**1 CORINTHIANS 8 – CHRISTIAN LIBERTY**

When we started this study of Paul’s letter to the Corinthian Church we went over a list of issues that had been told to him in a letter – Issues of problematic practices by the Corinthian Church. Through the magic of cut and paste lets review the list of issues:

* Church factions (splits)
* Lawsuits
* Immorality
* Questionable practices
* Abuse of church ordinances
* Abuse of Spiritual Gifts (Like tongues)
* Divorce
* Church discipline
* **Christian liberty**
* Worship
* Resurrection vs. Religion
* The call of being single
* The unequally yoked believer
* Long hair!
* How to behave in church!

Paul will basically boil Christian Liberty down to this: LOVE trumps liberty! Some believers feel no conviction about going to the beach, putting on a swimsuit and laying around, swimming, surfing, and trying to avoid sharks… SOME cultures consider this kind of stuff as offensive. SO… We need to be careful AND sensitive when doing swim parties and such…

* Some believers enjoy some wine at dinner… Others are offended.
* Some believers enjoy an occasional cigar – Others are offended.
* Some believers enjoy going to movies – Others are offended.
* Playing cards, gambling, secular music, owning and shooting guns, even playing some violent video games… anything really can be acceptable in some families and offensive to others.

In the Corinthian Church some people felt no guilt about buying meat that had been sacrificed to idols. It was cheaper than the fresher meat. OK, so it was a day older… Just cook it well and save a buck! The Idols were false anyway… BUT… they WERE supporting the temples of the gods by buying the meat, right?

It would like some of us stopping by the local cultists churches to buy from their rummage sale… Would it be supporting them, or just a good bargain on stuff?

IF you were rummaging through some stuff in the front of a Cult Church and saw me driving by and staring at you… What would you think? What should I think? Here is what Paul thought… LOVE TRUMPS LIBERTY!

**LOVE TRUMPS LIBERTY**

**1 Corinthians 8:1** Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

* Paul wrote to the Roman Church… “Welcome all the Lord's followers, even those whose faith is weak. Don't criticize them for having beliefs that are different from yours.” **ROMANS 14:1 CEV**
* Some of the Romans were vegetarians who were grossed out by the meat eaters… Some of the meat eaters mocked the vegetarians. BOTH were wrong in their criticisms of one another.
* Each group thought they knew more than they did… Listen…

2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

* We live in a time that our ancestors could not even imagine… Most of us have a computer in our pocket that can access more information than our grandparents could ever dream about.
* I have a niece who teaches elementary students and she is being told that most of the careers that her students will work have not even been created yet.
* What CAN WE KNOW for sure?

3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. **NLT - But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.**

**ANSWERS FROM THE APOSTLE**

4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* **nothing** in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. ***Idols are dead, our God is alive***! **WE KNOW THIS!**

**WATCH WHAT YOU WORSHIP**

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 6 yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live.*

* So the Apostle Paul once again gives the clear theology of the Christian Church…. That Jesus Christ is God… that He took part with the Father in creation… AND THAT we live forever because HE LIVES forever…
* Does everybody believe this who calls themself a Christian? NO, Listen…

**BOTHERED BROTHERS**

7 However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. **(Bothered)**

* SOME of the Corinthians were converted from these idol worshipping temples and had seen and witnessed demonic powered supernatural things… They were freaked out about ANYTHING having to do with the idol worship or even its meat market.
* The Apostle is making the point that even IF the discounted meat was a good deal… IT perhaps was NOT the best decision to make IF IT bothered some of the people that were trying to LOVE IN THE LORD.

**LETHAL LIBERTY**

8 But food does not commend ***(Recommend to stand beside)*** us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

* WHAT we eat or what we refuse to eat does NOT make us better or worse Christians…
* WHY we eat or do not eat IS the issue…
* BTW, What or WHO DOES commend us to God?

**So, You can eat whatever you want!**

9 **But** beware ***(take heed)*** lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ***(Convicted)***

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge ***(of liberty)*** eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

* IE, Don’t let your liberty cause less mature believers to do something that to them is sin.
* Jesus gave a stern warning about offending young believers… Remember? We more mature believers need to take care…
* Remember that the Corinthians had a lot of places that they could go to eat… Many of them represented sinfulness… SO… Paul says to be careful. Avoid even the appearance of evil. **1 Thes. 5:22**

**RAISING THE BAR**

11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

* **YIKES…** If you would not offend Christ Himself, then DO NOT offend one of His children..
* **WHY NOT? LOVE!**
* More important than what we do or do not eat… what we drink or do not drink… what we indulge in or refrain from IS LOVE! Therefore… Paul says…

**THE APOSTLE’S EATING PLAN**

13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

* Paul is willing to skip the BBQ for the rest of his days…
* It is better to skip it than to offend people. Better to keep your temper… Better to buy humbly… Better to dress modestly… Why? **LOVE!**