

Day 92, 1 Corinthians 10

by David Servant

Paul warns believers of the dangers of greed, idolatry, and immorality, and emphasizes the importance of disciplining our bodies and walking in love towards others.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 9:27, 1 Corinthians 10:5, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Corinthians 10:23, 1 Corinthians 10:29

Topics: "Christian Discipline", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

David Servant preaches on Paul's fear of being 'disqualified' and forfeiting heaven due to sin, using the Israelites as an example of those who displeased God despite their deliverance. He warns against sins like greed, idolatry, immorality, grumbling, and rebellion that can lead to forfeiting our relationship with God. Paul emphasizes the importance of discipline, resisting temptation, and showing love and sensitivity towards fellow believers in matters of conscience.

Transcript

It is sometimes debated what Paul meant in the last verses of chapter nine regarding his fear of being "disqualified" if he failed to "discipline his body and make it his slave" (9:27). Reading those words within their context of the first part of chapter 10, however, makes it obvious that Paul was fearful, not just of forfeiting some heavenly rewards, as some say. Rather, he was fearful of forfeiting heaven. Citing the Israelites as an example, Paul reminds us that, although they were delivered from Egypt, were "baptized" when they crossed the Red Sea, ate God-given food and drank God-given water that was representative of Christ, in the end, "God was not well-pleased with most of them," and "they were laid low in the wilderness" (10:5). They never entered the promised land.

This serves as a warning to us that greed, idolatry and immorality---three sins that Paul already warned of in this letter that will exclude one from inheriting God's kingdom (6:9-10)---as well as grumbling and rebellion, could result in our forfeiting our relationship with God. Paul reminds us that immorality, for example, resulted in the deaths of 23,000 Israelites on a single day! We are not to suppose that those immoral people inherited eternal life!

So we must "take heed" that we don't similarly fall, disciplining our bodies, lest we be "disqualified." Clearly, the temptation to commit sexually immoral acts exists for believers, and we are capable of yielding. Thankfully, however, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to resist, and He always provides a way of escape (10:13). None of us are forced to sin. Moreover, there is grace

offered after sin to those who repent.

Obviously, even though Paul listed idolatry as a sin that angers God, will exclude one from heaven, and is a form of demon-worship, he did not believe that eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols was idolatrous. There is, however, sometimes a valid reason to avoid eating such meat. That reason is love for a fellow believer who is persuaded that doing so is wrong. Although eating meat that is sacrificed to idols is not an issue that most of us face, we can certainly apply the concepts that Paul advocates, being sensitive to the peculiarities that exist within the body of Christ. Love is the important thing.

Again we read very similar words that Paul had written earlier in this same letter: "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify" (10:23). It goes without saying that Paul did not mean that greed, idolatry and immorality, for example, are lawful in God's eyes, but to be avoided only because they are not profitable or edifying. That would make Paul contradict himself within this very chapter. Considering the context, we note that Paul was speaking of eating meats sacrificed to idols. It was lawful, but not always profitable or edifying to do so. That makes sense.

Therefore, even if we know that something is not wrong, we should strive not to offend those who are persuaded otherwise, lest we hinder them from inheriting eternal life. Paul specifically lists Jews, Greeks and the church, all of whom possess their various scruples. I suspect that it was the Jews in the Corinthian church, because of their previous devotion to the Mosaic Law and the many fence laws surrounding it, who objected to eating meat sacrificed to idols. So Paul's words, "All things are lawful," were a reference to our freedom from the law of Moses. (But we are all under the law of Christ.)

Finally, notice that Paul admonished those who thought it was wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols to also walk in love towards those who were persuaded otherwise. He wrote, "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?" (10:29-30). Those who pointed their fingers at Paul for eating meat sacrificed to idols should think again about holding him to their personal convictions, especially in the light that he ate with thankfulness to God!

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