficial for building up the church¹. To live in a way that honors Christ is a way of selflessness. We willingly put others needs above our own. Something that Paul will tie in later, is that this living the way of Christ in selflessness is also beneficial to us, even though that is not our motivation.

Seeking the good of another in the development of their spiritual maturity can also lead to the development of your own spiritual maturity. When we focus on another's spiritual growth, we create intentionality and purpose for our spiritual growth. Meaning that when we seek to develop others, we know we cannot lead where we have not been before. So, we are motivated to grow so that we can continue to develop others.

[4] I'll give you a great example. When I was in college, I had a friend that lived in a town about an hour away from campus. We went to the same school but he did online so he can work and take care of his mom, but since I was on campus, he would come and stay the weekends with me. All weekend we did 3 things, we made good food, we went to Hockey games, and we argued theology. To this day he is still one of my best friends, but he was a sold-out Calvinist. Me on the other hand, I believed there was merit to both sides of the discussion of free will in salvation.

In every one of these weekend long arguments, I would find myself reading more scripture and studying more about the bible to prepare for the discussion that was coming. My surface level desire was to develop my friend spiritually, to get him to see the deeper beauty in scripture, salvation and free will. Because of the purpose for own conversations Friday through Sunday, Monday through Thursday I read

¹ Ephesians 4:29

my bible fervently. I realized that where I was preparing for the conversation with my friend, I was digesting more of God's word than I had before. By being in the word I felt such a deeper intimacy with God. Even after my friend and I stopped having those conversations I maintained the habit of being constantly in the word and I don't know if that would have happened without my argumentative friend.

This desire for believers to model spiritual health, growth, understanding and maturity is the thread that Paul has been pulling since chapter 8 and this is no exception. He will give specific examples for these believers in 4 different contexts to know how to apply this truth when it comes to the food that is sacrificed to idols. Since that is not explicitly a reality for us today we will look at maybe a modern application with each of them.

[5] 1 Corinthians 10:25-26

"Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For 'the earth is the Lord's, and fullness thereof'."

This is Paul referring to the freedom that they exercise in their own home, or they engage in privately. Meat sold in the market had a degree of separation from the context of the pagan temple. As we mentioned before chances are, because of the economy of Corinth, it was probably impossible to buy any sort of meat in town that did not come through the pagan temple and did not at one point in time been sacrificed to a pagan god. However, the risk of them causing someone to stumble when it is meat from the market and is eaten in private is low. In that case it is okay for them to eat meat, privately.

As he explains, there is nothing wrong with the meat itself. All of creation belongs to God. So even if it has been perverted and used for an unholy purpose, the use does not change the nature or the origin. It's like a reclaiming. Paul is saying if you buy meat in the market you don't have to go to each vendor and say 'was this sacrificed to an idol?'. He is not asking the people to attempt to find someone that is honest about where it came from. They're more likely to find a liar that replies with 'no' because he just wants the money. The animal might have been sacrificed to an idol, but it was God's creation before that, so it being sacrificed doesn't matter.

[6] 1 Corinthians 10:27

"If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience."

This is if you are invited to the home of an unbeliever and you must go, wither it's a social pressure or a business obligation. If you're in a situation where the food you are served might have been used for that unholy purpose, do not cause a disturbance, and create an opportunity to have a moral objection.

Originally, I thought about presenting this in a way that made us all vegans and being placed in a situation where we had an moral obligation to not eat meat. The more I thought about it, I think we would be so distracted by this idea of us not eating meat that would probably miss what Paul was talking about. Seeing as how most of us in this room would struggle to turn down good BBQ or a good steak, the idea of trying to think like a vegan would probably be w struggle. So, let's try it this way, I want you to take the perspective of a non-believer.

² Psalm 24:1

[7] Say you invite a bunch of your employees, business partners and clients over for a barbeque. Your trying to clear out your freezer for the hunting trip you have in the fall. Lets say there is one person that you think might be a vegetarian, but you aren't quite sure. You did not provide any vegan options, even the appetizers have bacon crumbles in them.

In this situation this invited guest has 2 choices, they can just eat the food you provided, and enjoy the conversations, building relationships with the people there may be their dietary obligations might come up in conversations, but they do not bring it up or make a fuss. Or they could come up to you and ask 'is there anything here that is not an innocent Bambi, that you shot and took away from its mother?'. I promise I'm not still upset about a specific barbeque I had in the past.

Which interaction is going to provide an opportunity where you would actually be interested in hearing and understanding their moral dilemma when it comes to not eating meat? Right not being an obnoxious Karen and causing a scene. One is an opportunity to be approachable and for others to be curious. The other is an opportunity for you to see them as pretentious and you want nothing to do with them and no longer care what they have to say.

This is what Paul is pointing out as providing opportunities to share the gospel. For them to eat what is before them know that no matter what they eat it is an animal provided by God and is good to eat. By being there in relationship and not creating this awkward situation for you host, provides the ability for the church to share their beliefs not just with the host but all of those that are at this event.

These are both somewhat private situations being in your own home or the home of another. Paul addresses the public space in verse 28

[8] 1 Corinthians 10:28

"But if someone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience- "

Now this is a situation where the moral dilemma has been created for you. This would apply to the meat market or to the dinner party. This would be a host probably knowing and expecting a moral objection by presenting the meal in such a way. Now Paul is saying not to eat it, the difference is that you are explicitly informed about the use of the meat. So, is Paul saying ignorance bliss? No. If the information is presented in such a way, it often is for an expectation of a certain reaction. But by this presentation of information, they have been given an platform to be able to explain their moral objections, if the host asks either in that moment or later.

[9] Thinking of our anti-hunting hypothetical dinner guest, let's say that you know they are a vegan/vegetarian. If you were to present your guest with some sloppy does, and then tell the story of how you shot the doe. If they were to say to you, 'no thank you' in a respectful way. You might try to explain that its good, it tastes just like beef, and they just reply that they have a moral obligation not to eat meat. Well now they have stimulated curiosity. You're going to want to ask 'why?'. Now they have created an opportunity for dialogue with you.

In the situation with the church, if they are made aware of their moral obligation, if it is done in a way that creates the dialogue, it is creating an opportunity to share the gospel for the benefit of the potential salvation of the unknowing individual. That is why Paul says that you are doing it for the sake of the host, not for yourself.

[10] 1 Corinthians 10:29-30

"I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that which I give thanks?"

For the host, their engagement in something that they have a moral objection to, could be harmful to the conscience of the host or may impede the spiritual progress of their host. Think of it this way, if it is someone that they know to be a Christian, if the believer were to engage in idol worship just like they do and are not a Christ-follower, then the host's actions and their moral decisions are justified. Again in a situation where the moral dilemma is clearly identified, if the Christian that they know is hypocritical or wishy washy on rigid moral obligations, then the host does not have to consider a change to their own behavior. Why follow Christ when the one that claims to be a Christian is doing the same things as an unbeliever. Even the Christian does not believe that they serve the one true God because they do not hold to his commands.

Paul says that our ability to engage in a freedom is not determined by another's convictions. However, how when someone holds to their moral convictions, it can inform others of an opportunity to limit their own freedoms. Explaining a conviction and a basis of it, presents an opportunity for the other person to re-evaluate their own understandings and an opportunity to change their engagement in such freedoms.

[11] If someone were to present the conversation as 'I don't do this because...I believe God's word says this, or I believe this way and so I put that into practice this way...'. The internal dialogue of the the person listening is, "do I believe the same things that they do? If I do believe those things, do I need to follow their example or does their application have merit?"

[12] If someone presents the conversation, 'You shouldn't do this because...God is this or that, and you're not a good Christian if you know this verse and don't do this...'. In this situation the person listening is not asking internal questions. They are now driven to defend their position and not weigh if your convictions have merit. The only thing that they can focus on is their desire for you to see that their position has merit because you have stripped them of it. All they will want to do is defend themselves.

[13] 1 Corinthians 10:31

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"

[14] We talked about his before, but The Westminster Catechism uses this phrase, 'the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever', we see it used by a lot of other preachers and popular theologians, but the first part is based out of this verse here. Our purpose in life is to bring God glory and enjoy him forever. For us to do something for the glory of God is to act in such a way, that people see God in action and God's reputation is enhanced.

[15] Matthew 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

God the father, is given glory when others see the actions of the believers. This is the purpose of engaging or refusing to engage in the religious freedoms. The question is "does this bring God glory?". If we are to bring God glory in everything that we do, we should be asking ourselves that constantly. What can I do to bring God the most glory? Because that is humanity's purpose in life to bring Him glory.

Here's the pill that is hard to swallow about our eternity, as a believer this should motivate us to be more diligent about sharing the gospel with everyone we come into contact with. God doesn't need you to be a believer for him to glorify himself through you. For those that do not believe in him God is glorified by enacting his justice and condemnation on those who are guilty of sin, but have not accepted salvation through Christ. For those who do believe he is glorified by giving mercy and grace through the atonement of Christ's death.

Because we are on the right side of God's grace, we seek for God to be glorified in every action in this life. We desire for him to receive the glory. We want people to see God's glory through us so that they can understand their need for his grace. That is why Paul explains in the next verse how he brings God glory through his ministry.

[16] 1 Corinthians 10:32-33

"Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many that they may be saved."

This is not talking about making everyone happy. You can't do that, right. You are not pizza. Paul is urging the church to avoid actions that cause others to reject the gospel message. If they acted more like Paul around unbelievers many more would be saved. We do it through setting the example for morality and holding to our convictions, but in our methods we do it in a way that is full of grace and truth. This is how we bring God glory through our convictions in the things God commands. We present them in a way that is helpful for the spiritual development of the individual and the building up of the body of Christ.

[17] This happens in the big things and the small. Is it lawful to take a bible and beat up your neighbor until he says, 'Jesus is Lord'? In our world that is called assault, but in scripture you might be able to justify it. It begs the question though, is it helpful? That is an obvious 'no' if case it is not obvious to some. Does it build him up, or build up the church? Definitely not. There's no way your neighbor is coming back for more and walking into church where you come from. In this case you may have the freedom, but you shouldn't do it.

It is lawful for you to watch a tv show or a movie with crude humor and only has one sex scene, sure you might be able to justify it, calling it lawful, probably taking scripture out of context. Again it begs the question, does it set a good example for your brother in Christ who struggles with his cursing habit or struggles with lust. When you ask him to watch it with you, or tell him to watch it in his free time, does it help him in those struggles with sin? Nope, it definitely doesn't help him to spiritually mature in his walk with Christ and grow as a believer. It also certainly doesn't turn him to the body of Christ.

In the bigger picture do either of these situations glorify God? No, not at all! If that is the case then don't do it!

GOSPEL

We must have this shift in our understanding, every moment in life is a ministry opportunity. Every time we pay for gas, or buy groceries, hang out with friends, or go get something to eat, it is an opportunity for each one of us to share the gospel or at the very least be an example for it. More often than not, we fall into the trap of thinking it as a role that we can step in and out of. Paul Tripp points it out in his book 'New Morning Mercies' like this.



[18] *“Part of our problem is that we tend to carry around with us an unbiblical definition of ministry that allows us to live comfortably as Christian consumers. We think of ministry this way: we have our little private lives that belong to us, and we step out of our lives into moments of ministry and then step back into our life after those ministry initiatives are over. The fact of the matter is that since we have been bought with the blood of Jesus our lives don’t belong to us anymore. They are his possessions for his use. This means that our life is ministry and ministry is our life.”*³

-Paul David Tripp

[19] Our lives have to be a continuous reflection of the one who purchased us by his blood and presents us righteous before the Father. Because we have not just been saved **FROM PUNISHMENT**, but we have been saved **FOR THE WORK OF THE KINGDOM**. We live this out to fulfill our purpose of bring God glory in everything that we do. We know how to do that, by following the example of the one that brought him the most glory and that is his Son, Jesus. The one who saw every moment of his life as an opportunity to witness to, testify for, and be the example of God in heaven. He did it in his birth, in the only recording of him in his adolescence and his entire adult life. Every moment was an opportunity to glorify God.

Through the words, teaching, and example of Christ, we learn how to bring God glory through our actions. That happens when we understand that our entire life belongs to God, not part of it, not some of it, but all of it. Everything that we do, the movies we watch, the way that we drive in traffic, the decisions we make at work, are all opportunities to glorify God. He bought us at such a high price, with the life and brutalized death of his Son, if he paid that then he gets **ALL OF US**.

Paul finishes this section of the letter by showing us how this kind of life is contagious and how we participate in this system of leading other to salvation.

APPLICATION

[20] 1 Corinthians 11:1

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ”

This is a system of spiritual growth through imitation, a system of making disciples. The same system that Jesus used with the 12. The way that we grow and mature is by modeling our lives after those who are pursuing after Christ. Now, this is 2-fold system.

For those who have chosen to be a disciple of Christ, the first thing is that we have to do, is to be critical of those we allow to be in a position of influence over us. We must scrutinize their example with how it compares to God’s word. No one is going to be perfect, so don’t hold people to a standard that is unrealistic, but their lives should not be in opposition to what God’s word says. If it is then we do not allow them the ability to be an influence over us. We look at the way they live and ask the question, who do they seek to glorify with their lives, God or themselves?

The other side of that coin that we must understand, to imitate others and be an imitator of Christ, we are going to have that same influence over others. Especially when we do not seek our own good but the good of others like it says in verse 24. That influence might be our children, our spouse, our neighbors, coworkers, whoever. They are looking to how you live, so that they can be an imitator of you, as you seek to imitate Christ.

³ Paul David Trip (2014), “New Morning Mercies”, *Crossway Publishers*, Wheaton, IL, July 30th

[21] That is why every opportunity in your life is a ministry opportunity. Because of this we must scrutinize and be critical over the lives we live in comparison to scripture. We want to put forth the best example of what it means to live like Christ does. This is not as a mask. We do not put on Christlikeness when were around people, and we can take the mask off when were alone.

This is a genuine outpouring of our desire to please God and to bring him Glory. This needs to be our wholehearted desire to live like Christ. Because you don't know when the clear opportunities of ministry are going to come, and you do not always recognize the eyes that are watching the seek to imitate you or use you as their example of what it means to be a Christian. We must seek to glorify God is absolutely everything that we do, always.

[22] PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Who are the people that you know have a spiritual influence in your life?
 - a. Does their life reflect Christ-like character?
 - b. Do they live a lifestyle that aligns with scripture?

If you cannot answer these questions because you are not sure, then maybe get to know them more before you allow them to continue to be an influence or maybe you shouldn't allow them to influence you at all because you cannot verify that they are living like Christ. If you don't know, you should not be an imitator of them.

2. Who are the people in your life that you have spiritual influence over?
 - a. Does your life reflect a Christ-like Character, in a way that is effective for sharing the Gospel?
 - b. Does your lifestyle align with scripture? Is there anywhere that is doesn't? What would it take to change that?

If you are growing just for you then when you approach it with laziness then you believe that it only affects you, but it doesn't. we have a mission to imitate and model Christ as a way of glorifying him because of who may be attempting to imitate us.

COMMUNION