

1 Corinthians 10

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[0 : 00] I take your Bible and go into 1 Corinthians chapter 10. 1 Corinthians chapter 10. So excited on family worship. I love having the children in here. I think it was very poor planning on my part or somebody's part to do the back-to-school bash the same day that I'm going to be in the dunking tank, not only when the adults have to be in the sermons, but also the kids have to be through the sermon.

So now it looks weird if adults are standing in line throwing balls at the preacher to make him weep, but now it's excusable for kids to do it, and I can upset the kids real quick too so I can get a whole line of people trying to get me wet this afternoon, but that will be fine.

1 Corinthians chapter 10 is our text this morning. We'll read the chapter its entirety, so if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you to join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God from 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Paul is still answering the question. I want you to keep it in mind. Still answering the question posed in chapter 8. Is it lawful to eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols?

That's the church of Corinth has been asking that. So we conclude that here. We're going to read the first verse of chapter 11 as well. For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them and the rock was Christ.

[1 : 27] Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well pleased for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

Do not be idolaters as some of them were, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play. Nor let us act immorally as some of them did and 23,000 fell in one day.

Nor let us try the Lord as some of them did and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction.

Upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation is overtaking 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. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

[2 : 32] I speak as to wise men. You judge what I say. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread. Look at the nation of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?

What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything or that an idol is anything? No. But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God.

And I do not want you to become sharers in demons. 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? All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good but that of his neighbor.

[3 : 35] Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking question for conscious sake. For the earth is the Lord's and all it contains. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking question for conscious sake.

But if anyone says to you, this is meat sacrificed to idols, do not eat it. For the sake of the one who informed you and for conscious sake. I mean not your own conscious but the other man's.

For why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? Whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. Just as I also please all men and all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many so that they may be saved.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. So thankful for the opportunity we have together as your people and to read the word of God. We pray, Lord, now as we have read it and heard it, Lord, that you would speak to our hearts and minds.

[4 : 41] Give me clarity, a voice, clarity of mind that you may be glorified. There be no stumbling block within me. Lord, would you speak to us, each as individuals and as one corporate body, all for the glory and the promotion of Jesus Christ among us.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. You said, Pastor, you were going to read the first verse of chapter 11, right?

Well, we'll get to that in just a moment. The question was asked of Paul from the church at Corinth. If you remember, the first Corinthians is Paul writing a letter back to the church in response, evidently, to a letter of some questions that had come to him.

Before he started asking or answering their questions, he began to really speak to them concerning some matters which he knew about that they did not tell him about, namely their immorality and some of the actions going on within the church.

He needed to get them right with the Lord and with one another. Then he could speak to their questions. In chapter 8, the question is asked, is it lawful to eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols?

[5 : 49] We're not going to reiterate that or we're not going to speak on it again because we realize that this is cheaper meat offered at a discount price because it's been laid on the altar and then put out there for sale in open market. The idol doesn't need it.

The priest of the false gods doesn't need it. And they're just putting it at a cheaper price. So the question is not really about the meat. The question is, can I do just whatever I want?

Is it lawful? Should I do these things? Paul gives a general answer to that in the 8th chapter and then he gives an application to his answer in the 9th chapter and then he gets more direct in the 10th chapter.

The general application that he gives to it in the 8th chapter is you need to live with a, not concern for yourself, but a concern for others. So do that which is benefiting to others.

By the way, pay attention to that because he closes with that same point. In the 9th chapter he begins to make it personal. He looks at his own life as an example. There were freedoms which he had, which he had laid aside for the cause of the gospel.

[6 : 49] That the gospel was worthy of his sacrificial living. And he is pointing this back. If he can do it in his life, really should they even be asking, should I?

Or can I? He is talking about focusing on something other than I. In the 10th chapter he gets very pointed in his response.

And I want you to see this morning in the 10th chapter avoiding the pitfall of sin. Avoiding the pitfall of sin. If you remember, this is really a non-question among believers.

If you open up the book of Acts, some of you and following your daily reading plan or some of you listen to the same reading plan. Robert Murray McShinn's reading plan is one that I follow.

No, not all of you do. Some of you follow that. You are reading in Acts 17 today. Acts 17 begins Paul's or really picks up in the midst of Paul's second missionary journey.

[7 : 53] It is where he ends up in Athens, speaking of Mars Hill. Acts 17 invariably is followed by Acts 18. After leaving Athens, Paul goes into the city of Corinth and is there in the 18th chapter of the book of Acts that we find him planting the church at Corinth which this letter was written to.

But if you were to be a student of the book of Acts, you will know that something took place in Acts 15 that dictated a truth to all of the churches in the non-Jewish world.

Acts 15, they say, is one of the most critical chapters in all of the book of Acts because it shows how the church should behave. And in Acts 15, you have the council at Jerusalem led by the half-brother of Jesus, namely James.

The book of James is named after him in which some Jewish believers had tried to convince Greek and Gentile believers that it was necessary to be circumcised to convert to Christianity.

Essentially, you had to become Jewish to be a Christian. And Paul and Barnabas and those who had been on the mission field said, no, this isn't right. Peter had preached at Cornelius' house.

[9 : 00] He is the one who opened the door to the Gentile believers. By the way, that's the keys that were given to Peter to open the door. And so Paul and Peter and all those who had actually been on the field testify at Acts in Acts 15 in the Jerusalem council to the reality that the same anointing that God gave the Jewish believers, he also gave the Gentile believers.

That is, the filling of the Holy Spirit. Just as at Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell upon the Jewish believers, so too, when Peter was preaching in Cornelius' home, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentile believers.

And then, when it began to expand and even go outside of Jewish territory and go into Roman world, if you'll notice throughout the book of Acts, every time the gospel goes into a new land, the people are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in tongues.

Why? Because it validates the spread of the gospel. It is God's validation to what took place in Pentecost is also taking place everywhere else so that no one could say, I'm more of a believer than you.

You say, Pastor, you're spending a long time here. I am. Stay with me. Because there's a short letter that's compiled by the Jerusalem council sent to all of the churches that says, you accept Jesus Christ, we accept you as a brother or sister in Christ, all that we ask is that you do these few things.

[10 : 24] And in those few things is that you abstain from immorality, sexual impurity, which by the way the church at Corinth did not do a good job at, and that you abstain from meat which had been sacrificed to idols.

Now if Paul was present and he was in Jerusalem, and if Paul was given a copy of that letter and he was in Jerusalem to Acts 15 to take it to the churches when he went into Roman society and he did, and if he planted the church at Corinth after receiving such letter to give to the churches and he did, then really it's a non-question.

Because the believers had already answered that. No, you should not eat meat sacrificed to idols. But as is often the case in scripture, the question is not really about meat.

The question is can I do whatever I want to do once I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior? Because see, if it was just about meat, we could say, well I'm not eating meat sacrificed to idols so I don't have to worry about this and I can discount that passage and lay it aside.

When I go to whatever grocery store that I choose to go to, I'm assuming that that meat had been processed. It's got a USDA label on it. It hasn't been offered to an idol. It hasn't been laid upon an altar somewhere.

[11 : 42] Some inspector has watched the slaughtering of that animal and I anticipate that it will be fit and clean to eat and that nothing impure has been about it so then I can just throw the rest of this passage out. No, no, that's not so because it's really not about meat.

The question is can I do whatever I want to do once I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior? Two times in the letter Paul has reminded the believers at Corinth, for you are not your own, you have been bought with a price.

Now that is kind of the guardrails to our what we call freedom in Christ. You say, well Christ has set me free.

I am free from the guilt of sin, I am free from the penalty of sin, I am free in Jesus Christ and you are free indeed. But freedom is not license and if we're not careful Christian freedom leads to a pitfall of sin.

But in chapter 10 we are told how to avoid that pitfall. The first thing that we notice is there must be caution. There must be caution.

[12 : 51] Paul writing to Gentile believers points to an Old Testament truth. He points to Old Testament realities that speak to them as well because he says, for I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers.

And he begins to speak of these Old Testament truths. Remember those of you that have been with me for some time now. My habit on Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings is to preach through the scripture.

We are now making our way through 1 Samuel and be wrapping up 1 Samuel probably this coming Wednesday. But when we were in the book of Exodus I told you that we cannot rightfully understand our salvation until we understand the Exodus events.

And every time we go back to it is because that Exodus event is so much more than people crossing a Red Sea and walking out of Egypt. It was God seeing man suffering under the bondage of sin.

It was seeing man enslaved not by their own choosing but enslaved by their own birth. They were born into slavery and they were born into this slavery which caused them to groan and to moan and God took notice of the slavery that oppressed them.

[14 : 00] And since God took notice, God called a Redeemer. And when God called a Redeemer, He appointed the Redeemer to lead them out and set them free. And He didn't just tell the Redeemer to lead them out, He told the Redeemer to lead them out and take them in.

Remember that because you were born into sin, friend. You were born into the slavery of sin. You didn't have to choose to do wrong. You inherently knew how to do wrong. What you need to know is that in that sin when you groan and moan, God takes notice of you and He has appointed a Redeemer.

And He hasn't just appointed a Redeemer to set you free, He's appointed a Redeemer to take you out and bring you in. Right? He's got somewhere for you to go. And since you're following Him through that, it takes a moment to get you out.

It takes a lifetime to cleanse you up and to fit you to be in. Right? It took a moment to get them out of Egypt. It took 40 years to get Egypt out of them. We call that sanctification. Because until they could go into the promised land, they had to get out of the old land.

Before you can be the new man, you have to get the old man out. And it takes some time. But there's a caution you need to pay attention to in that sanctification period. And he reminds them, for I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses.

[15 : 16] That doesn't mean that they were baptized into Moses' name. That just means that they were following Him through the Red Sea. Right? They didn't get wet because they walked on dry ground. Remember that? They were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

And they all ate the same spiritual food. And they all drank the same spiritual drink. What is he saying? That everyone who came out of Egypt had a legitimate, definite experience.

I mean, never miss it. If you left Egypt, if you were some of the Jewish people that cried out and you followed, or if you were that mixed multitude, remember it says there were a mixed multitude that went with them.

By the way, the mixed multitude is the one that causes the problems. That mixed multitude who wanted the blessing but didn't want the redeemer. The mixed multitude who wanted to walk out but didn't want to walk in that fellowship.

Right? They wanted the freedom but they didn't want the ruling of the Lord. So no matter who you were, from the greatest to the smallest, from the biggest to the least, everyone had the same experience.

[16 : 21] Don't miss it. None were more saved than any other. I mean, every one of them, the Bible tells us, walk through the Red Sea on dry ground. Every one of them, the Bible says, was overshadowed by the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Every one of them, it says, ate manna every day that was new except for on the Sabbath. Every one of them, it says, drank from the rock that was struck. Every one of them had a legitimate, definite experience.

I mean, they were saved. They were free. They were completely set free. Every single one of them. But here's the caution. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well pleased.

And in two times, Paul says, these things were written for us. Two times. Did you notice it? He says, in verse 6, now these things happened as an example for us.

And then it says in verse 11, now these things happened to them as an example. These are examples for us. Friend, this is why you need to know that there's more to the Bible than the book of Matthew.

[17 : 36] Scripture doesn't start at Matthew and end at the book of Revelations. It starts at Genesis, goes all the way through Malachi, and then picks back up in Matthew, and then goes to the end of the book of Revelations.

If you're ever around people who say, oh, well, the Old Testament has no application, then you turn right here and say, well, Paul says I need to pay attention because that's where I see the examples for how I should live today. Because if you don't know what happened then, how do you know what you should do now?

And what does this show us? What does this example point out to us? It says be cautious of using, Lord, help me in my clarity, be cautious of using an experience to justify your freedom.

They said, well, I'll walk through the river. I'm walking under the cloud and the fire. I'm eating the manna. I'm drinking the water. Surely I can do whatever I want to because I am really experiencing the blessings of the Lord.

And they thought they were. And it says, so they played the harlot with the idols. They acted immorally with the people. They began to grumble and complain to the Lord.

[18 : 42] And then the Bible tells us, and they fell, and they fell, and they fell. Now here's the question. Paul is not spending a lot of time. Are these people really saved? Because you said, well, they must not have been really saved.

Well, they were really out of Egypt. You say, oh, well, pastor, I'm talking about eternal salvation. Well, this is a picture of our eternal salvation.

The Exodus event is not recorded so that we would know something cool that happened in history. The Exodus event is given such detail and brought up so often in Scripture. It is brought up so often in Scripture so that we could understand the eternal reality and the application that it has to us spiritually.

Right? These were all out of Egypt. Now we're not talking about eternal destinies, but we're talking about a genuine experience, but they did not experience the fullness of what God intended for them.

They were not brought in because they used their experience as a license to sin. You say, pastor, where's the application? There are a lot of people today that can point back to an experience.

[19 : 48] Oh, a moment when God gave them goosebumps. They felt the Lord calling them to all their heart and their mind. They sensed his leading. They fell on their knees and they repented a genuine repentance, genuine mourning, genuine conversion.

Oh, they had an experience with the Lord. They walked in intimacy with him. They drank from the pot. They ate of the bread. They walked under the cloud and the pillar of fire. And then the longer they walked, the more that experience became a license that since I am free.

then I can do whatever I want to do. Don't miss the nevertheless. Because, friend, listen to me.

Experiences with the Savior do not justify your actions or mine. just because you have known him and experienced the reality of him and know the truthfulness of him, just because I know him and I understand the reality of him, it does not justify sinful actions.

There's a caution. And if we ever need an example, all we have to do is turn back in the Old Testament. Every single one of them.

[21 : 04] Friend, listen. They saw the Shekinah glory fall upon the tabernacle. They saw Moses' face shining when he came out of the presence. They were there when the tablets were brought down off the mountain that was quaking and trembling.

They were there. They heard God. The Bible tells us in Exodus chapter 20 that when God descended upon Mount Horeb, it says that all of the nation heard him speak. It says that they all heard the Ten Commandments and then they said, we are not worthy.

We are not worthy. Moses, you run up there and talk to him because we ain't worthy. See, sometimes we think that Moses was the only one who heard. No, the Bible tells us that they all heard. They all heard and it didn't take but 40 days before they built a golden calf.

See, an experience will last but a moment. But that relationship will keep you away from the pitfall of sin. Be cautious.

We ought not base our religious walk upon experiences. Because what does the Bible tell us in verse 12? Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

[22 : 14] The moment that I think because of my experiences that I've got somewhere. The moment that I think because of my experiences that I have attained some level. The Bible says take heed. The moment you think you stand you are about to fall.

I mean even Aaron said bring me all your earrings. Let's see what happens. An experience my friend is not enough. We have to have caution.

Second thing we see here in this passage is a consideration. We're going to avoid the pitfall of sin. We must understand this. We must have this consideration. Verse 13 says, verse 13 gives us our first two considerations.

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. Here's the first thing I want you to consider in your Christian walk. You're not facing anything that no one else has ever faced. You say, oh pastor you don't know how hard it is.

Pastor you don't know how strong the pull is. Pastor you don't know how much the temptation, how I wrestle with this. No but I do know the book of Ecclesiastes tells me there's nothing new under the sun. What has been will be.

[23 : 26] I do know that what you are facing God has had other people face it too. I do know that whatever temptation comes our way the Bible says it is common to man. Why is it common to man?

Because we have a common foe. Right? The same one who's tempting you is the same one who's tempting me. The same fiery darts me hurled at you is the same one throwing fiery darts at me.

No temptation has come to you but it is common to man. The first thing we must consider is that neither one of us, not one of us stand in some unique situation. Y'all are supposed to push me back right?

Not one of us stand in some unique situation that no one else has ever been there before. This is why friend read the Old Testament read Christian biographies read Christian history read the walk of those who went before.

Why? Because it doesn't take long in reading. You say, well, I don't have much time to read. We have a great saying around our house, I don't have as much time as I would like to read. I have a brother who's blessed me with so many books I probably would never read them all but I'm trying my best.

[24 : 32] but what we need to understand is we have just as much time as anyone else in the world. I remind myself of that all the time. You say, oh, no, no, no, I don't, I don't, I don't have the same 24 hours that I have the same 24 hours anyone else has.

It's a utilization of our time. And if I'm going through something that I think is unique to me, something that I think no one else has ever faced, it doesn't take long before I can find them in scripture and history.

And I don't mean just read any history. Read the history of those that God has walked with and dealt with. This is why it tells us in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 13 that we have a, or Hebrews chapter 12 that there's a great cloud of witnesses around us.

Testifying to the reality, cheering us on, it says, to run the race that is set before us with endurance. Sometime when the temptation comes my way that I think no one else has ever faced, I'm so thankful when God puts someone in front of me, someone either I can read or I can meet and face the same temptation and I can see how he brought them through it and it can give me the endurance to run the race.

No temptation ever comes your way but is such as is common to man. Why is that? We need to consider this. Second consideration from this verse is and God is faithful.

[25 : 51] Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but with the temptation will provide the way of escape so that you will be able to endure it. Here is the second consideration. We are trying to avoid the pitfall of sin. The first consideration in this verse is that what you experience, there are other people that experience it too.

The second consideration I want you to know is God does not take away the temptation. But I wish you would. Oh, there is coming a day when he will. But the Bible says that Paul does not say that God takes away the temptation.

God doesn't remove the temptation. He empowers the believer. This is why relationship is so important. That he will empower you.

He is faithful and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. For the believers in Corinth when they walked along the meat market and they saw the meat sitting there.

He has a temptation to buy that cheaper meat. He says, oh, this seems kind of, seems kind of, you know, like unnecessary. But he is like, well, God is able to give you the strength to avoid that.

[26 : 59] But it is not really about the meat. Right? Can I do whatever I want to do when I accept Jesus Christ? God doesn't remove the temptation. He empowers the believer.

We are still looking at our considerations. He says, therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. Sometimes the way God empowers you is he gives you feet to run. He does not always empower us to have the will to stand.

Sometimes we think we can stand in the midst of that temptation and be okay. And that is not wise. The Bible says that's foolish. He gives us feet to run and to flee from those things.

And he says, I speak to wise men. You judge what I say. It's not the cup of blessing which we bless as sharing in the blood of Christ. It's not the bread which we break as sharing in the body of Christ. Now he considers, he keeps going on with this consideration.

And he brings in now the Lord's table, right? Communion. And he starts talking about this communion exercise. Now, we don't do it this way here. Some of you have jokingly told me we need to do it this way.

[28 : 00] It really would have been shunned upon, you know, a couple years ago. Still kind of shunned upon today where we have a common cup and a common bread, you know. We're coming, I just wipe the cup off and we do it again. We all share the same cup.

I say, well, I want to go first, right? I guarantee you if we did it that way, some of you would be running down the aisle to try to get first. Not many of you would want to be last. But anyway, in this day they were sharing a common cup, common loaf.

And what he is symbolizing here is he's going to the picture of communion. That in taking communion or going to the Lord's table is representative, it is not actually, but it is representative of the blood of Christ and the body of Christ.

And it is sharing in both his blood and his body. And it is uniting with one another. When we come together as a church body and we take communion, though we are separate cups, separate bread, we are doing it together.

That is why we do it together because it is our uniting together in communion with one another and the Lord remembering what he has done for us. Right? And he goes back and he says the same thing that happened in the Jewish ritual of the altar, the food that was offered on the altar, the sharing in the relationship with God.

[29 : 07] And then he starts talking about this meat that they brought up. He says, so, those false teachers who offer meat to false gods, lower case g, they are also entering into communion.

But now Paul says there are no such things as idols. There are no such things as false gods. He says an idol is nothing. But he does know where false gods and idols derive from. He says their communion is not with this false god, no matter what you call it.

He says their communion is with demons. And the reason they commune with demons is because of this great truth. Anything that tries to distract us from the worship of the true and holy God is a work of demon activity.

It is demonic. All idols, all false gods, all misrepresentations of the true God are demonic activities. So you are communing, he says, those priests are communing with demonic activity even though that idol is nothing.

So this is the consideration. Do you really want to take yourself who is now communed with the body of Christ and communing with Christ himself and unite that to demon activity?

[30 : 21] Let's take it away from meat. Fill in the blank in your own life. Since I am free in Christ, can I blank? You know that blank, I don't have to tell you what it is.

Every one of us knows what that blank is filled with. The one thing we ought to consider is, do I want to join Christ to that? Is that really what I want to unite Christ with?

Because he'll also write to the church at Corinth that many people fall asleep, that is, they die by taking the Lord's Supper in an improper way. Because God will not be mocked.

Consider these things. Do I want to unite this with Christ and with the body of Christ? Because we are connected.

So what you do, I am doing it with you. What I do, you're doing it with me. Spiritually, socially, and morally.

[31 : 31] The caution, a consideration, and number three, a concern. It's the last thing, a concern. He gives us a greater consideration in verse 22. It says, or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?

We are not stronger than he, are we? So consider, am I doing this to make God jealous? Am I doing this to make God jealous? Would God be pleased with it? And he goes right into this concern. The concern is a repetition of what Paul has already stated in chapter 8.

And I know I'm wordy and I'm trying to close with me, so stay here. Verse 23 says, all things are lawful but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful but not all things edify. So the question is really not should I do it or can I do it?

The question is, will this benefit anyone by me doing it? And now the focus is shifted from personal freedoms to other concern. The question is not really can I, it's will it be better for them?

He said, let no one seek his own good but that of his neighbor. He said, well if I'm free in Christ then surely I can do that which is pleasing to me. Surely I can do that which is good to me. Friend, listen to me, Satan keeps you in bondage by allowing you to do what you want to do for yourself.

[32 : 46] Part of the bondage of sin is you get to do what you want. The freedom of Christ sets you free from your natural desires so that you could do what he's called us to do. He says, eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscious sake.

That's your sake. He says, so if you're going to the meat market and you buy something and they don't say anything and you just buy this meat, you take it home, he says, hey, you can take that home and you can eat it, that's okay. You didn't ask any questions you don't know, you're doing it for your own conscience, you're not sinning against your own conscience.

Why? For the earth is the and you want to go. You don't have to go, but if you want to go, if an unbeliever invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience sake.

So he's not saying you've got to be out of the world, right? He says, you're going to live in the world, you're going to be the lights of the world, so you just go and you eat, eat whatever they give you, but, but if anyone says to you this meat was sacrificed to idols, do not eat it.

Don't do it. Now that you know, the book of James says, for he who knows to do right does not do its sins. It says, but if anyone says to you this meat was sacrificed to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who informed you and for conscience sake.

[34 : 02] I do not mean your own conscience, but their conscience. So now all of a sudden, the reason I'm not eating, I'm free to eat it in my home, I'm free to eat it if I don't know, but the moment I know I shouldn't eat it, why?

Not because of me, but because of them. It's a concern. And he wraps it up. If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

Whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. Just as I also please all men in all things, not seek him own profit, but the profit of the many so that they may be saved.

This wraps this whole question up, right? Can I eat whatever? Or the question as we have put it to ourselves, am I free to do blank? He says whatever you do, do it to the glory of God.

Whatever that blank is, if you can do it to the glory of God, and if it gives no offense to any unbeliever, and if it would not offend the church, then do it.

[35 : 06] You say, well, why do I have to go through all those things? Because your concern is not so much for self as it is for others. it's living with the concern.

Paul says, I please all men in all things. I want to do everything for the sake of others. Why? So that they may be saved. See, Christ has set you free to be his ambassador.

I'm wrapping up here. Take that Exodus event, they leave Egypt, they're out there in the wilderness, in the middle of the wilderness, they get all those laws.

Remember the book of Leviticus? The theme of the book of Leviticus, be holy as I am holy. All those laws seem so binding. Those laws seem so legal, right? Don't do this, don't do that, don't eat this, don't eat that, eat this, don't do that, you know what all those laws did?

They didn't constrict the people of God. As a matter of fact, those laws gave the people of God the opportunity to reflect God to everybody looking at them. By living different than everybody else around them, it gave them the opportunity to be witnesses for the one true God.

[36 : 14] Because if you read those laws, the things that he restricts are the things that everybody else around them was doing. And he was setting them apart to lift them up so that they may promote who he is.

He was calling them to be ambassadors to a watching world. And the only way they could do it was by not doing the things they could have done simply because they belonged to him.

And he gave them the freedom to be his representatives in the watching world. We're the same. You say, well, why do I have to not do these things around me?

Why should I restrict this? Because you are free to be his ambassador. And you cannot do that by looking like everybody else. Paul closes this with one final word.

Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ. Let's pray. We thank you for your word. We thank you for the power and the conviction that comes from it.

[37:17] Lord, I pray that as we have said it, we have read it, Lord, that now you give us hearts and minds to apply it and lives to live it out for your glory. Whatever it is you want us to do, however it is you want us to live, we pray, God, that it will be God-honoring and Christ-glorifying.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.