

1. Last week we completed the study of the Second and Third Missionary Journeys and when the clock tolled 11:30 we were about to begin several concluding remarks regarding Paul's visit to Corinth.

2. I want to review some of that learned by way of several summary points:

Summary Points

1. There were great idolatrous temples in Corinth with a cafe, temple and fornication area. Particularly popular seemed to be the Temple of Apollos.

2. There was also a meat market outside the temple where meat was sold.

3. Many Christian converts came from these idolatrous religious backgrounds.

4. Many of these converts had strong feelings about the practices associated with the idol worship and their role in the abominations.

5. They were offended by anyone who would eat at the temple cafe or buy meat in the market outside the temple.

6. There were on the other hand certain believers who saw nothing wrong with buying the meat since to their mind there was no such thing as an idol and therefore why not?

7. A schism developed over this matter which for some was an essential and for others a liberty.

8. Paul was apparently asked to adjudicate this matter:

8.1 He begins his judicial opinion by asserting that knowledge of doctrine carries with it certain responsibilities.

8.2 He then teaches that an idol is nothing and therefore the group partaking of the meat is on solid doctrinal ground technically speaking.

8.3 Paul next however concludes that not everyone has this maturity and that there are those who are offended albeit in error.

8.4 The great Apostle then opines that eating or not eating does not recommend anyone to God.

8.5 Paul then issues the bitter medicine to the eaters: refrain from eating because of your weaker brother.

8.5.1 We may have liberty to do something but there is never a general license; each situation requires discernment.

9. In verse 8:13 Paul explains why:

1Co 8:13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

10. In verses 1Co 10:23-33 Paul uses this same example to teach flexibility and how Christianity is not an easy relationship to apply in time.

10.1 When you go to the meat market says Paul “Don't ask whether the meat has been sacrificed to idols or not sacrificed to idols.”

1Co 10:23 "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial.
"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive.

1Co 10:24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

1Co 10:25 it is certainly ok to eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience,

10.1.1 He then continues, “Do you want the meat to be the issue to the outside world or do you want Christ to be that issue?”

10.1.2 Do not for example make this an issue before the grocery-store clerk, just buy what you want.”

10.2 Paul then asks "What if someone asks you to dinner, is the meat going to be the subject of the conversation?" I should hope not says Paul.

1Co 10:27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

10.3 What however, if an unbelieving host asks you about eating the meat being served, is she testing you? In this case don't eat says Paul.”

1Co 10:28 But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake--

1Co 10:29 the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience?

10.4 “You must be flexible” says Paul “Make Christ the issue and not the meat.”

1Co 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1Co 10:32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God--

1Co 10:33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

11. The same lesson is taught by Paul to the Church at Rome.

11.1 Here however the drinking of wine is added to the teaching example.

11.2 None of us can live our lives unto ourselves.

11.3 You must not judge others but rather judge yourself says Paul; so that you do not offend a weaker brother in Christ.

Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

11.4 Paul tells those in the Church at Rome that there are weaker brothers out there.

Rom 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

11.5 Under the same principle of not casting your pearls before swine we must not let that which is a non-essential (but a correct principle) be ridiculed by the “ignorant” Christian.

Rom 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

11.6 By correctly applying this doctrine we can be approved of both God and man but it does require flexibility.

Rom 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Rom 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Rom 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense.

11.7 Now we have the 20th century example of wine added to the meat list.

Rom 14:21 **It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine**, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

11.8 It is certainly true we live our lives unto the Lord. It is also true; however, that living the Christian life also includes applying impersonal love toward all people but especially fellow believers.

Rom 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Rom 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

Rom 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

12. The test of flexibility is very difficult because many weak believers and unbelievers may try to impose their standards on you and you may be tempted to react.

13. Our job is to relax and let doctrine have a chance to change us all and this demands flexibility concerning the non-essentials.



14. While at Corinth Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans.

14.1 Returning through Philippi and Troas, he stopped at Miletus and spoke with the elders of the church of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35). For example:

Acts 20:22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me...."

Acts 20:23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

14.2 Here he rehearsed his ministry among them, and charged them with their sober responsibilities, while also warning them of dangers that would arise after his departure.

14.3 Wishing to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, Paul made his way through Tyre and Caesarea where he was warned of the dangers awaiting him. It is here that Paul becomes a full fledged “reversionist” putting his needs above the will of God. (See the Doctrine of Paul's Reversionism).

14.4 In his religious apostasy he says: "I am even willing to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," he pursued his course.

Acts 21:4 Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10 After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

Acts 21:11 Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

14.5 With him was the money he had collected for the needy saints in Jerusalem (compare 1Co 16:1-4; 2Co 8-9; Rom 15:25-27).

14.6 While he was warmly received by James and the elders, certain Jews from Asia, present in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, falsely accused Paul of defiling the temple area by bringing a gentile into the Temple. (Acts 21:27-36).

14.7 Paul does what he has warned all of his gentiles converts never to do: "get involved again with the evil legalism of the Mosaic Law."

Acts 21:20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law.

Acts 21:21 They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.

Acts 21:22 What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, Acts 21:23 so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow.

Acts 21:24 Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

14.8 A riot followed and the incident led to his arrest by the Roman captain in the city. This is divine discipline from God for Paul's evil thinking.

15. The imprisonment period (Acts 21:15-28:31):

15.1 At first sight it appears strange that Luke should have given so large a section of his narrative to Paul's imprisonments, when it was the missionary expansion of the early church that had occupied him up to this point.

15.2 Concerning this period of Paul's life, it will be well to study Paul's relations with the following persons and groups:

15.2.1 James and the Jerusalem elders (Acts 21:18-26);

15.2.2 Claudius Lysias, the captain of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem (Acts 21:31-39 and Acts 22:22-30):

15.2.3 the Jewish mob in the temple area (Acts 21:40-22:22);

15.2.4 the council (or the Sanhedrin, the supreme governing body of Judaism in Jerusalem, consisting of 70 men plus the high-priest, Acts 22:30-23:10)

15.2.5 Felix, the procurator of Judea (Acts 24:1-27):

15.2.6 Festus, successor to Felix (Acts 25:1-12);

15.2.7 Herod Agrippa II, Roman-appointed king over certain territories adjacent to and within Palestine (Acts 25:13-26:32).

15.3 During this period, Paul claimed his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-28), appealed to Caesar for a fair trial (Acts 25:10-12), and was judged to be innocent of the charges against him by both Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26:31-32).

15.4 His voyage to Rome eventuated in a two-year period of unhindered preaching and teaching, practically on Caesar's doorstep (Acts 28:30-31)!

15.5 It is here the story penned by Luke comes to its end.

16. What happened to Paul?

16.1 Did he ever appear before Nero?

16.2 If so, was he condemned and executed, or released?

17. Let's pause here and review the *Doctrine of Paul's Reversionism*.

Doctrine of Paul's Reversionism

Introduction: Paul like all people made mistakes and had bouts with negative volition to the Word of God. This doctrine is designed to declare three of Paul's such reversions.

1. The three selected are: his trip to Jerusalem, his failure to apply impersonal love toward John Mark and his refusal to teach at Troas.

1.1 In c. 58 A.D. it was the will of God that Paul's third missionary journey should go west into Spain.

Rom 15:24 **Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you:** for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

1.2 In Ephesus he decides to go to Jerusalem before going to Rome. It was God's will he go west to Spain rather than east to Jerusalem.

1.2.1 See Rom 1:10 ..." if by any means I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you."

1.2.3 Now compare Rom 15:25-32 with Rom 1:10.

Rom 15:25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

Rom 15:26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem ...

Rom 15:28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

Rom 15:29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Rom 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Rom 15:31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

Rom 15:32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

2. Paul dearly desires the approbation of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem and finds exhilarating the thought of taking an offering from the Gentile churches at Macedonia to the much-`persecuted Judaeo Christian Church at Jerusalem.

2.1 In a state of reversionism Paul goes east instead of west.

3. Paul wants to arrive at Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. It is in the Jerusalem Church he wants to preach and be recognized as one of the early leaders of the Judaeo Christian faith. Large crowds arrive in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.

3.1 This from a man who warned his Gentile congregates to avoid the Mosaic law with its evil feast days.

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Gal 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

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