

Pastors and Pay – 1 Cor 9:1-14

1 Cor 9:1-14; As you can see from the banners behind me, and the different stage set – this is our WinterJam weekend for Student Ministries

And what a weekend it's already been, including the band that just led us in worship

It also marks the return to our study of the book of 1 Cor, and the issues Paul addresses

Which happens to be *Pastors and Pay* this weekend

One of the more awkward topics to talk about for me . . .

But it's in the Word, and therefore deserves our attention as much as anything else

And let me just say from the top as I do with many of these issues – I'm *not* preaching this

b/c there's a problem around here; we are well taken care of

I'm preaching this b/c I don't *want* there to be a problem . . .

And, b/c some of you may not think rightly or biblically about this (**Intro**)

- With that in mind then, you might recall that Paul is in the middle of addressing the issue of freedom and constraint in the Christian life . . .

And being mindful of how your actions affect those around you

And in the process, he lays down some pretty strong prohibitions and principles

Especially for people who have been doing just the opposite all their lives

Which apparently resulted in the Corinthian church crying foul, and questioning Paul's very authority to say such things – that's the implication of Paul's thoughts

He digresses from his discussion about freedom and constraint in ch8, to address his *authority* in the first few verses of ch9. . .

And then his *rights* as a minister of the gospel, and then his *practice* – which we'll get to next week

That's his flow of thought (**Text**)

- So starting in v1 he says . . .

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

After laying out some strong principles in ch8, Paul's like – “What am I, chopped liver?”

“Can I not say it like it is? Am I not free to speak the truth just like you? I am”

“In fact, I have the authority to do so b/c I'm an apostle

I've seen the resurrected Jesus (Acts 9:4-5); I've been commissioned by him directly, to preach the gospel and inform your thinking . . .

And I have you to show for it – you're living proof of my apostleship”

That's the idea of the *seal* in v2b – the believers in Corinth were one of the validating marks of Paul's apostolic ministry and authority

Just like a wax seal with an imprint of a person's ring, validated the genuine nature of a document or agreement

As his workmanship, they were proof that Paul had received a genuine call from Jesus to preach the gospel . . .

With all the authority in the world to do so

- Then, he turns to the issue of his rights in v3, and starts by saying . . .

This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

IOW do we not have the right to life's necessities?

It's another rhetorical question that implies an affirmative answer

They *do* have the right to be supported by the church

And then he asks in v5 – *Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?*

Again, a rhetorical question that not only *implies* a “yes” answer, but *requires* it b/c of the *sentence* structure in Greek

They *do* have a right to take along a believing wife

Which not only validates the right of pastors to marry, but debunks the belief that *Peter* wasn't

Most importantly however, this gives any full time minister of the gospel, the right to be supported to the extent that their wives and family can be *with* them . . .

And fully integrated into their ministry

Pastors shouldn't have to depend on their wife for a second income in order to meet their *needs* . . .

And evangelists or missionaries shouldn't have to leave their wives at home b/c they can't cover their expenses *to take them along*

- All of which leads up to the *main* point in v6, where he says with a touch of sarcasm . . . *Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?*

IOW do we not have the right to be fully supported, or *is it only Barnabas and I* who are excluded from that?

Is it only Barnabas and I who have to work *outside* the church, to pay our way *inside* the church?

No; Ministers of the gospel should be compensated for their work, so they don't have to be bi-vocational

Otherwise, they will have far less time and far less energy to devote to the work of ministry; And it will show; The ministry will suffer

- That's the crux of the issue here – that pastors should be *paid*

Which he restates in v11 after citing some of the supporting reasons, saying . . .

If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

If we preach the gospel, teach the Scriptures, equip the saints, and proclaim the truth as we should . . .

Is it too much to get paid for it so we can *keep* doing it? Not at all!

So when you put it all together . . .

Pastors have a *right* to be *paid* for their work of ministry (v6,11)

And I say pastors, b/c though Paul applies these principles to himself as an *apostle*, he also broadens the application to include others who were doing the same things

Like Barnabas, who traveled and ministered *with* Paul, but wasn't an apostle . . .

And James, the brother of Jesus, who led the church in Jerusalem – he was a pastor

Which means that full-time ministers have a *right* to be *paid* for their work

- Not only that, but it's part of honoring them; Paul says in **1 Tim 5:17** . . .
Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.
 And then says in the very next verse – *For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and “The laborer deserves his wages.”*
 Implying first of all, that pastors *are* elders b/c they're the ones who labor in preaching and teaching . . .
 And secondly, if they do their job well, they deserve double the honor

And one of the ways to show it, beyond the highest respect and deference for who they are and what they do – is to compensate them well *****
 Which unfortunately, is more the exception than the rule in church-world

The typical church-goer's thinking that we should pay pastors as little as we possibly can b/c that's all they deserve – is bunk; it's wrong
 Just as a call to ministry doesn't include a vow of celibacy, neither does it include a vow of poverty; They not only deserve a decent wage, but it honors them

- Now, that's not to say that anyone around here is getting rich – that too would be wrong
 The words of Agur in **Prov 30:8-9** apply to pastors just like everyone else
Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, 9 lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

Nobody's getting rich, and contentment and discipline must always hold sway in a pastor's life; Always
 But if you think they should be scraping the bottom of the barrel, or that it's okay if they do – you're sadly mistaken; and you're treating them wrong
 If they've given their *lives* to the work of ministry – the last thing we should do is nickel and dime them to death; which is often what happens

Gal 6:6 says – *One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches; All good things*
 And as a church, it should be one of our greatest joys to do so
 To pay our pastors well – not only b/c they deserve it and it honors them, but b/c it's their right *****

Which brings us to v7, where Paul begins to lay out 6 reasons for doing so
 The first of which, is that . . .

- **Because it's common sense (v7)**
 Pastors have a right to be paid for their work of ministry, b/c it's common sense
 In v7 he says – *Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?*
 Nobody; That's who

Soldiers don't fight during the day, and then work a civilian job at night in order to get their food, and uniforms, and ammunition, and firearms
 Those things are provided by others; And the same should be true of pastors
 It's common sense
 If farmers don't farm for free, and shepherds “shep” for nothing – neither should pastors

It's common sense; And second . . .

- **Because it's God's design (v8-10a)**

They have a right to be paid for their work b/c it's also God's design
8 Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same [referring to the Law of God given to Moses in the OT]?
 It does; *9 For it is written in the Law of Moses (Dt 25:4), “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.”*
 IOW do not withhold that which an ox needs in order to do his job
 And then he says – *Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake*

Now, we've looked at these verses before, and will do so again b/c they provide us with an example of how to apply the OT Law in our NT age
 But for now, Paul cites this particular law, to convey that God's design to provide for ministers of the gospel, is the same as his design to provide for beasts of burden
 Just as oxen were allowed to eat some of the grain *they* were grinding, so too pastors should be allowed to benefit from the work *they* are doing
 It's God's design

Third . . .

- **Because it's motivational (v10b)**

Pastors have a right to be paid for their work of ministry b/c it's motivational
 V10 says, referring to the OT Law – *It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.*
 One of the motivations for a farmer working so hard in the fields, is the *hope* that they'll have something to eat or sell; That they'll benefit from their labor
 Take that hope of compensation and reward away, and the motivation goes with it

And the same is true of a pastor
 Remove the hope of being compensated for their work, and it won't be long before the work stops
 Compensation is motivational

It shouldn't be the only reason a pastor devotes themselves to the work of ministry, nor should it be anywhere near the top
 But knowing that you get *some* compensation, and that you can support your family with it – is part of the motivation to keep on

Fourth, pastors have a right to be paid for their work . . .

- **Because it's done for others (12a)**

After reiterating his main point in v11, that it's not too much to reap *material* things if a pastor has been faithful to sow *spiritual* things . . .
 Paul says in v12a – *If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?*

Most likely he's referring to people like Apollos and Peter who also ministered in Corinth, and had a *rightful claim*, a legitimate claim, to be compensated for it
 And if that's the case for them, how much more should it be the case for me, Paul says
 After all, I *planted* the church

And the same would hold true today – if a church paid a previous pastor who made a mess of things, how much more should they pay someone who makes the most of things?
And if you went to a church where you supported a *mediocre* pastor through your tithes and offerings, how much more should you support a good one?
One who leads *well* as 1 Tim 5:17 says
If it's done for others, good and bad, it should be done for all

- Then, with that in mind for what *we* should do as a church, Paul interrupts his flow of thought in v12b, to give us our first peak at what *he* does
Saying – *Nevertheless* [i.e. despite the fact that we have a right to be paid], *we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.*
IOW Paul gives up his right to be paid
The reasons for which he cites in v15-23 that we'll look at next week
But for now, he immediately returns to his point in v13, and cites yet another reason pastors should get paid; And that is . . .

- **Because it's common practice (13)**

Pastors have a right to be paid for their work, b/c it's common practice
Common practice in religious circles that is
Similar to the fact that it's common sense in secular ones

13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?

It's impossible here, to tell whether he was referring to the legitimate practices of OT priests, or the illegitimate practices of pagan priests, like those in Corinth
But either way, it's yet another reason he cites for why ministers of the gospel should be paid

They too are *employed* as the verse says; Only this time in the service of the *church*
And they *serve* by equipping the saints to be *living* sacrifices
Therefore, they too should be sustained by the church – by those who benefit from such work; It's common practice

And then last, pastors have a right to be paid for their work . . .

- **Because it's commanded by the Lord (14)**

14 In the same way [as those employed in the temple], the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

Paul was probably referring to the instructions of Jesus in Lk 10:7, where he told the 72 that he was sending out . . .

To eat and drink in households that received them, without worrying about paying for it,
b/c *the laborer deserves his wages*

IOW if they were *proclaiming* the gospel, they should get their living from those who *received* the gospel – Jesus commanded it *****

- So God's Law, God's Word, and God's Son – all teach that God's ministers are to be paid, and paid well, for their work
And I want to say to you, on behalf of all of us on staff – thank you
We are blessed to serve you, blessed to lead you, and blessed to be supported by you
God bless you for that

Pray – Thank you Lord, for this church; For the love of these people

For their joyful generosity and faithful giving, to support those of us who have given our lives to the work of ministry among them

It's yet another showing of your love, and faithfulness, and provision

And I pray that you would continue to find us as pastors, faithfully fulfilling the work of ministry you've entrusted to our care