

LESSON 22: I CORINTHIANS 8-16
MARCH 1, 2017

OVERVIEW

- . Eating foods offered to idols – I Corinthians 8-10
- . Order in worship – I Corinthians 11
- . Spiritual gifts – I Corinthians 12-14
- . Resurrection – I Corinthians 15

EATING FOODS OFFERED TO IDOLS – I CORINTHIANS 8-10

- . The Principle involved – I Corinthians 8
 - . In every questionable situation, I must not only consider myself and what is available to me as a Christian, but also whether my action will help or hinder a weaker brother
 - . In Corinth there was a strong pagan population
 - . At the heart of pagan worship was idolatry
 - . Animal sacrifices were offered up to the idols
 - . Once the sacrifice was made the meat from these animals were offered for sale in the public markets
 - . Many pagans bought these foods, not just for their premium quality but also because they believed that by eating these foods they would be blessed
 - . There were many members of the church at Corinth who had a strong, solid faith foundation, who would eat these foods simply because they were high quality and good to eat
 - . These Christians made no connection between the eating of these foods and somehow condoning idol worship
 - . This was creating problems with some of the newer members of the church, or those members who had a weaker faith
 - . There were members of the church who still wanted to blend some of their new faith with their older pagan traditions
 - . They perceived the actions of the stronger Christians as a means of condoning their desire to blend the old with the new
 - . Paul was not only calling out the weaker Christian for this mind set but also challenging the stronger Christians to act in a manner that will give them a greater chance to glorify Christ
 - . To have a shepherd's heart is to be willing to give something up, even if it isn't wrong, in order to help a weaker brother
 - . This principle can be easily applied in today's culture where issues like alcoholism, gambling and so many other things are affecting our population

- . You may not have a problem with any of these issues, but that doesn't give you the freedom to exercise this strength when you are around someone who is struggling with any of these issues
- . There were Jewish members of the church in Corinth who despised Paul because he wasn't adhering to the customs of the religious leaders, under the old system of the Jewish
 - . Under the law, Moses clearly defined that the members of the Levite tribe, who were entrusted with the spiritual leadership of the Jews, were not to work, and therefore, were not given any land in Israel
 - . It was the responsibility of the other tribes to provide for the financial well being of the Levites and the church
 - . Paul refused to take money from the church and insisted on working
 - . He was a tent maker by trade and continued to exercise his trade during his mission work
 - . One of the reasons he did this was to eliminate the possibility of the opposition from accusing Paul of promoting a false faith as a means of providing for himself
- . The underlining theme in these three chapters is Christ's absolute lordship over a Christians life
 - . As Christians, we need to surrender every aspect of our life over to Christ so that our ever action will demonstrate Christ's lordship over us
 - . As we grow in our faith we don't see this as a sacrifice, rather something we truly want in order to grow closer to God

ORDER IN WORSHIP - I CORINTHIANS 11

- . The social customs of the time were creating issues within the church which were disrupting the order of the church
 - . One custom was the clothing on one's head
 - . Pagans believed that men's head should not be covered
 - . Jewish men had always covered their heads since the time of Moses
 - . Pagans believed an unveiled woman was marked as a harlot, one of loose morals who had thrown off the restraint of submission, disgracing her husband
 - . Christian women were now saying "In Christ, all things are lawful to me, I ~~no~~ longer need a veil."
- . Paul addresses these issues by dealing with the principle of God's order in three relationships, the relationship in the divine sphere, the divine-human sphere and in the sphere of the human marriage
 - . In the divine sphere, God the father is Christ's head
 - . In the divine-human sphere, Christ is the head of man

- . In the marriage, man is head of his wife
 - . This is a matter of position and function within the marriage, not a general principle, since neither the man or woman is independent in the eyes of the Lord
- . Paul states that in the Christian church the man's head is to be uncovered. Because in Christ the veil is taken away
 - . Man dishonors his head, Christ, if he prays to Him with covered head
- . The woman's head should remain covered because to not do so would be to disgrace her husband
- . Although some of these rules seem outdated today, we must approach each culture and set of traditions in a way that will bring glory to God, not attention to ourselves

SPIRITUAL GIFTS - I CORINTHIANS 12-14

- . In these chapters Paul upholds God's abundant outpouring of diverse manifestations of His power to enable every Christian to live a fruitful life and to provide blessing, strength and edification to other members of the church, the body of Christ
 - . No gift should be deemed more important than another, just as each body part carries its own importance and significance
 - . It is essential that each body part is healthy and contributing to the overall strength of the body
 - . In the same way it is important that every member of the church is exercising their gifts in a way that strengthens the overall body
- . In Corinth, many members of the church were putting a premium on the gift of Tongues
 - . The root of this was in the pagan belief of the time that the most inspirational words were those coming from the unconscious mind
 - . The church was frustrated that there weren't more believers who had this gift
 - . This was creating a dispute within the church of the reasons behind this
 - . There was also some resentment towards Paul that he didn't speak to them in tongues
- . Paul addresses all these issues by beginning with the importance of all spiritual gifts - I Corinthians 12
 - . The underlining purpose of every gift is to help one another
 - . All gifts are intended to act in perfect unity for the body
 - . Paul talks about nine gifts, in order of importance; wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation

- . The first two of these gifts are universal and available to all believers
- . He specifically puts tongues towards the end
- . Love – I Corinthians 13
 - . Paul emphasizes that the most permanent fruit of the spirit is love
 - . The love described here is first God's love revealed perfectly in our Lord, Jesus Christ
 - . Secondly, in proportion as the Holy Spirit is unquenched within the believer, He produces in the believer's life Christ's own love moving out into every situation of life
 - . Are we truly reproducing Christ's love in inward emotions, mental attitudes and outward emotions
 - . The emphasis of this passage is spiritual maturity
 - . Any gift that we are given is meaningless if we have not learned to love in the manner that God wants us to love
 - . Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul and love your neighbor as yourself
 - . We need to learn what it means to love the way God loves
 - . Everything that Paul has talked about in the chapters leading up to this is rooted in this meaning of love

RESURRECTION - I CORINTHIANS 15

- . Proof of Christ's resurrection – I Corinthians 15:1-11
 - . The Corinthians' changed lives is proof of Christ's resurrection
 - . Old Testament prophets wrote about it happening
 - . There were over 500 living witnesses who were still alive at the time Paul wrote this letter
- . Importance of Christ's resurrection – I Corinthians 15:12-49
 - . It's important for our eternal salvation
 - . If dead bodies cannot be raised then Christ was not raised vv 12-13
 - . If Christ's body was not raised then the apostle's witness is a lie
- . At the core of Christianity is the belief that Christ died, was buried dead and was supernaturally raised from the dead with the same body in which He died
- . Christ's resurrected body was somehow different after his resurrection
 - . The body that is sown perishable is raised imperishable
 - . The resurrected body is a composite of the earthly and heavenly vv. 46-49

NEXT LESSON: MARCH 15, 2017 – 2 CORINTHIANS 1-7