

1 Corinthians 9

1-18-12

Winning your Rights or your Race?

I. Announce:

A. Slide#1 Justice Matters Flyers - back at sound booth.

II. Intro:

A. Last Week: We talked about our Christian liberties. This week: Paul uses his own life as an example of the benefits of *Voluntarily Limiting Personal Liberties!*

B. Paul, the master illustrator, uses 15 examples in this chapter.

1. He'll liken Christian Ministry to: a Soldier(7a), a Winegrower(7b), Shepherd(7c), Oxen(8,9), Farmer(10), an OT Priest(13), Preacher(14-16), Steward(17), Servant(19), Jew(20a), one under the law(20b), those w/o the Law(21), Weak(22), Runners(24,25), & Fighter(26,27).

C. Note: Paul's one great desire was *to win the lost*, & that governed his every decision!

D. Stats on Pastors in USA: (From Mark Driscoll Podcast, Paying your pastor #20, 1Cor. Series)

1. Every month 1,500 quit [sin, usually sexual; burn out; or church in fighting].
2. ½ of pastors marriages end in divorce.
3. 80% of pastors (84% pastors wives) feel ungrateful & discouraged in ministry.
4. 50% would leave ministry if they had another way of making a living.
5. 80% of seminary & B.S. Graduates who enter ministry, leave it w/in the 1st 5 yrs & do so for life.
6. 70% of pastors admit to fighting depression. Some internalize, some externalize.
7. 40% of pastors confess to committing adultery while in ministry. (thats just the ones that admitted it)
8. 70% pastors say the only time they read the bible is when they're preparing for study.
9. 80% of pastors wives feel their spouse is overworked.
10. 80% wish their spouse would quit the ministry. :(
 - a) Being a pastor is obviously difficult. Maybe you'll know a little bit better how to pray for your pastors.
 - b) Remember Pastor Paul *planted* the church in Corinth.
 - c) He's been working there for 18 months now & no salary.
 - d) So Paul has planted the church(not easy). Led all of them to Christ. Labored intensely over them. You'd think he'd receive **thanks, respect**, maybe at least a **stipend?**
 - (1) Nope. No thanks, only disrespect & refused to pay him.

E. Slide#2 Outline: Winning His Rights; Surrendering His Rights; Winning Souls; Winning His Race

III. Slide#3 **WINNING HIS RIGHTS! (1-12a)**

- A. Slide#4 Warren Wiersbe said, *We do not have the right to give up our freedom, for that was purchased by Christ(Gal.5:1); but we do have the freedom to give up our rights.*
- B. (1,2) If every Christian has rights, then most assuredly Apostles do!
- C. (3-6) Paul & Barnabas' Rights!
 - 1. Though Paul & his co-workers had every right to eat, drink, marry, & collect funds for their work of preaching the gospel, they pursued none of these things.
- D. (7) A Soldier is paid for his services. A Winegrower...eats from the grapes he harvests. A Shepherd...drinks from the milk of his flock.
- E. (8,9) An Oxen – Now he backs it up biblically.
- F. (10-12A) A Farmer – he should have some ultimate share in the harvest.
- G. (11) Wow! How many have taken advantage of this statement?
 - 1. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?
 - 2. Many pastors have fleeced the flock with this Scripture...but not one will get away with it!
 - a) Slide#5 Ezek 34:2-4 Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.
 - 3. Paul had seen too many pastors growing fat, & he was determined to go to the other extreme!

IV. Slide#6 **SURRENDERING HIS RIGHTS! (12b-18)**

- A. (12) Paul gave up his rights...to win souls!
 - 1. Slide#7 Hinder=a cutting in (literal sense of cutting down a tree) [Belize Rosewood example] It was also a surgical term for making an incision.
 - a) Paul didn't want his financial needs to cut into the body of Christ.
 - 2. Men judge a message by the life & character of the man/woman who brings it; & Paul was determined that his hands would be clean!
 - 3. Someone once said to a preacher, "I cannot hear what you say for listening to what you are."
 - a) He should be respected if he is respectable! Not pastors who are lazy or sleazy. Nor just because of their Title (P.I. Pastor).

- B. (13) **An OT Priest** – The Levites were to work full time down at the tabernacle & thus the tithes brought in were to take care of he & his family.
- C. (14-16) **A Preacher** – Woe, if I don't preach!
- D. (17) **A Steward** – Remember, a steward was one who was **given much to oversee, ...but owned nothing himself.**
- E. (18) **Paul's Reward** – Preaching the gospel was reward enough.
 - 1. **Without charge** – Another reason why we don't *pass the plate*...so people don't feel like they have to pay to be here. **Once they're a believer they know to give w/boxes in the foyer.**

V. Slide#8 **WINNING SOULS! (19-23)**

- A. (19) **A Servant** - Though free from all men, he made himself a slave to all, ...so I may **when the more.**
 - 1. 6 times in 4 verses...**that I might win.**
- B. (20a) **Slide#9 A Jew** – we saw this in Acts 18:18 **He had his hair cut off at Cenchrrea, for he had taken a vow.**
- C. (20b) **One under the law** – not that he would **place himself under the law**, but that he wouldn't do anything to offend those under the law.
 - 1. (i.e.) He wouldn't eat **pork** in the face of one still under the Levitical law regarding no pork.
 - 2. Also, w/Christians who are still under **some legalism or custom** you may have to **submit to their moral standards**...so as to reach them.
 - a) (eg.) Haiti trips we require ladies to wear **long dresses** & guys to wear **ties** to church service. No **clapping** in a Bulgarian church I was in, in *Etropole*. Not putting my bible on the floor India.
 - b) **Slide#10** Last time in Haiti 1 of our guys had **piercings**. Was asked to remove for Sun Service
 - 3. Because of **Paul's restraint**, many **under the Law** were brought **above it** to enjoy the full knowledge of Christ!
- D. (21) **One w/o the Law** – Paul did this so well in all the Greek cities. He didn't use Jewish analogies, but instead spoke to their **Gentile-ness!**
 - 1. **One w/o the Law**...could also refer to the “freedom abusers”.
 - 2. Paul encourages us to be **mobile in method, but not in morals!**
- E. (22) **As Weak** – they could be easily offended & slip back into sin.
 - 1. We must restrain our liberties while we are w/them.
- F. **I have become all things to all men** – doesn't mean Paul had **no convictions**. It means he used his convictions to build **bridges**, not **walls!**
 - 1. **Slide#11** Which do you build? Bridges or Walls?

- a) **Bridges:** w/a J.W. This morning...**we both love Jesus**...but...we both see Him as someone completely different. With the **Yoga lady Kim** I met on plane...**we're both spiritual**. With anyone from **India** I meet, "Hey, I love your country, food, people."
- b) **Walls:** Can you think of a wall you erected while witnessing to someone before?
 - (1) Time I got frustrated w/a J.W. lady & told her **she was going to hell!** (wall or bridge) [I went back & apologized later].
2. We should witness with **tact!**
 - a) **Slide#12** Tact is the art of making a **point** w/o making an **enemy!**
3. Paul would "come-alongside" **but not** "compromise"!
4. What **barriers** do you find difficult to cross...so as to win a friend of yours to Christ?

VI. Slide#13 **WINNING HIS RACE! (24-27)**

- A. **Slide#14** Columnist **Herb Caen** wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "**Every morning** in Africa, **a gazelle** wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. **Every morning a lion** wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. **It doesn't matter** whether you are a **lion** or a **gazelle**; when the sun comes up, **you'd better be running.**"
 1. **Slide#15** Like this gazelle :)
- B. As we look forward to the **Olympics** every 4 years. So during the time of Paul.
 1. Back then it was the **Isthmian Games**, held every 2 years, 10 miles outside of Corinth.
 2. Let's listen to our **trainer** Paul, & follow his advice so we will one-day, **Stand as Victors!**
 3. Reading these verses you can almost "**smell the locker room!**"
- C. (24) **Slide#16** Run in a **race** – (racecourse) *σταδίου*, stadium.
 1. A running track which was a parallelogram about 200 yds. long & 30 yds. wide.
 2. How sad, knowing that God has set mankind in such **a race** where **heaven** or **hell** is our certain end, **that** we should sit down and **loiter**, or run after the **childish toys** of the world, forgetting the prize we should run for. (Adapted from Richard Baxter)
- D. (25) All the endeavors of the **athlete** are in vain if he has not **trained** his body & **abstained** from all that might in any way harm his physical condition.
 1. "**Champions aren't born, they're made!**"
 - a) Made, via discipline, right training, desire & motivation, & realistic goals.
 2. Our key word is temperate or **to exercise Self-control!**
 - a) It means **strength within**. [It carries the idea of *mastering yourself* instead of giving in to impulse or overindulgence]

3. **Winners won:** a lifetime exemption from paying taxes & serving in the military. Tuition free education. A *not-so-modest* statue of yourself erected along the roadway that led to the site of the games. **But**, the real prize was **The Crown!**
 - a) The Isthmian Crown was *a wreath of wild celery*.
 - b) **Slide#17 5 Crowns:** Crown of Life (Blessed is the man who...James 1:12); Crown Incorruptible (here) Crown of Rejoicing (at His presence 1 Thes.2:19,20); Crown of Rt(all who have loved His appearing 2Tim4:5-8); Crown of Glory (Shepherd the flock 1Pet5:2-4)
4. **Let's keep in mind Paul isn't speaking of salvation, but **Rewards!****
5. Paul wants us running to *the finish line of life* with our sites on **winning...not** just on finishing the race.
 - a) Myself in track in H.S. I just wanted to finish!
 - (1) Except one race, I felt great, I was going for it. The race, the 880 yrd dash. 1st lap...I was smokin...the 2nd lap started...I hit the wall so hard! **WHY? Lack of discipline...**On our long run days I'd talk my friends into running to my house & going swimming, or trampoline-ing.
6. Since these athletes disciplined themselves so strenuously...for a **wilting wreath**, **how much more** should we train to win a **continuing crown**.
 - a) Heb.12:1 **Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.**
7. "If you want to **perform** like a champion, you must **practice** like one!"
8. (John Wesley) "Give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin **and** desire nothing but God, **and** I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; **they alone** will shake the gates of hell **and** set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."
- E. (26) **Not w/uncertainty** – Eyes fixed on the goal.
 1. **Note:** he moves to "I" (not "we") Paul doesn't stop to sightsee, window shop, or pick flowers in his spiritual race of life.
 2. **Slide#18** When Paul was in the ring w/sin, he'd cock back his arm & plant his fist square on the chin of sin.
 3. J.B.Phillips translation of this, **I am no shadow-boxer, I really fight! I am my body's sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others I should myself be disqualified.**
- F. (27) **Disqualified** – Rejected as unusable.
 1. Used of **metals & coins** which were rejected for **not standing the test**. (RWP)
- G. **Slide#19** Paul's one great desire was **to win the lost**, & that governed his every decision!"
- H. Someone once defined **real failure** as: "...**living** without knowing what life is all about, **feeding** on things that do not satisfy, **thinking** you have everything, only to find out in the end you have nothing that matters."
- I. **Slide#20** So...what are you going to strive for? Winning your **Rights**, or your **Race**?