

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
The Apostle's Example of the Law of Love
1 Cor 9:1-23

Last time...the Law of Love

More pertinent to us than should we eat meat offered unto idols is should we drink an alcoholic beverage

We are at liberty to have a glass of wine etc...if we do so in faith (Rom 14:23)

But that liberty is not the issue – the issue is my brother

Will me doing what I am free to do cause him to stumble in his walk with the Lord?

Alcohol devastates many lives

If my liberty in Christ devastates my brother, I sin against Christ who died for my brother

Rather, as did Christ, I should deny myself for the benefit of my brother

Jesus kept the Law of Moses because He loves us

We keep the Law of Love because we love Him and each other

Ps 116:12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

Matt 22:36-40

This time...the Apostle Paul's personal example of the Law of Love in action

We will be in 1 Cor 9

v1-2 apostle...seen Jesus Christ:

Paul's authority as an Apostle of Jesus Christ was questioned by some in the church at Corinth.

This fed the biggest problem facing the church – divisions (Ch 1-4)

Yet Paul's credentials are those of the other 11 Apostles

1. called by God the Father and Jesus Christ
2. eyewitness of the risen Lord Jesus Christ
3. personally taught by Jesus Christ

Acts 1:21-22 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

Acts 9

1 Cor 1:1

Gal 1:1, 10-18

Paul says he may not be an apostle to all (Peter was the Apostle to the Jews), but he is most certainly the Apostle to

- the Gentiles...Rom 11:13, Gal 2:7
- this fellowship...they are his seal of ownership and authority

And one of his proofs of apostleship is how he has lived among them

- faithful to his calling
- faithful to following Jesus – a life governed by the Law of Love

v3-6 Mine answer:

To those who question Paul's authority as one of Jesus' 12 Apostles, Paul asks:
Do we not have the power/authority/ability in the Lord to

1. eat and drink...sustain our bodies, which belong unto the Lord (Ch 6:13b)
2. marry, as do the other Apostles and James and Jude and Peter (Ch 7:7-9)
3. forbear working...have our physical needs provided for by the church like the other Apostles, tending to your spiritual needs rather than "making tents"

Acts 6:1-4 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

These are all rhetorical questions

The answer is of course, "Yes", but in question form it serves to get the reader to think

Note: Paul: Apostle

Barnabas: not an Apostle but a full-time worker in the ministry

Paul asks more rhetorical questions to make his case

v7 warfare...vineyard...flock:

Full-time ministry is likened unto

- going to war – who goes to war paying his own expenses and buying his own equipment?
- planting a vineyard – who plants a vineyard but does not enjoy the fruit it produces?
- shepherding a flock – who cares for a flock and does not enjoy the milk produced by the flock?

“The ministry” is

1. spiritual warfare
2. working the soil of men’s hearts, sowing the seed of the Word of God, pruning, tending to the fruit that is yielded unto the Lord
3. feeding, tending, and leading a flock of the Lord’s sheep

v8-10 as a man...the law:

“Am I saying this to get my will done?

Am I just sharing my opinion?

Or is this what God has said in His Word, our Final Authority?

For it is written...Deut 25:4

The master does not muzzle his servant to prevent it from eating of its labor

Image: stalks of harvested grain

ox tied, walking around and around on top of the stalks
its weight and hoofs used to separate the chaff from the fruit
since the ox is doing the work, it is allowed to stop occasionally to
get a mouthful...providing energy needed to continue the
work

Is God concerned for oxen?

Yes

Or did He say that primarily for His servants?

The Law (Deut 25:4) is written for His servants, not oxen...this is how He provides for those who work full-time for Him.”

1 Tim 5:17-18 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

2 Tim 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits

v11-12 sown...spiritual...reap...carnal:

The application in the church is those in full-time ministry serving the Lord in spiritual matters should be supported and provided with physical things by the Body of Christ

This should not be a big deal, this is God's established way of providing the physical needs of His servants

Note: This principle is later going to be applied to the nation of Israel

Rom 15:27 For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things

One reason why we go

Why we financially support a ministry there

Paul goes on to say that the church is providing for other teachers (Ch 4:15) so they most certainly should be providing for him and Barnabas

Nevertheless...Paul has not exercised his Apostolic authority or demanded on getting provision from the church for him and Barnabas, but rather has labored making tents for their own support...so that the work of the gospel is not hindered

Paul is free to stand on the Law (Deut 25:4) but opts to stand on the higher law, the Law of Love

- so no weaker brethren would stumble in their walk with the Lord
- so others dead in sin and lost in the darkness would also be saved by grace thru faith in Jesus Christ

To the Apostle, sowing spiritually is far more important than reaping physically
Souls are the motivation, money is not

Paul again makes his case of living by the Law of Love vs the Law of Moses

v13-14 minister about holy things...altar:

Again teaching by asking questions, Paul teaches that

- those who labor, serve Him, in holy things (His things), eat of the things of the Temple/house of God

Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house

- those who attend to Him and others at the altar, share in the food from the altar (Levites)
- in the same way, the Lord has ordained/instituted/arranged that those who serve Him full-time preaching the gospel should live on the fruits of the gospel (v7-11)

This is not Paul's opinion, this is not Paul being self-serving,
this is the Lord's way

When the Lord called me into the ministry and sent me to Ahwatukee to start a
new work (plant a church), I had a full-time job at APS

For 4 years I

- worked full-time at APS...for which I was materially compensated
- worked full-time in the ministry...for which I was NOT materially compensated
- husband to a wife...who made a sacrifice for my calling
- father to 7 kids...who all made sacrifices for my calling

But suddenly one day the Lord took away my job at APS

Driving home I said to the Lord, "I need a job!"

He said quite plainly, "I have you full-time now. You serve Me."

Since that time, as financial circumstances dictated...or so I thought...I on several
occasions took part-time work – construction jobs, sales job

None of those ministry-time-stealing jobs were blessed by the Lord, no 2nd job
ever worked out

I have learned my lesson – I am exclusively a servant of the Lord!

Getting back to Paul, opting to live according to the Law of Love rather than the
Law of Moses

v15 But I have used none...better for me to die:

The first word: But

Despite the truth of v1-14 is the evidence of his life governed by the
Law of Love

Paul

- declined from partaking in the provision the Lord has ordained
(v9-10 and v13-14)
- did not write these things in this letter in order to get support from the
church
- instead opted for v12b so that no brother weaker in the faith and in the
knowledge of God's ways would stumble in their walk with the
Lord, the weaker who
 - thinks "Religion is Big Business!"
 - says "The Church is ALWAYS asking for money; all they ever
talk about is money!"
 - was jaded or scarred by TV evangelists like Jim and Tammy
Bakker, Benny Hinn, Jimmy Swaggart, etc
- says it would be better for him to die than to stumble brethren with an
appearance of self-serving, making empty/void his boasting
(1 Cor 1:31)

Paul is serving the Lord in the calling He received from the Lord
He is not serving himself in a job
He is being faithful to his calling and to following Jesus by living a life governed
by the Law of Love

v16-17 necessity is laid upon me...willingly...against my will:

Paul is an Apostle, but he has nothing to brag about...except the Lord Jesus Christ
Eph 2:8-9 and 1 Cor 1:29 are true of the Apostles also
With Jesus, the Apostles are Ch 4:9-13
Without Jesus, he is nothing

But necessity is laid upon him...a constraint/distress rests upon him:
Woe is unto me if I do NOT preach the gospel

Jer 20:7b-9 I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I
spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the
word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a
derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of
him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in
mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was
weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

If he preaches the gospel...and endures all the trials and tribulations that come
with it...willingly, he has a reward (in heaven and in the Kingdom)
But if he preaches the gospel unwillingly, a stewardship of the Gospel entrusted to
him by the Lord remains
His calling from the Lord remains, no matter what the circumstances may be

I have taken the Apostle Paul's example to heart, wanting above all else to be
willingly faithful to the Lord's calling of preaching and teaching
Understanding that trials and tribulations come with it

Examples

1. the church split...an attack on me and my family...wounded me
profoundly took me right to the edge of quitting
2. Financial distress, something we all know
The church was financially very weak in 2012-2013
Part of our witness to the community is to pay our bills in full and
on-time
I made myself the last to be paid and not the first
And for a stretch of time there wasn't much left after we paid the
bills (and I took a 2nd job that...didn't work out)
I never stopped preaching and teaching, never even considered it
[Lake Tulloch Bible Church]

Monica and I, of course, kept going...depleted our savings and
took a 2nd mortgage to get some equity out of the house
Rather than getting overrun, we opted to sell our more-than-we-
now-needed home in Ahwatukee
When we sold it in early 2015, the sum total of our liquid assets
was \$100
I was 60 years old, “normally” would have been planning
on retirement after a professional career
The equity in the house (the Lord’s...back story) was used to put a
down payment on house in Chandler and pay off our debt
And the Lord has given me another ministry – Senior softball

I deserve nothing from the Lord, the Lord owes me nothing
Always, the Lord is faithful to us! (Please do not misunderstand – we are fine)
I strive to remain faithful and willing to my calling because I so love Jesus Christ!
Without Him I have nothing

v18 make the Gospel without charge:

When Paul came to Corinth, he made tents with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3)

Paul was willing to preach the Gospel “without charge” and has a reward (v17a)

What is the reward?

That his preaching of the gospel is a “love gift”

That he exercises his office of Apostle without misusing his
authority

The Gospel is free

The price paid for the Gospel was paid by Jesus on the Cross and in the
grave

God does not sell Good News, He freely gives it
And as his ministers are to (Matt 10:8)

That is why this fellowship

- has agape boxes vs passing the plate (2 Cor 9:7)
- never sold/sells tapes or CDs

That is why

- I do not charge for weddings, funerals, retreats
- Monica does not charge for retreats

Yet many in the Church have misused their position

- covetous false teachers making merchandise of the people
- wolves in sheep’s clothing fleecing the flock vs feeding the flock

They will get their reward...and so will Paul

v19 made myself servant:

The Apostle Paul was

- not “owned” by any person, no matter how rich or powerful they may have been (“indebted” to a rich benefactor)
- not in bondage to any person, obligated to anyone for support given
- free from the Law of Moses (Rom 10:4) to serve the Lord and others according to the Law of Love

He willingly made himself a servant (bondservant, willing servant) to all people...
so they might be saved from eternal death

Paul was Christ-like, he had the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5-8)

And the Law of Love played out in how he witnessed of Jesus Christ

v20-23 Jews...under the Law...without the Law:

Paul was a Jew set free from the curse of the Law of Moses (Gal 3:22-26)

He witnessed Jesus Christ to the Jews starting from the “worldview” and culture
of the Jew – the Law of Moses

He witnessed Jesus Christ to the Gentiles starting from their worldviews and
cultures

But he never compromised the Word of God

He did not live according to the letter of the Law of Moses but according to the
Spirit of the Law, as taught him by Jesus, to witness to the Jews

He did not live like a heathen in order to witness to the heathen, he was salt and
light in the heathen world

Why?

For the Gospel’s sake so some might be saved from eternal death

Matt 9:13 Jesus came to call sinners to repentance

Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that
winneth souls *is* wise

To participate in the Father’s business of seeking and saving the lost with
his Lord and his brethren

Application: The Law of Love

“The ministry”:

It is a calling from the Lord, it is not a job
It is what I get to do!

Motivation for Christian service: the Love of Christ, not money or some material benefit
Matt 6:24

Chuck Smith’s brother worked for a mortuary in Orange County CA.

A funeral was scheduled

It had been raining and the grave side service was quite a distance from the pavement

Minister: “Stop. “We do the service here; I don’t want to ruin my new \$100 shoes.”

A very recognizable name in OC and USA

Later, another funeral...same conditions...different minister

Chuck’s brother: Do you want to do the service here so you won’t ruin your new shoes?”

Minister: I don’t care about my shoes, I care about these people. Let’s go.”

The ministry is not an occupational classification, it is a calling by the Lord.

The motivation is love, not love of money

The issue is being faithful to your calling, understanding that trials and tribulations are a
part of following Jesus, Who is always faithful to His servants

The calling is spiritual, the message is spiritual, the rewards are spiritual

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always
abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour
is not in vain in the Lord.

Heb 6:10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which
ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints,
and do minister.