

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
The Law of Love
1 Cor 8

Last time...Apostolic Marriage Counselling “for the present distress” of impending persecution by the Roman Empire, when

- time is short
- the fashion of the world is passing away

This time...the next topic of instruction:

- eating food offered to idols
- the Law of Love

We will be in 1 Cor 8

v1 things offered unto idols...knowledge...charity:

In this letter of correction and instruction in righteousness, the next topic:
Should we eat food that has been offered/sacrificed unto an idol?

Cultural context:

Corinth was in what is modern day Greece

The Greek pantheon of gods were adopted by and renamed by the
Roman Empire

Temples to false gods were just about everywhere

Meat sacrificed and offered to the false gods

(to appease the gods lest they become angry)

was then sold in the marketplace

So, should Christians eat such meat?

Finding meat that was not was very difficult

A more applicable scenario would be having a glass of wine or beer with your meal, be it at home or in a restaurant

The question is not “Can I?”, the question is “Should I”?

Answer: it depends

It depends on who else is also there, whether in your home or in public

Is a less mature follower of Jesus Christ there that does not know

- Rom 14:14, 17, 22-23?
- the difference between having 1 glass and having 2 or 3 or 4?

It is upon the more mature follower of Jesus Christ to know and to act accordingly...Rom 14:13, 15, 19 and to love/edify the less mature brother/sister

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul writes that, in these situations, we all have knowledge.

Of what?

Need to keep reading

However in these situations, the mature follower of Jesus Christ has:

1. knowledge
2. charity

Who is the Source of knowledge?

Is 11:1-2 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots, And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Who is the Source of Love?

1 John 4:8 God is love

Therefore

- knowledge (apart from love, the very nature of God) is
 - self-centered
 - has self-interests at heart
 - inflates Self over “lesser” others
 - tears down the weaker
- knowledge with love is
 - Self-less and Self-last...God-centered and others-centered
 - has others interest at heart
 - builds up the weaker

Rom 15:1-3

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The way of the world, which is devoid of the nature of God (love), is that the strong feed on, dominate, oppress the weak

But we have not so learned Christ

Christ-likeness, the way of God in the world, is that the strong help and build up the weak

v2 think that he knows...knows nothing:
 A reality check on knowledge:

A person that is puffed up/prideful and considers themselves "well versed" in the of knowledge of spiritual things, the things and ways of God

- uses his knowledge to exalt himself and to tear others (weaker in knowledge) down
- in reality, knows
 - not as much as he/she thinks
 - nowhere near all that is to be known

You cannot tell spiritually proud people anything...they already know it.
"I know, I know."
("You are the dummy, not me!")

But a humble, right-minded person has learned that the more he/she knows, the more he/she knows how little he/she knows
i.e. the more you know of the Word the more you realize you don't know

I once heard Pastor Chuck Smith say...

He who knows not and knows not that he knows not, is a fool – shun him
He who knows not and knows that he knows not, is a student – teach him
He who knows and knows not that he knows, is a teacher – follow him

This is true:

No one knows all there is to know (is all-knowing) about anything of God or of himself/herself

The Lord God our Creator alone is all-knowing of Himself and each of us
Man's knowledge is like man – finite and flawed

We need to humble ourselves before the Infinite God always

v3 But if any man love God:

 The greatest knowledge is to know God

Jer 9:23-24 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth **glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me**, that I *am* the LORD which exercise **lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness**, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

To know God is to know His nature...love and kindness and goodness and grace

John 3:16

Rom 2:4b

2 Peter 3:18a

To know and love God is to love Him and others

1 John 2:3-5

1 John 3:16, 23-24

1 John 4:7-21

The weak (sinners) are built up by the love of God
btw...God is strong, we are all weak in comparison

Therefore, with this understanding

- knowledge alone serves Self and tears down the weak
- love serves others and builds up the weak

we need to address the issues of eating food offered to/sacrificed unto idols
and apply God's instruction in righteousness to

- having the glass of wine or beer at a meal
- etc

v4 we know that an idol is nothing...none other God but one:
So, what is it "that we all have knowledge"? (v1)

First of all who is "we"?

Believers, followers of Jesus, the saints to whom this letter is written

We all know:

1. an idol is nothing in the world
 - is not anything
 - amounts to nothing
 - no promise of satisfaction or gain
2. there is only OTL God...the Maker of heaven and earth and all that is therein...
 - sun, moon, stars...the universe
 - principalities and powers...the spiritual realm
 - man, beast, and plant...the physical realm

Both of these truths (idols, one God) are revealed to us by

- Creation
- Conscience...the "hard-wired" awareness of God
- His Word

Zech 12:1 the LORD, which stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him

Is 40:12-26

The Creator God

- measured the seas and oceans in the palm of His hand
- measured the universe with the span of His hand
- stretched the universe out like a curtain
- measured the dust of the earth
- weighed the mountains and the hills in a balance
- considers the nations
 - a drop in a bucket
 - a particle of dust on the balance
 - as nothing to Him

the idols

- are an image of a creature made by a creature – man

Is 41:21-23

The Creator God (Creator of time Who inhabits eternity)

- tells His beloved creator what is going to happen in time before it happens...the history of Tomorrow

Is 44:6-19

The Creator God

- declares He is the First and the Last, beside Him there is no God

the idols

- are empty
- see not, hear not, know not, move not, understand not

the idol worshippers

- work to make an image, gets tired and thirsty doing it
- cut down a tree, using the wood to
 - make a fire to warm himself and upon which to cook his food
 - make a god to worship, prays to it and seek deliverance by it
- have no knowledge or understanding

Is 46:3-10

The Creator God

- carries His people
- is incomparable, having no equal

the idols

- are carried by people who then lay prostrate before them

We know that things (glass of wine or beer) are amoral and the issue is of the heart

Eccl 9:7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works

Prov 20:1 Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise

v5-6 called gods...one God...one Lord Jesus Christ:

In this fallen world, the god/prince of this world has deceived many with many false gods...all of them are nothing

But, by the revelation of the OTL God, we know there is

- one and only one Father
 - of/from Whom are all things
 - we in Him
 - Acts 17:24-31
- one Lord Jesus Christ (The Word/Voice of God)
 - John 10:30
 - by/thru Whom are all things
 - we (to the Father) by/thru Him
 - Col 1:12-17
 - Heb 1:1-3
 - Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (The Meaning of Life)

v7 Howbeit not in every man that knowledge:

But, not every believer

- knows the depth and the breadth of v6
- has the strength of faith to live according to v6

because

- not all the Apostle's doctrine is written yet
 - 18 other Epistles not written yet at this point in time, including Col and Heb
 - only James, Galatians, 1 Corinthians have been recorded
- different believers have different levels of knowledge
 - the difference between having 1 glass and having 2 or 3 or 4
 - some have a conscience, an awareness of God their Maker, that is weak and defiled/corrupted

Hence the teaching that knowledge alone tears down the weaker but love builds up the weaker

v8 meat commendeth not to God:

Whereas the sacrifice of meat/food to an idol was intended to commend the worshipper to the false god...to appease lest it become angry... food and drink do NOT commend us to the OTL God

Rather

Rom 5:8

Is 53:10-12 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors

Matt 3:17 This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Rom 10:4

1 Cor 5:21

Eph 2:8-9

1 John 5:11-12

Therefore, eating meat offered unto an idol or having a glass of wine/beer with dinner neither enhances nor detracts from our position before God (“in Christ”)

Not eating and not drinking that glass does not make us more pleasing to the Father

Eating and drinking that glass does not make us less pleasing (displeasing) to the Father

Bacon, cheeseburgers, and ham sandwiches are not the basis upon which we approach the Living God

Our relationship with God is not dictated by what we eat (Acts 15) but rather what we have done with Jesus Christ

Our position before Him and His pleasure in is FIXED by the Person and work of Jesus Christ our King and Lord Who has ransomed/redeemed us and set us free from

- the bondage of sin and eternal death
- the curse of the Law

v9-11 take heed...this liberty...stumblingblock:

But be warned!

Be careful!

Be aware of your brother!

Do not let your knowledge of this liberty/freedom cause you to

- think more highly of yourself than you should (Rom 12:3)...
spiritual pride is the ugliest form of pride
- think less of a brother who has not the depth of knowledge yet
- exalt Self in this knowledge, think of Self before others, and thereby
stumble your weaker (in knowledge and faith) brother

Rather,

2 Peter 3:18

Walk in love (others interests at heart, to build up the weaker)

Do not walk in knowledge (Self interests at heart, tearing down the
weaker)

Because Christ died for the weak...

each of us and all mankind (sinners)

Jesus makes strong those who trust in His strength...to help the weak

v12-13 sin so...sin against:

To walk in knowledge of God without the love of God results in

- wounding the weaker in the faith
- sinning against the Lord Jesus Christ who died for the weak

Therefore, the loving and rational thing to do is:

To not do...until the end of time...that which you are at liberty to do
if it stumbles/offends a weaker brother

Truly Rom 13:10

Love says, "Don't do what you are free to do if it hurts anyone else."

Love edifies, builds up

Love does not tear down

What is more important: me or my brother?

My brother!

That is the mind of Christ and the heart of the Father

The issue is not Right or Wrong...the issue is Love

Matt 22:36-40

Matt 16:24-25

John 13:34-35

Rom 14:13-23

1 Cor 6:19-20

Jesus kept the Law of Moses for us...because He loves us

We keep the Law of Love for Him...because we love Him

Application: The Law of Love

1. Rom 5:8

I'm walking behind Jesus

He is leading

I am following, stumbling and tripping as I go (Rom 7)

Along the way, while I'm down again, the devil challenges me

"What are you doing here!"

I meekly say, "I'm with Him." pointing to Jesus

Jesus turns and declares, "He's with Me!" and picks me up and carries me

Talk about coattails!

Such amazing love!

2. Why wouldn't I?

\$10 car wash...or \$10 for unlimited car washes for a month

"Why wouldn't I do that?"

God my Maker so loves me that He sent His Son in my form to pay the penalty for my
sins/offenses against Him

The Father in heaven wants to reason with me, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall
be as white as snow."

Jesus says, "My sacrifice is acceptable to My Father for your sins, it satisfies My Father's
perfect justice. Give me your wages (eternal death) and I'll give My gift (eternal
life)."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Repent (turn toward Me vs away from Me) and believe...trust Me with your life."

Why would I not do that?

3. Such amazing love in a love-starved nation

In a world gone mad because it has declared war on the Truth, the only hope for this nation is Jesus Christ

His amazing love and amazing grace are motivated by His great love

His people on earth, the Church, need to operate in this nation according to His Law...
the Law of Love

Only the Body of Christ and the Spirit of Christ can make a difference in the world

We do so by the Law of Love

What are we to do?

1. The Father's business...of so loving (John 3:16)

Matt 4:4

Matt 4:10

Unbeliever: Rom 1:18-23

with Rom 10:13-15...because loves them, the weak

Believer...John 13:34-35

Knowing Jesus and making Him known

2. The Father's will

Ps 8:3-4 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

- to bear his/my sin
- to give him/me newness of life, a new creature
- to give him/me a right standing before Him
- to be pleased with him/me

What could man/me ever do for such a loving Father?

Keep the Law of Love for Him...before Him and all mankind as His witness

The Law of Love...above City/State/Federal laws,

this law is to govern our lives: Do what is best for others vs Self

The mind of Christ