

“Do All for God’s Glory”  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

In our passage,

Paul is warning the Corinthian church against idolatry –

Against giving the honor that rightfully belongs to God

To someone or something other than Him:

Our Lord tells us in the first commandment,

“You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3),

The worship of false gods was rife in Corinth:

And they needed to avoid it:

We may not be tempted by idolatry –

At least literally, as the Corinthians were –

But we can still fall into the same sin:

We actually do, when we put anything ahead of God:

Of our love and service to Him.

If we’re true believers,

We won’t do this consistently –

We can for a time;

We can “back-slide” –

But we can’t continually –

John, “No one who is born of God practices sin” (1 John 3:9) –

And never with our whole heart,

Because God’s Spirit working in us

Will compel us to fight against it.

Warnings like this are meant

To help us do just that.

But Paul is also making an assumption:

That in this congregation –

As in virtually every other in the world –

There are those who belong to Jesus

And those who don't –

He draws our attention to the OC church

To prove his point:

They had the same privileges as the Corinthians –

As we do –

Theirs may have been pictures pointing forward to Christ,

While ours are memorials pointing back to Him –

But these could save them just as well,

If they looked forward to Jesus in faith.

God's redeeming them from Egypt,

Pointed to the redemption He would provide in Christ.

Their "water" baptism –

In the cloud and in the sea –

Into Moses –

The mediator of the OC –

Pointed to our baptism into Jesus –

The Mediator of the NC.

They ate spiritual food –

The manna God provided,

Which was a picture of Jesus –

The true bread from heaven –

And they drank spiritual drink –

The water from the rock:

Which was Christ –

That's what we do when we eat the bread

And drink the wine of the Lord's Supper.

But even though they had all these things –

To point them to Jesus

And build them up in their faith –

Paul says many/most didn't believe and were destroyed.

B. This raises an important question:

Where do we stand with the Lord?

Are we basing our assurance on the same things:

That we believe in Jesus – that He exists?

That we're members of His church?

That we've been baptized?

That we participate in the Lord's Supper every week?

If we are,

We can almost hear James say,

“You do well:

“Those who died in the wilderness did the same.”

What else do we need?

Paul tells us –

As also James –

We need the evidence of a changed life.

## II. Sermon.

A. First, we need to be devoted to God –

To love Him;

To be committed to doing things His way;

To be seeking His pleasure and not our own.

The Jews followed God

As long as He gave them what they wanted,

But when He didn't, they fell away.

They “loved” Him when He got them

Out of their difficult situation in Egypt.

But when Moses went up on the mountain

To receive God's Law,

They turned to their old ways:

They made an image of Yahweh (golden calf),

And worshiped Him as the Egyptians do their gods –

With feasting and immorality.

When Balaam counseled Balak  
To send his prostitutes to them  
To invite them to worship their fertility gods,  
They fell again into idolatry and immorality,  
And 23,000 died in one day.

When they complained  
Because the journey was too long  
And they were tired of eating manna,  
He sent fiery serpents that killed many of them –  
Except for those who believed God's promise  
And looked to the bronze serpent  
He provided in His mercy:

Jesus tells us that serpent pointed to Him:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).

When they thought God was too restrictive  
In who may or may not be a priest –  
As in the case of Korah and those with him,  
Who wanted to make their own rules,  
And do things their own way –  
God sent His destroying angel,  
To bring judgment on them and their families (Num. 16).

If we belong to Jesus,  
We'll be content with what He gives us  
And stick to doing things His way:

We won't fall away quite so quickly.

That doesn't mean we won't be tempted

To turn from God to get what we want –

That doesn't mean we won't fall into sin –

Remember David and Peter.

But more often than not,

We'll take the way out He provides –

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

And when we do fall,

We won't stay in sin –

We'll get back up,

And keep moving forward;

Because we're devoted to Him.

Paul tells us,

If we are sharers in His Table –

If we come here

And eat the Lord's Supper week after week –

We *must* eat from His Table alone:

We *must be* devoted to Him:

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?” (vv. 21-22).

B. Second, Paul tells us

We won't use the freedom He's given us to please ourselves,  
But to please Him and others.

Paul told the Corinthians

They were not to eat from the table of demons.

But he goes on to say in verse 23 –

As well as in chapters 8 and 9 –

That they *may* eat meat sacrificed to idols:

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.”

And in verses 25-26,

“Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS.”

He says there's a difference between *sacrificing* to an idol –

Because you're devoted to it –

And *eating something that has been sacrificed* to an idol –

Being devoted to the Lord.

It's the same difference between

Enjoying the things of the world –

As one devoted to and belonging to the world,

Wanting only to please ourselves –

And enjoying the things of this world

As those who belong to the Lord –

Using these things to glorify Him.

The Corinthians had the freedom  
To eat meat sacrificed to idols –  
As long as in eating it,  
They were seeking to please the Lord.

It didn't please Him if their eating  
Gave the unbeliever who invited them  
A reason to accuse them of hypocrisy;

Or if it stumbled a weaker brother –  
Because it encouraged him  
To do something against his conscience.

Today, it would be like drinking alcohol:

We have the freedom to drink –  
If we use alcohol as the Lord intends –

But if we know that someone who doesn't believe  
Will accuse us of being inconsistent/hypocritical:  
Because he can't see the difference  
Between responsible drinking and drunkenness;

Or if we might stumble a weaker brother,  
By encouraging him to drink  
When he believes all drinking is wrong –  
We should abstain.

We need to be aware of how what we do affects others –  
We need to think more about their well-being than our pleasure:

Paul, “Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor” (1 Cor. 10:24).

C. The bottom line is

If we belong to Jesus,

We will be careful

To do *everything* we do

For God’s glory and pleasure –

Rather than our own:

Paul, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (v. 31).

That’s clearly what Jesus did;

And that’s what His Spirit

Will also be doing in us,

If we belong to Him.

This evening, we’ll consider more carefully

How we are to do this. Amen.

<http://www.gcmdesto.org>