

## Intro:

1. Over the last two weeks we have been looking at 1 Corinthians 10.
  - a. This morning, Lord willing, we will finish the chapter - verses 14-33.
2. The Christians of Corinth who received this letter were completely surrounded by idolatry, pagan worship, prostitution, immorality, and debauchery.
  - a. It appears that they were having a hard time not being influenced by all that was taking place around them.
3. Recap of 1 Cor 10:1-13:
  - a. In Vs 1-4 Paul gives several examples to illustrate that the children of Israel were one people united together under God's leader for the people, Moses.
    - i. The people under Moses had all been delivered out of the slavery of Egypt by passing through the Red Sea in their great escape.
    - ii. All experienced supernatural protection and provision.
    - iii. All drank water from the Rock of Meribah, an event that foreshadowed the Living Waters that Jesus Christ provides to believers.
  - b. But in Vs 5 Paul points out that God was not well please with these people and the primary reason for this was that they lacked faith in failing to enter the Promised Land immediately after coming out of Egypt.
  - c. In Vs 6-10, Paul lists five more things that hindered and disqualified Israel.
    - i. Lust, Idolatry, Sexual Immorality, Tempt/Test Christ, Complain
  - d. In Vs 12 Paul exhorts the believers in Corinth and you and me to take heed, to be on guard, to watch out so that these five things don't hinder or disqualify any of us.
  - e. Verse 13 is a verse of promise and hope for the believer. You may feel like your temptation to sin is overwhelming, but remember, **God is faithful!**
    - i. He won't allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able...
    - ii. And He also provides a way of escape *if* you'll take the time to look for that way of escape.

## Read 1 Cor 10:14-33 and Pray<sup>1</sup>

1. In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul wrote, “*Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me*”
  - a. Paul’s words in this 10<sup>th</sup> chapter are a continuation of his response to questions asked of him.
2. In 1 Corinthians 8:1 it says, “*Now concerning things offered to idols*” - Meat in particular.
  - a. In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter Paul helped us to understand that we have a tremendous amount of freedom and liberty in Christ.
  - b. But we must not exercise our liberty in Christ in such a way as to stumble other people.
3. This idea of liberty and issues surrounding meat offered to idols carries over into this 10<sup>th</sup> chapter this morning.
  - a. If you are not familiar with the chapters preceding this chapter, I encourage you to go home and read this letter in its entirety so that you can gain the proper big picture perspective.

1 Corinthians 10:14-15 <sup>14</sup> **Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.** <sup>15</sup> **I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.**

1. If you’ll stop and honestly consider Paul’s message, you’ll see that these are words of wisdom: there is no other way.
  - a. Your life experiences and your conscience testify of this truth.
  - b. The reason a person’s heart and soul is unsettled even in the midst of material, relational, & professional prosperity is that God has created us so that we can only be complete in Him (Col 2:10).
2. So Paul rightly says, “**Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry**”
  - a. Don’t worship or esteem something, anything, higher than God or ahead of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

- b. Flee from it! The original Greek word for flee means ‘*Escape*’ & is associated with danger!
  - c. What happens when you don’t flee from it? It’s going to get you!
- Remember the context of the entire chapter; Paul in the preceding verses has just illustrated how the Children of Israel were all joined together as one people.
    - Now Paul is going to apply that same principle of oneness to the Christian faith, for you and me.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 <sup>16</sup> **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?** <sup>17</sup> **For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.**

1. The word **communion** comes from the Greek word ‘*koinonia*’ which means *fellowship, sharing*; it speaks of *oneness*.
  - a. There is a spiritual unity through the blood of Jesus Christ.
2. This makes sense when you understand the implications of eating together in the Middle East.
  - a. When you eat food, your body breaks that food down to supply your body with life and energy.
  - b. The Middle Eastern thought is that if you are sharing a meal, you are becoming one with that person because you are eating the same food.
  - c. So too, the communion cup and the communion bread symbolizes our oneness in Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:18 <sup>18</sup> **Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?**

1. “**those who eat of the sacrifices**” is a reference to the Old Testament Fellowship or Peace offering.
  - a. According to Leviticus 3 & 7, this offering was brought to the priests
  - b. The blood and fatty portion of the animal were used in the sacrificial offering

- c. But the meat would be given back to the worshipper to eat.
  - d. That meat was symbolic of a meal shared between the worshipper and God.
  - e. The children of Israel were united together through an act of worship at the altar.
2. In a similar way we are joined together through an act of worship, in the partaking of communion together.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20 <sup>19</sup> **What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?** <sup>20</sup> **Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.**

- 1. We must understand that behind the idol is a demon.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 8:4 *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.*
    - i. An idol in and of itself is nothing.
  - b. If you worship God, then you have chosen wisely in worshipping the one and only True and Living God.
    - i. But Satan has skillfully deceived people by getting them to worship things that are created rather than worshipping the Creator Himself.
  - c. Understand that there is demonic activity going on when people worship an idol.
  - d. In 2 Cor 11:14 we learn that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
    - i. He has successfully led people into religious activities that look good, and do good deeds, but do not worship God; they do not esteem Christ as Lord; they deny Christ's deity as God in the flesh.
    - ii. When you see people praying to Buddha, there is demonic activity going on.
    - iii. When you see people celebrating at the Shinto Shrine, there is demonic activity going on.

- e. For those of you who want to travel throughout Japan to visit and see ancient temples and shrines, know that demonic activity has perpetuated their existence.
  - i. I know we have liberty in Christ, but I personally think it's a bad witness for Christians to go to Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines and marvel, gawk, and celebrate its "wonder and beauty".

2. Paul says, "I do not want you to have fellowship with demons"

1 Corinthians 10:21-22 <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

1. Let's think about this for a minute to make sure there is no confusion.
  - a. **Meat** – what you eat, no problem.
  - b. But there are certain places where people **meet** that are going to have a negative effect on our walk and relationship with the Lord.
2. I've heard it said that there are three types of people:
  - a. *"Them that is; them that ain't; and them that think they is but they ain't."*
  - b. There are those who are saved. Everyone else is not saved and are headed for hell if they are not born again (John 3).
    - i. Sadly there are those who think they are okay with God, but have no clue that they are lost and separated from God by their unforgiven sin.
3. I believe part of the confusion that exists is when Christians try to live their life with one foot in the world and with the other foot they are trying to follow Christ.
  - a. You just can't do it.
  - b. You can't live a double life.
    - i. You can't be involved in an adulterous relationship and properly love & nurture your spouse whom you are married to.
    - ii. You cannot love God and love this world. (For Satan is temporarily the ruler of this fallen world. (John 12:31))

4. That's why Paul says <sup>21</sup> **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.**

a. I wonder what the Lord thinks when we dabble with idolatry?

i. Of course He doesn't like it any less than my wife would like it if I went to Hooters for lunch.

b. Don't provoke the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:23 <sup>23</sup> **All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.**

1. The word **edify** comes from the Greek word which means to build up.

a. Our actions should be building up both ourselves and those around us.

2. This 23<sup>rd</sup> verse should be considered with its sister verse, 1 Corinthians 6:12, which says, "*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful [profitable]. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*"

3. We are free in Christ from the Law – the Old Testament Law, and various *unregulated* traditions, customs, and observances that are legalistically enforced.

4. Questions to ask yourself:

a. Is what I want to do helpful or profitable?

b. Is what I want to do going to possess any power of me?

c. Will what I'm doing edify other believers?

1 Corinthians 10:24 <sup>24</sup> **Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.**

1. This is love! Yet this is so hard to live out.

a. If you want an example of this, then read the Gospels because that is what Jesus did, He laid down His life for our well-being.

1 Corinthians 10:25-26 <sup>25</sup> **Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;**  
<sup>26</sup> **for "*the earth is the LORD's*, and all its fullness."**

1. Buy your meat, take it home and enjoy!

1 Corinthians 10:27 <sup>27</sup> 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.

1. Again enjoy. We have freedom in Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:28 <sup>28</sup> But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*

1. Paul exhorts us to make a concession here for two primary reasons:
  - a. As a Christian we are to do what we can not to stumble someone.
  - b. People are going to try to test you; don't fall into their trap.
    - i. They are looking for a reason to point the finger at you.
    - ii. After all, we are not greater than our Master Jesus and look how He was treated.
2. First Paul says we can eat because *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness"*, but now he's says don't eat the meat, *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*
  - a. We are free to eat all manner of meat, but on the occasion that we abstain for the sake of others, don't complain about, you are not missing out...
  - b. Because there is so many other things available to you to eat and enjoy.
  - c. Go find something else to eat that won't stumble a brother or sister.

1 Corinthians 10:29-31 <sup>29</sup> "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? <sup>30</sup> But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks? <sup>31</sup> Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1. The point: Christians should not be judging one another in matters of conscience.
2. Romans 14:5-6 *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does*

*not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.*

People like to quote 1 Cor 10:31, but we must consider the full counsel of the Lord.

Let's read on...

1 Corinthians 10:32-33 <sup>32</sup> Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, <sup>33</sup> just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

1. Paul building the case that we have liberty and freedom in Christ.
  - a. We can do almost anything we want with the key being that we deny ourselves and serve others, all to the glory of God.

Finally in 1 Corinthians 11:1, which fits so well with what Paul just wrote in Chap 10 we read... **Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**

1. Who are you imitating today?
  - a. Do your actions look like Christ?
  - b. We should all have a common goal of being more and more like Christ as each day passes by.
2. We are going to partake of communion together where by symbolically we are becoming one through the bread and the cup.
  - a. Of course we are already one by the blood of Christ.
  - b. As we prepare to receive and participate, consider what Christ endured in order to make us one.
  - c. Consider how you can continue in one accord with your fellow Christian imitating Christ and serving others to the glory of God.
  - d. (Worship team leads)