

1 Corinthians 10

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Tape #8145
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Let's turn in our Bibles now to 1 Corinthians Ten as we continue our through the Bible study. Paul said, *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware* (It's interesting that most of the time when Paul says that, it is because we are ignorant. When he starts to talk about the Spiritual gifts, when we get to chapter twelve, again he said I don't want you to be unaware or ignorant. Yet it is one of those areas where there is so much ignorance as far as the gifts of the Holy Spirit, how they are to operate and all.)

So now he doesn't want you to be unaware *that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,* ²*all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,* He is talking about the children of Israel coming out of the bondage of Egypt. You remember that God provided for them as they were journeying through the wilderness, a cloud by day. The cloud guided them. The cloud was to be to them a shelter from the sun. Throughout their wilderness journey there was this cloud. That was the way that God directed their ways. It's interesting that the cloud led them to the Red Sea where they were really trapped by the Egyptians. Yet God opened up the Red Sea.

Paul likens that unto baptism. The baptism of the end of the relationship of the old life, the life in Egypt, that was a life that was mastered by the flesh. Egypt is a type of living the life of the flesh in sin. Bondage to our flesh. All of our lifetime is subject unto bondage, Paul said. That is the bondage of the life of the flesh, the hold that a flesh has over a man, the power of the flesh. Whereas Paul, speaking about the power of the flesh said, that which I would, I do not, but that which I would not, that I do, oh wretched man that I am. And we all know what power the flesh can have over our lives. Egypt is a type of slavery to the flesh.

Coming out of Egypt into a new relationship with God by water baptism, we reckon that old life of slavery to the flesh to be dead, to be over, as we enter into the new relationship with God through Jesus Christ, coming into this experience now of God manifesting His power and His provision for us. So, baptized in the sea.

³*all ate the same spiritual food,* ⁴*and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.* So we remember the rock from which the water flowed to them when they were dying of thirst in the wilderness (Exodus 17:3-7). How that Moses smote the Rock according to the commandment of God and water came gushing forth. And the people drank and they were able to survive the desert conditions as the result of that miraculous water out of the rock. Paul tells us that Rock was Christ! The Rock from which the water of life flowed, flows to us from Jesus Christ. But it was necessary for the Rock to be smitten that the water might flow. And so God said, "Smite the Rock!" It's a picture of Jesus being smitten on the cross in order that the live giving water might flow to us from Him.

Now later in the wilderness experience (Numbers 20:2-13), now they were in the desert of Zin. They came to Moses, once again, with terrible accusations, because they were thirsty, accusing Moses of bringing them out to kill them in the wilderness with thirst, declaring that they would have much better off to have remained in Egypt, that to have followed Moses into the wilderness. Moses had this time, had heard forty years of murmuring and complaining. He had had it! He went before the Lord and said, Lord, here they are again.

It's interesting how that neither Moses or the Lord really wanted to claim these people after a while. The Lord said, your people that you led out of the land. Moses said, not mine! They are your people, you know!

So Moses came to the Lord. The Lord said, go out Moses and speak to the rock, that it might issue forth water. Moses went out and he took his rod and he said, you rebels, must I again smite this rock and give you water? He smote the rock twice. The water came gushing out. God is gracious. But God said to Moses,

because you smote the rock, you didn't sanctify Me before the people. You cannot lead them into the promised land.

Moses later brought the subject up to the Lord. Oh, Lord, please, You are a gracious God. You are a glorious God. You have done awesome things, allow me to go over and see the land. God said, it can't be, Moses. For the sake of the people, Moses said, God wouldn't let me go. God said to Moses, don't speak to me any more about this.

Now, what was so bad about smiting the rock the second time? As Paul will tell us here in a couple of places in this chapter, the things that happened to the children of Israel in their wilderness wandering and in their coming from the bondage of Egypt into the promised land, were examples for us. God was painting a picture of how men can come out of the slavery of sin and into the glorious, promised land, a life of fellowship and relationship with God, enjoying the fullness of God's blessing. In order to come into these full blessings, we have to, of course, drink of the water from the smitten Rock, the water of life from Christ Jesus. But once the Rock was smitten, it never needed to be smitten again. All you have to do is to speak to the Rock now. He has been smitten for us. Now we speak to the Rock. And as we come to Jesus and as we ask Him for forgiveness, the water of life flows freely to us.

But Moses in smiting the Rock, marred the picture that God was painting. The illustration that God was giving, he messed it up, in smiting the Rock the second time. That is why it's such a serious offense. Disobeying God, he destroyed the picture that God was seeking to paint for mankind. So that Rock was Christ! When you realize how badly marred the picture was when Moses smote the Rock the second time. It was in essence saying that the Lord must be smitten again. No, He suffered once and for all! So once smitten was all that is necessary. Now tonight we drink of the water of life that flows through us from Jesus Christ as we just ask and you shall receive. So God was painting this picture, these things all happen as we read in verse six, as examples for us.

⁵*But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.* Now, it should be noted that there was a legitimate wilderness experience. Then there was what you might term an illegitimate wilderness experience. It probably would have taken them up to a month to journey from Egypt with that many people into the promised land. They took forty years. That wasn't necessary. It could have been done in a month. I look at the forty years as an illegitimate wilderness experience. Now in bringing the analogies, we come out of our bondage to sin. We come into this new relationship with God. We're baptized in water, but you notice the children of Israel, when they were in the wilderness, still had fleshly appetites. They were still thinking about the garlic and the leeks in Egypt. Oh, those spices. They were still lusting after the meat. Oh, we had meat to the full when we were in Egypt. They were still looking back with envy at the old life. They hadn't fully separated themselves from that old life. And so many times when a person comes to Jesus Christ, they come with baggage. They are still holding on to the old life, not wanting to let go completely, not wanting to sever the relationships in that old life. And they come with baggage. As we journey through the wilderness, the purpose of course was to sort of to help them get rid of the baggage. To bring them into a new relationship, a new relationship with God, where God would take care of them. God would provide the manna. He would provide the dew in the morning and the manna during the day to sustain them. He is bringing them into a new relationship but his intention is to bring them into a full, rich, glorious land, a land that flows with milk and honey, land that is very verdant, a land that is very great, agriculturally. And God wants to give them this land. It's the land of promise for them. To get into that land they have to cross the Jordan River.

The Jordan River in typology, in hymnology, is often thought of as death. When I die I'm gonna pass over Jordan into heaven. Swing low, sweet chariot, coming forth to carry me home. I looked over Jordan and what did I see? A band of angels coming after me, coming for to carry me home. You know, we sing about Jordan as the death experience that brings us into the heavenly kingdom. But, that doesn't really hold to the picture because when they came over Jordan, they still had to battle. They still had to possess that land. They experienced even defeat.

Once you get to heaven you're not going have to battle. Once you get to heaven, you're not going to have defeats. So it is really a type of the life victorious, the victorious Christian life, living in the Spirit. This life

that God has for us, joy, abundance, provision, the life in the Spirit, that God wants for each of us. But it's the death of the old man, that is the reckoning of our old man to be dead, crucified with Christ. And it is by this identification with the cross, being crucified with Christ, that we bring an end to that old life governed by the flesh. We then enter by new life in the Spirit.

It's the difference between Romans chapter seven, the latter portion, and Romans, chapter eight! It's coming into chapter eight, where the life of the Spirit of God in Christ has now freed me from the law of sin and death. The new law, the law of the Spirit working in me. That comes as we reckon the old man to be dead, to be crucified with Christ that the body of sin no longer rules over us.

Now it's interesting to note that though they did have battles in the wilderness, they really never gained any territory. It was really just survival. It was not until they entered into the land of promise that they began to possess those blessings and those things that God had for them. Once we enter into this new relationship in the Spirit, it is then that we begin to receive the blessings that God has for His people as we begin to possess our possessions. We begin to lay hold on the promises of God. We begin to gain territory. We begin to grow.

Now the reason for the illegitimate wilderness experience was their lack of faith, to believe that God would do what He said He would do. He said He would go before them. He would drive out their enemies. He would give them the land to possess it. And you remember how that Moses sent out twelve spies, one representing each of the tribes. And how that when they came back, ten of the spies gave an evil report of the land. They created fear in the hearts of the people. The walls of their cities are reaching up to heaven. The people are giants. We were like grasshoppers in their eyes. The land isn't really able to support the people that are in it. They gave a very discouraging picture of the land.

Joshua and Caleb on the other hand, two of the spies said, oh, glorious! We've picked this bunch of grapes in the valley of Elah. Look at the huge bunch of grapes. We had to carry it on a staff between them. They said but the cities have high walls. They said, oh, they are nothing. But the people are giants. They said they are bread for us. We'll eat them up. And they encouraged the people. But the people were listening to the ten spies. They began to murmur. They said we can't do it. Let's choose a captain to lead us back to Egypt. There is no sense of going any further. We might as well go back to the old life of slavery.

As the result, God said, okay, if you don't want to trust and believe Me to give you the land, then you will stay here in the wilderness for forty years, until you all die. And your children which you said, oh, they will be a prey to them. Your children will go in and possess the land. So that was an illegitimate wilderness experience, but it resulted from their lack of faith to trust God to do what God said He would do.

So many times with us, our Christian experience is a wilderness experience. It's not really a joyful walk in the Lord. You still have too much of the world to really be happy in Christ, but you have too much of Christ to be happy in the world. You are in that in between state. You are in the wilderness. You are sometimes close to Egypt, sometimes close to the Promised Land, but roaming in the wilderness. Now God is gracious. God is with you there. He will take care of you even though you don't believe it or trust Him, He'll still do it. But oh how much better to enter into that rich life in Christ! It's not seeing how close you can live to Egypt and still be related to God, it's entering into the full, rich, life and walk into the Promised Land into the life of the Spirit. That's what God has and wants for us. So it makes a beautiful picture. God was painting this picture. God wasn't pleased with those who didn't trust Him, who, and of course for other reasons which we will get.

⁶*Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.* They lusted for the leeks. They lusted for the garlic of Egypt. They lusted for meat. Lusting after the things of the flesh. They were examples that we shouldn't lust after the things of the flesh.

⁷*And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."* Now this happened when Moses was up on Mt. Sinai, receiving the Law from God. As Moses was there on the Mount, the people because He was there for forty days, the people came to Aaron, the brother of Moses, they said make us gods that we might worship them. As for this Moses, we don't know what has happened to him, you know, he could be dead. He's been gone for forty days. We

don't know what has happened to him. So Aaron said to the people, bring me all your gold earrings and so forth. He melted them down. He fashioned them into a calf. He said these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt. Tomorrow we will have a celebration. So the next day, the people came. They offered the peace offerings and all. This is where it says that they sat down to eat and to drink, that is of the peace offering, it was a big festival, a party and then they rose up to play. Moses was directed to come back down. He heard the shouting and the laughter and the riotous sounds coming out of the camp. Joshua said, Moses, what's going on? It sounds like there is a war. No, these people have turned against God. So they came in, and of course, they ground the calf, the golden calf to powder. They put it in water. Moses make them drink it. That is that first experience of idolatry by God's people there in the wilderness.

The second lesson, ⁸*Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;* Now this is when Balaam had been hired by king Balak to curse these people coming through the land. When Balaam was unable to curse them, the king said to him, I was intending to make you a very rich man. If you had just cursed them, I would have made you a very rich man but your God has kept you from your riches. So Balaam said, now look, king, in the beginning I told your men that I couldn't bring any enchantment or curse against them. They are God's people, but let me tell you what. The God that they serve is a jealous God. And though I can't curse them, I can tell you how to bring a curse on them.

Have your people go down and greet them. Then invite them into their homes for dinner. When they come into the home, be very gracious. Be very friendly. And bring out your gods and say to them, these are the gods that we serve. Would you like to see how we serve our gods? And lead them into the worship of your gods. Because the God that they serve is a jealous God, He will strike them. He will smite them. We see the wicked advice of Balaam. Send the young girls down there. Have them flirt with the guys. Have them get all excited. Get them into the tents. And then have them bring out your little goddess of fertility. Say this is the god that we worship, the god of sex. Would you like to know how we worship our god? Let them entice them this way. The God, they serve will curse them. So the king Balak followed the advice of Balaam. And the plague of God came against the children of Israel because they were committing fornication. And it said, some of them fell one day, twenty-three thousand.

Now there is a supposed contradiction in the Scriptures here, because when this story in Numbers. It said there were twenty-four thousand who died in the plague. Twenty-four thousand total, there were twenty-three thousand in just one day. Notice he say in one day here, twenty-three thousand, but it was a total of twenty-four thousand. That is like so many supposed discrepancies in the Scriptures, there's a very simple explanation. If you read carefully, you'll see the discrepancy disappears. So here, twenty-three thousand in one day, twenty-four thousand, total.

When you deal with numbers in the Hebrew language, often times it is difficult to discern the actual number because they used their letters of the alphabet for their numerals. And one letter can signify different numbers. The letter koph is the number nine. To have a dot over it you have the number nine hundred; put two dots over it, you have the number nine thousand. Just a little dot over the teth, so often times it is difficult dealing with the old manuscripts to see or to find out how many dots are over the teth. That is over many of the letters they have nine or nine hundred, eight or eight hundred or eight thousand, it all depends on the little markings with them. So often times it is difficult to determine from the original, we don't have the original text, but from the oldest text, just to figure out the numbers is not always the easiest thing in the world.

So don't be idolaters, don't commit fornication, ⁹*nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;* The fiery serpents and of course this takes us to Numbers twenty one, where the children of Israel were murmuring against the Lord and against Moses. So God sent these fiery serpents into the camp. Their bite would sting like fire. It was deadly. So the people cried to Moses. He cried unto the Lord. The Lord instructed him to make that serpent of brass, to put it on a pole in the center of the camp. It will come to pass that when anyone is bitten by one of the fiery serpents, if he will look and see that brass serpent on the pole in the middle of the camp, he'll not die of the snake-bite.

Brass is a symbol of judgment in the Scriptures. The serpent is a symbol of sin. So the brass serpent was a symbol of God's judgment against the sin. Thus, by looking at the brass serpent, they say then sin was

judged there on the pole. And by faith, looking at it, they did not die of the snakebite.

Now it is interesting when you get to John, chapter three, Jesus is talking to Nicodemus. He questioned Jesus, how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus said, Nicodemus, you're supposed to be a teacher among the Jews. If I talk to you about earthly things and you can't comprehend them. How in the world would you comprehend if I talk to you about heavenly things? But then after that sort of a little chiding, Jesus, then answered the question, how can a man be born again? He said as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. That whosoever believed in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. So that serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness, these were all examples for us.

That was a type of Jesus, suffering the judgment of God for our sins, on the cross, on the pole! There he suffered God's judgment for our sins. And we by faith, looking at Jesus, looking to the cross, seeing that our sins have been judged, the price for our guilt has been paid. Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us. Because it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. And how that He took the judgment of our sins upon Himself there on the cross. And we by faith, looking to the cross of Jesus Christ, are forgiven our sins.

So again, these whole experiences through the wilderness, become beautiful examples for us as they teach us of redemption, through Jesus Christ. As they teach us of coming out of the slavery of sin into the life of the Spirit into this relationship that we can have with God as His children!

So don't be idolaters, don't commit fornication, these are the things we are to learn from their experiences in the wilderness. Don't tempt Christ by murmuring against what God has done ¹⁰*nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.* Again this is a reference to Numbers, chapter fourteen, where the people were murmuring Moses and murmuring against the Lord and the Lord brought judgment against them.

¹¹*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, (It's all for our sakes that these things were recorded.) upon whom the ends of the ages have come.* These things happened early in the history of Israel, but they were written and recorded for our benefit, we live in the times of the end of the world.

It is interesting that the early church was expecting the Lord to return immediately. There were even rumors that Jesus would return before John died. They were going around in the early church. I do believe that the Lord intends that the church live in expectancy of His return at any time. I believe that's part of God's design. I believe that it has a purifying effect in the church, that belief that the Lord could return tonight. It has a very purifying effect. If the Lord did return tonight, am I ready? Am I walking in such a way, expecting Him to return? Would I be ashamed at His coming? So he that has this hope in him, purifies himself even as he is pure (1 John 3:3), the purifying effect in the church.

Secondly, it helps us to have a right attitude towards the material world. Jesus said, don't lay up treasures on earth, where moth and rust can corrupt, thieves can break through and steal, but lay up treasures in heaven. So many times we find ourselves caught up in the materialism of the world, until you realize that the Lord is coming at any time! And so it helps us to have the right perspective toward the materialistic things of the world. Keeping just a light touch, as far as the world is concerned. So they were believing that they were living in the end of the world and that these instructions were written for their benefit.

¹²*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* Now these are the things that can trip you up, idolatry, physical or Spiritual fornication, the murmuring against the things of the Lord. They can trip you up. You think you stand but we stand by faith, but take heed lest you fall!

¹³*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.* What has happened to you and to me is common to all men! None of us are super saints. We, all of us, struggle with our flesh. It's common to all, I'm living in this body. Paul said, we who are in these bodies, do often groan, earnestly desiring to be free. He said, we and all creation, groan together and travail as we wait for the manifestation of the sons of God, to whit the redemption of our

bodies. As long as we are in these bodies, we are going to have the biological drives, we are going to have the desires of our flesh. We have to deal with them. They are common to all men.

But God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. He's faithful! Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Now, that doesn't mean necessarily that you are going to take the way of escape. It means that God will make the way of escape. There are a lot of times that God made the way of escape, but I didn't take it. It wasn't that God wasn't faithful. I was the one who wasn't faithful. I can't blame God for where I failed, where I stumbled. I have to accept the responsibility. I have to testify that God was faithful. He made the way of escape. I didn't take it! God is faithful and I have to also testify that God has warned me before I have ever stumbled. He's warned me to be careful. He's warned me to flee. I didn't do it!

But God was faithful. And God is always faithful. He will make the way of escape. Sometimes it's running. With Joseph, it must have been quite a temptation. But he fled. Paul said to Timothy, flee youthful lusts! Run from them! God is faithful. He will make a way of escape. It's important that we take it.

¹⁴*Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.* Run from it! That's your way of escape!

¹⁵*I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.* Trust that you are wise enough to pick this up and to understand it.

Now Paul turns to the Lord's Table and communion and the reason why we call it communion. ¹⁶*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?* Now, after the supper, Jesus took the cup. He said, this cup is the new covenant in My blood, shed for the remission of sins. That was the third and final cup of the Feast of the Passover and it was taken after the supper. It was known as the "cup of blessing." During the Feast there were three cups. The third and final after the supper, the cup of blessing, so he said, the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Jesus said, this cup is a new covenant in my blood.

The bread which we break, (And of three pieces of Matzo, the middle one was broken. The bread, which we break, He said this is My body broken for you.)

is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Through the blood of Christ, through the body of Christ, we enter into a mystic relationship with Him and with each other. As we partake of Him. And each of us as we partake of the same element, we each partake of Jesus, communion with Him! You are brought into communion in oneness with Him and I am brought into communion and oneness with Him. And thus we are brought into communion and oneness with each other through Jesus Christ. This is what the body of Christ, united in Christ, is all about.

¹⁷*For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.* (We're all a part of the body of Christ. Though that there are many, we all make up the body of Christ, the one, body of Christ. We are all partakers of the one bread. Now may God help us to see this in its true light, because it passes beyond these four walls. It passes into every church where the believers gather together to worship Jesus Christ and to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. It's trans-denominational. It crosses the barriers that men have built up. We need to see the whole body of Christ and to be burdened for the whole body of Christ. And not just for Calvary Chapel. God help us to see beyond our borders! And to rejoice in the other ministries in the community, in the area, that are being prospered and being blessed of the Lord, realizing that we all share a commonness, a communion through Jesus Christ. God help us in that area.

¹⁸*Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?* Now in the sacrifices that were brought, there were different sacrifices. There was the sin offering that they would bring. There was the burnt offering, which was the offering of consecration, where I am consecrating my life to God, through the burnt offering. And then there was what they called the peace offering, which was the offering of fellowship. I would bring the lamb. The priest would kill the lamb. He would take the fat. He would place it on the fire, on the altar, and it would ascend as a sweet smelling savor unto the Lord. You know as you are barbecuing, the thing that gives off the great aroma, is the fat droppings that come into

the fire. I mean, man!!! I'm getting hungry. Now the priest would then take a portion of that lamb for himself, but the rest of it would be roasted. You would sit down with your family and eat a feast with the family. But it was a feast of communion. We would offer a part of it to God. God has partaken of it. We are partaking of it. We're eating with God, was the idea. It was beautiful kind a thought where we are sitting and eating with God. He has received a part of the lamb. We're eating a part of the lamb. We're becoming one with God through this in a mystic way. This is the way they saw the peace offering.

So referring to that, Paul said behold, Israel, after the flesh, are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? You are partaking of the things of the altar that have been sanctified to God. ¹⁹*What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?* Now Paul has been dealing with the issue in Corinth of some of them who were exercising their liberty in Christ and they were offending some of the weaker believers because they were eating meat that had been offered in a sacrifice to the pagan gods, to the idols.

So Paul is bringing up this issue again. He said, what am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Paul said it earlier, we not that an idol is nothing, but I say ²⁰*Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God,* (When they take their offerings to the temple of Jupiter or whatever and they offered their sacrifices, they were similar to the sacrifices offered by Israel. But he said their offering, their sacrifices to the demons or devils.) *and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.* (That you would not enter into that kind of a, you know, if you take a lamb and you enter into fellowship God, peace offering, communion, I wouldn't you to enter into fellowship with devils.)

²¹*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.* You have an inconsistency here. They are mutually exclusive.

²²*Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?*

²³*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful* (It's interesting how he seems to take one side and then he jumps to the other side.); *all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.* There are things that can hinder my progress, my walk with the Lord. I don't want anything to hinder my walk with Him. I'm running in a race. I don't want anything to slow me down. Remember in the last chapter he said (1 Cor. 9:24), "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." We are in a race. We should be in it to win. If so, then we don't want anything that would impede our progress towards the goal. All things are lawful but all things aren't necessary or expedient. All things are lawful for me he said, but all things but not all things edify.

Not everything builds me up in the Lord. There are a lot of activities that are lawful. You know, watching TV, yeah, it's lawful. I mean it's not sinful. You know, you can't say it's sinful to watch football on TV, brutal sport. No. No. It's lawful. But does it build you up in Christ? So Paul is saying, it's lawful, sure I mean, but it doesn't edify.

²⁴*Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.* And that is, don't seek your own welfare. Think about others. Be considerate of others. So you have liberties. So you feel this freedom in Christ, in great liberty, well, don't just exercise it for yourselves. Think about a weaker brother. Be considerate. Someone who sees you do that may be stumbled by it.

I received a call this week from a pastor in Santa Maria. Some of the ladies in his church went to Israel on a tour with a well-known pastor. And they saw him drinking and they saw him sort of carousing with some women. They were greatly offended. Now, this man may say, well all things are lawful for me, well he sure offended some of God's little children. That's not right! They came home and they are devastated. That is not right. So you are using your liberty in a wrong way if you are exercising your liberty in such a way as that can offend a weaker brother. It's better as Paul said, if eating meat is going to offend a weaker brother, I won't eat meat as long as the world stands. I don't want to be an offense. I don't to hurt. I don't want to trip someone up. So don't seek just your own, but seek really the benefit and the profit of others. Be considerate of others.

Now he gives a couple of interesting rules, ²⁵*Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake*; Now much of the meat that was sold in the meat markets, was first of all, offered as a sacrifice to the idols, then they would sell the meat because the priest always received a portion of the meat and there would be many people sacrificing. There was more meat than he could eat so he would sell the surplus meat to the meat market. So much of the meat in the meat market would come from the pagan temples that had been offered in a sacrifice to the pagan gods. So Paul said when you are in the meat market to buy meat, don't ask, was this meat offered to an idol? Just be quiet for your conscience sake. In other words, Jesus said, it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles a man, it's what comes out of his mouth. Don't you realize that what goes into the mouth goes through the whole digestive system and passes out of your body, the waste materials? That's not what defiles. That passes through. It's what is in your heart. It's what comes out of your mouth is what defiles a man.

So Paul said, ²⁶*for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness."* It all belongs to God ultimately. It belongs to Him.

²⁷*If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go (You know one of those invitations you can't get out of. You are sort of obligated.) , eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.* In other words, when they put that steak in front of you, don't say was this steak offered to an idol? Just eat it! Don't ask questions.

²⁸*But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness."* But your conscience could give you pangs. So for conscience sake, don't eat it if he declares it to you, and for his sake.

²⁹*"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other* (Not your own necessarily, you may in good conscience eat it. You may have a full understanding, the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness thereof. All things are lawful for me, you know, this is what some of the Corinthians were saying. He said, fine, but for the conscience sake of someone else. Don't think of your own. Think of others. Be considerate of others.) .

"Conscience," I say not your own, but that of the other. But he said, *For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?* Why should I live by his conscience?

Paul said, ³⁰*But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?* In other words, here I am. I'm giving thanks. I've asked God to bless it. It should be sanctified by the blessing. So by the grace of God, I realize that I am under grace. God's grace is sufficient for me. And then he said, but if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

Paul answers, ³¹*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* There is the bottom line! Oh God, help us to grasp this. If we grasp nothing else, God help us to grasp this! I'm to live for the glory of God. That's the purpose of my existence. To bring God glory. Paul used the phrase in Ephesians (Eph. 1:6), "To the praise of the glory of his grace." I'm to live for God's glory. Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, I'm to do it to the glory of God. If you can do it to the glory of God, you are all right. You are on good ground. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God. Let that be the little standard by which you judge, whether or not I should. Can I do this for the glory of God? Do I do this for the glory of God?

³²*Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God* (Come on Paul, let's be real, but as much as is possible, Paul said, live peaceably with all men. As much as is possible and be careful that we don't bring offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God. Paul said, I've become all things to all men, that I might gain the more.

³³*just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of many, that they may be saved* (Not living selfishly. Not saying, well, I have the liberty to do that. It doesn't bother me. I can do that and I feel great freedom and liberty. You know I can still fellowship with them. Well, don't live to please yourself but seek really the profit of all man that they may be saved. You don't want to destroy the person for whom Christ died because you feel at liberty because of the grace of God and your understanding of the Scriptures and relationship, that I have the liberty to do these things. No. No. No. That's not it. We

walk in love, being considerate toward the weaker brethren, not doing anything that would bring offense to the cause of Christ because I have a superior understanding of the grace of God or the liberty that I have in Christ. We don't use that but we seek to live beyond our own convictions, considerate of someone else who might be stumbled by my exercise of things that I feel a freedom to do.

Father, we thank You for the instructions and we thank You for the examples that You have given to us. We thank You, Lord, for this Christian walk. You've brought us out of the slavery and the bondage to sin. You've preserved us through the wilderness. But God help us not to spend our life in the wilderness. May we by faith enter into the land of promise, inheriting those precious promises, Lord, as we walk in the Spirit, in the richness of fellowship with You. Walking in love, Lord, as far as the weaker brother is concerned, not seeking to do those things that would bring an offense or create a stumbling block. Lord, help us that in everything we do--words, deeds, we do them all, Lord, for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.