

1 Corinthians 8

12-28-11

You Are Your Brothers Keeper!

I. Announce:

- A. Regular services Sunday Jan. 1st.
- B. Pray for Peru Team:
- C. Randy & Lycia (Kosovo):

II. Intro:

- A. Your love may be tested more by **Christians** who disagree w/you, **than by unbelievers** who persecute you. [It takes a diamond to cut a diamond]
- B. What do you do when your Christian brother/sister disagrees with you, on how God's people ought to live?
 - 1. Luther wrote, **A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none.**
A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all."
- C. **Story:** When I 1st got saved I had a **Crucifix** on the wall, at the foot of my bed. When I'd say my prayers at night I was taught by my mom from an early age, I should stare at the crucifix when I prayed. It was a habit for so many years. I wasn't sure if I was supposed to stop?
- D. **In the next 3 chapters,** Paul deals with the subject of **Christian liberty**.
 - 1. **Here Paul answers a question the Corinthian church asked him concerning food.**
 - 2. **Note: Now...**introduces a new question to answer. (see 7:1; 10)
 - a) We all deal with meat offered to minions, or demon meat right? :) Well...no!
 - b) **Liberty issues have been:** movies, playing cards, wine w/dinner.
Today taboos? Might be tattoos, piercings.
Here in Corinth it was *false god's* barbecue, & *idol-meat* casserole.
- E. **When are you free to enjoy your liberty?**
When should you **limit it** for the sake of others?
What **gray areas** has the Lord told you to abstain?
How should you respond to those who **enjoy more liberties** than you do, **IF** they're participating in those activities w/discretion?
How should you respond to those who are **flaunting** their liberties?
How do you respond to those who choose to **enjoy fewer liberties** than you do, especially when you are in their company?

III. LOVE TRUMPS KNOWLEDGE! (1-3)

- A. (1) **Things offered to idols** – In Corinth, meat was purchased for the most part in the marketplace.

B. The problem for some of the believers was that they knew, most likely, it had been offered in one of the pagan temples, in which **3 things** would have taken place:

1. **Part** of the meat was burned to a deity.

a) Sometimes a mere token part, as small as some of the hair cut from the forehead. William Barclay

2. **Part** was served at a banquet w/the deity as honored guest.

3. **Part** was sold at the marketplace.

a) So, Christians didn't know what to do with this...was this compromise to eat this? Did it even matter?

4. We may not deal with whether the butcher at Costco/Albertson's has said some strange prayer over our T-Bone's or not, **but** we all still deal with Christian liberties.

a) When can we **lean on** our Liberties; & when to **leave off** our Liberties?

C. Knowledge puffs up(bellows, blows up, inflates) & Love builds up.

1. If knowledge puffs you up, it usually tears others down!

But if your love swells up, it usually builds others up!

IV. **LIBERTY & SANCTIFIED LOGIC! (4-6)**

A. After teaching *the danger of knowledge*, **now** Paul uses knowledge rightly...w/some sanctified Logic.

B. True, we are Monotheists, there is but **one** true God.

1. **But**, let this knowledge of One God be a **tool** not a **weapon!**

2. Don't use your knowledge as a **wrecking crane!**

C. **So** is it right for a Christian to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols?

1. There are many idols, all of which represent *gods* which do not exist (4b,5).

2. There is only one true God, the creator of all things and the giver of life (6).

3. In light of the above, there is **no connection** between food and spirituality (8).

a) Since, idols weren't real & the sacrifice to an idol was meaningless, it really didn't matter what was said over them, or done to them,...it was just a religious hocus-pocus!

(1) **Therefore, we can always just jump in & partake...right???** **No!**

V. **LIBERTY NOT LICENSE! (7-12)**

A. Our liberties are controlled by *conscience*.

1. **Conscience** is the judge within that commends us for doing right & condemns us for doing wrong.

2. As we grow in spiritual understanding, a weak conscience becomes stronger & we appreciate our freedom in Christ more & more.

3. The **weak** believer must not **run ahead** of his conscience & the **strong** believer must **never force** him to do so!

a) Christian **freedom** is tied to Christian **responsibility**!

B. Paul warns that weaker believers are upset when other believers eat such meat.

1. **Don't become** a stumbling block to other Christians (9-12).

a) To do so is to sin against your **weaker brother** (9-11).

b) To do so is to sin against your **Savior** (12).

2. **Do become** a stepping-stone(1-3): Knowledge puffs up, but love **builds up**.

C. (8) It is a **clean heart** & **not clean food** that will matter; & the weak brother confounds the two!¹

D. (10) Eating **in** an idols temple –

1. What places are off limits to you, but may not be to other Christians?

2. What places are off limits to other believers, but may not be to you?

E. If you've been saved out of a certain background, that greatly affects your Christian Liberties!

1. **For some**, TV played a big part pre-salvation, so out w/the TV.

2. **For some Christians**, staying at Laughlin or Las Vegas is no big deal. They don't drink or gamble, they go to take advantage of the cheap hotels, cheap food, & cheap vacation - **But other Christians say**, "how can you support these establishments that have destroyed so many people, families, & lives?"

3. **For some** it is going to the theater, or dancing, social drinking, playing cards (since they came from the tarot cards), & the list goes on.

4. **Have you noticed some "Song Remakes"** are ok to you, & others aren't? (Why? Time period they came out of...what you were doing at the time?)

5. **If you were saved out of *Idols worship*** you'd have a problem with this too!

F. (11) **Your pride can cause harm to others.**

1. **Remember**, **knowledge** will never solve the problem!

2. If Christ **loved** the brother enough to die for him, **then** the strong believer ought to **love** him enough to give up his right to eat certain meat.

G. (12) The conscience is not infallible, **yet** it is a serious matter to violate it **or** tempt others to violate theirs!

1. **Husbands**, do you tempt your wife to wear clothes in public they are not comfortable wearing? - Or watch movies they are not comfortable watching?

¹ Wycliffe Commentary on the NT

VI. A LESSON OF LOVE! (13)

- A. I will never again eat meat – This sets forth the basic principle of Love!
1. Seeking the good of others *before* one's own!
 2. 1 Cor.10:24 **Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.**
 3. **Love** not *light* (or *knowledge*) solves the problem!
- B. **Liberties** are controlled by Conscience; **Conscience** is strengthened by Knowledge; & **Knowledge** is balanced by **Love**!
1. Your spiritual knowledge can be either a **weapon** to hurt people, or a **tool** to build people!
 2. The decision to follow the path of Love rests w/Paul, not w/the weak!
- C. Jesus said, **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**
1. **Not if we** become serious students of the Word?
Not if we go to every seminar we can afford?
Not if we pour all of our money into missions?
- D. Paul says, “If what I eat is going to make another Christian sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live - for I don't want to make another Christian stumble.”
- E. And let's remember our *attitude* with which we restrain our liberty!
1. Don't view *weaker believers* as **nuisances**, standing in the way of your liberty!

VII. 4 QUESTIONS TO ASK!

- A. **[1] Can I do this?** - What does **the Bible Say**?
1. Murder, rape, & lying are always wrong, because the bible says so.
 - a) They are wrong w/all **peoples**, at all **times** & in all **places**.
 - b) **This is known as a Universal Sin.**
 2. Also, **you can't break the law** - so drugs are an easy one. **Or**, drinking before 21.
- B. **[2] Should I do this?** - What does **my Conscience Say**?
1. This is not to be 1 persons conscience, **nor** the pastors conscience...**but yours!**
 2. **Just because you can do or eat something...doesn't mean you should.**
 3. Our conscience acts like **a rudder** to help steer us, keep us from drifting into dangerous waters. **A person might not read the bible, but they know rape is wrong(conscience).**
 4. We shouldn't make rules not in the bible. The bible doesn't need our help.
 5. **Again...just because we can doesn't mean we should!**

6. This is known as a Particular Sin.

C. In Rom.14 Paul gave us Christian guidelines for Gray areas, to achieve unity amidst diversity!

1. Receive those who are different than you.
2. Don't look down on those w/differing views.
3. Remember that those who disagree w/us are still accepted by God.
4. Let God Judge!
5. Love requires self-limitations!
6. Become convinced what is right for you personally!
7. All members of the body of Christ are interrelated, interconnected, & interwoven!
8. We both are the Lord's. We are on the same team!
9. All members will face God's Bema judgment individually.
10. There is no right & wrong side...except for you personally.
11. You will be graded on your attitudes you've displayed & how you've treated those who disagreed with you.

D. [3] What does my Weakness Require? - How must I restrict my Freedom?

1. There are areas where I must *intentionally* restrict my freedom.
2. There are areas where I am strong & you may be weak; & where I am weak & you might be strong. *Know thyself!*
 - a) It might be violence on a TV show that's no big deal to you.

E. [4] What does my Friend Need?

1. If I eat with a Vegan, why not eat off the vegan menu?
2. When you have people over for dinner, that isn't the time to show off your liberties.
3. Remember the basic principle is Love!

Christian Solidarity or Parody?

Once upon a time 3 churches in a small town decided to get together & have a Baptism to show solidarity. They chose their town's only park for a safe venue. And so, everything was going wonderfully...until they arrived at the park. Invited to the gathering was: *The 1st Church of the Starched Shirts; The Association of Even-Keel Conservatives; & The Free-Will Liberal-a-palians.*

They figured they'd start with a Pot-Luck, since as everyone knows this is how **All** good Christian events start.

- The 1st Church of the Starched Shirts brought out their home made Lemonade.

- The Association of Even Keel Conservatives placed on the tables the most contemporary Monster drinks...& Starbucks of course.
- And then, The Free-Will Liberal-a-palians opened their coolers & displayed every type of Beer known to man. **This caused no small stir.**

Immediately the pastors got together & pow-wow'd & decided they had better start the **Baptism** before things got out of hand, or, in their hand for some.

- ***The 1st Church of the Starched Shirts*** came from the dressing rooms in their White Robes. They were fitted tight at the collar & descended down to the ankles (some of course didn't even show ankles!)
- ***The Association of Even Keel Conservatives*** sported their Billabong, Rip Curl, Roxy, & of course "Ezekiel" brand swim attire (though modest of course!...well, according to their bi-laws at least).
- ***The Free-Will Liberal-a-palians*** bounded forth freely in their colorful Speedos & Tinni-Weenie-Bikinis. - The Starched Shirts blew a stitch!

Wanting to get this whole thing over with, the pastors said let's get to Baptizing.

- I like to "Drip" when I Baptize said the 1st.
- I prefer the biblical way, we "Dunk" said the 2nd (If it was good enough for Jesus it is good enough for me!).
- I don't favor the Drip, nor the Dunk, but I fancy the "Douse". "The Douse" both exclaimed? Yes, I came up with it myself, he said gleefully. We have them stand there knee deep in the water & we picture them full of mud. Well, then we throw a bucket of water at them & Douse those sins away! Get it!

Well, let's get to it.

- I Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit said the Even Keel Conservative minister.
- I Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, & the Holy GHOST said the Starched Shirt Reverend.
- I Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, & in the Hole you go! said the Free-Will Liberal-a-palian pastor.

And so the three churches baptized their converts that day...in 3 different areas, of the small town's one park's, pond.

And the town's 3 secular Newspaper's different journalist all reported in solidarity, the Christian Churches Parody!