

I CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

REVIEW...

- I CORINTHIANS 1-6 ~ 4 PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH ~ DIVISION / DISCIPLINE / SINGING / PURITY
- ANSWERING THE 5 QUESTIONS FROM THE CHURCH - 1ST MARRIAGE...
 - I CORINTHIANS 7:1-9 - TO THOSE WHO WANT TO GET MARRIED...
 - In order to avoid sexual immorality - get married...
 - Get married for the right reasons - not to get / but to give (*you are not your own*)...
 - I CORINTHIANS 7:10-17 - TO THOSE WHO ARE MARRIED...
 - Do not get divorced - Command from God - **Matthew 19:3-9** / **Mark 10:1-9**...
 - The only exception - death / adultery - because marriage is meant to last for life!
 - If you do get divorced - stay single - or remarry the one who you divorced...
 - I CORINTHIANS 7:18-40 - BE CONTENT...
 - You MUST accept every situation the Lord has put you in...
 - Financial / social / and relationships - married or single...
 - If you are single do not seek a wife (*Adam & Eve*) - instead wait on the Lord...
 - But if you do get married - you will face many challenges in life...
 - If you can it is better to remain single - wholly devoted to the Lord...
 - Do not think marriage will make you content - contentment only comes in Jesus!
- ANSWERING THE 5 QUESTIONS FROM THE CHURCH - 2ND IDOLS...
 - I Corinthians 8-10 - Paul deals with questions about Idolatry...
 - The first question he addresses is about food offered to Idols...

ANSWERING THE 2ND QUESTION - FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS...

- THE PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE... VS. 1-3
 - The church had questioned Paul about idols...
 - This was a common problem of the day - the Greeks worshiped many gods...
 - Part of how they worshiped these gods was by offering a sacrifice of food to them...
 - Some part of the animal was offered up as a sacrifice - but the rest was to share...
 - The 'picture' - having a meal with the gods - they got part / you got part...
 - Much the same as with the Jewish faith - the 'peace offering' - **Leviticus 3:12-17**
 - If you were invited over to an unbeliever's house for a meal...
 - Or if you bought meat in the market (*almost always which had been offered*)...
 - As a believer in Jesus - could you with a good conscience eat the meat...
 - We all have knowledge... vs. 2-3
 - Apparently the church in Corinth had a solution to this problem...
 - They thought they 'knew what to do - how to handle the issue'...
 - Paul warns them - everyone has knowledge - but knowledge alone is not the answer...
 - This is hard for us as men - because we are problem solvers - we look for the answer...
 - When people come to us with a problem we want to be the answer - we can fix it!
 - When we think we are the answer...
 - If you think you know anything/everything - you really know nothing at all!

- When we think WE have THE answer - we become arrogant - puffed up...
- Rather than solving the problem - often we become one ourselves!
- I had a friend many years ago who believed in evolution - because of the facts...
- He challenged me that if I could show him he was wrong - he would change his mind...
- I took up the challenge and studies up on Evolution vs. Creation...
- I came back and dismantled the Evolution theory - he admitted he not defend it...
- But he still believed in Evolution - because he wanted to!
- I had all the right knowledge - but knowledge is not enough...
- o Knowledge and Love...
 - The one who has the answer is the one who has God's love...
 - * **I Corinthians 13:2** - "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."
 - We might have all the knowledge - know our Bibles from front to back...
 - We might have degrees - titles - the answer to every question - but...
 - Knowledge is only half of the picture - Love allows me to use that knowledge for God!
 - I may know the only way to heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ - true...
 - But unless I have the Love of God - and am willing to share that message - it is useless!
- **THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD... vs. 4-6**
 - o We 'know' that and Idol is nothing...
 - Apparently the solution of the church was to 'know' idols were just lifeless images...
 - **Jeremiah 5:10** - "Do not be afraid of them, they cannot do evil of good..."
 - Idols have no power - they are neither harmful nor helpful...
 - It's foolish to trust in them to be able to help us - just as foolish to be afraid of them...
 - They are just a block of wood or plastic - no more powerful than a stick of wood!
 - The church had come to understand the foolishness of trusting in an idol...
 - The idea that something I create - can then turn around and save me...
 - * **Isaiah 44:19-20** - "The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, 'Why, it's just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to... roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?'"
 - There are many today who trust in idols - to answer prayers / help in hard times
 - Even those who do not look to idols - still tend to trust in our money...
 - We forget what our money is made of - paper is a wood product...
 - We look to Manuel Roxas (P100) / Benigno Aquino (P500) / Jose Santos (P1000)
 - Idols may have feet, ears, eyes, mouth - but they cannot walk, see, hear, or speak
 - **Psalms 115:8** - "Those who make them [trust in them] are like them."
 - If we trust in statues - or we trust in pretty printed-paper - we become like them...
 - If we are trusting in idols then we are no longer looking or listening to God...
 - Where God has the power to help us / save us - idols can do nothing...
 - So if we are trusting in idols rather than in God - nothing happens!
 - o There is only One God - **Ephesians 4:6**...
 - While there are many so-called 'gods' - they are not really gods - they are fallen angels...

- *** I Corinthians 10:20** - "Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God..."
- The only REAL God - is our Father in Heaven - our Lord Jesus Christ...
- One of the great mysteries of our Faith - there is only One God - **Deuteronomy 6:4...**
- Yet God exists in three distinct persons - God the Father / God the Son / God the Spirit...
- The Bible makes no effort to explain how this is true - only that it is a fact!
- What makes a religion a cult - rather than a denomination - Mormons / Iglesia...
- Is there denial of this 'key' doctrine - rejecting the divinity of Jesus Christ!
- **KNOWLEDGE WITH LOVE... vs. 7-13**
 - The Strong & the Weak...
 - The strong - those who have the knowledge - those who know idols are nothing...
 - They can eat any meat with a clean conscience - knowing there is only one true God!
 - But not everyone has that knowledge - the weak - do not understanding God's word...
 - Those who still think there is power in an idol - don't know it's just a block of wood...
 - If they eat meat they know has been offered to idols - their conscience is convicted...
 - For the most part people don't offer food to idols anymore (*common still in India*)...
 - But people do kiss idols / they do still burn candles to idols...
 - We know this is foolish - but those who don't know God's word don't understand...
 - Food cannot defile us...
 - You are not better because you eat - you have understanding - the strong...
 - You are not the worse if you do not eat - you do not understand - the weak
 - The food is not the point - it is about our conscience...
 - And the tendency for us to criticize people who do not share our convictions...
 - Those who do not understand - the weak...
 - This is where most people tend to struggle – being judgmental of others...
 - If we have a rule we believe we must follow...
 - If we think you cannot eat meat offered to idols...
 - If we think we cannot see movies / listen to secular music / have a tattoo...
 - Then we tend to think everyone else has to follow our rules as well!
 - Passing on your convictions...
 - If I we have conviction - it wrong to drink (*the Bible does say it is sin to be drunk*)
 - And I tell you that you should also not drink – I have given you a law...
 - The problem is I have not changed your heart – you still want to drink...
 - I set you up to fail – you will drink cause you want to – then feel like a bad Christian
 - Trusting in the Lord to show others right and wrong...
 - If instead I tell you to go to the Lord – ask Him if you should drink...
 - God will tell you – and if He says no - He'll change you heart so you don't want to!
 - God does not just give you a Law - He gives you the ability to live up to the Law!
 - Those who have more knowledge - the strong...
 - This tends to be the easier position to take – having more freedom in Jesus...
 - If someone follows more rules than we do – 'God bless them' – we don't mind...
 - So long as they do not force their rules onto us!
 - Not that we are free to sin...

- If you have any doubts about what you are doing...
- If you are not sure if you should see that movie – play with those cards...
- Then better not to - because whatever is not done in faith – is sin - **Romans 14:23**
- Don't let your freedom lead you away from Jesus...
- **I Corinthians 6:12** – “You may say, ‘I am allowed to do anything.’ But I reply, ‘Not everything is good for you.’ And even though ‘I am allowed to do anything,’ I must not become a slave to anything.”
- We have incredible freedom in Jesus – but be careful...
- Do not let your freedom become a snare that brings you into the bondage of sin...
- Make sure whatever you do – or don't do – do it to the glory of God!
- **I Corinthians 10:31** – “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- Be careful of your freedom in Christ - if a weaker brother sees you...
 - If you eat meat inside the temple of an idol - for sure it has been offered...
 - Maybe they have a special that day - maybe the food is REALLY good...
 - You don't care because you know that idols are nothing...
 - But if your weaker brother sees you eating - he might be tempted to follow along...
 - But because he does not understand - he will sin against his conscience by eating...
 - Our freedom in Christ can lead another brother into sin!
 - We might know that idols are nothing / cards are nothing / movies are nothing...
 - But to a brother who thinks they are evil – to him they are sin...
- Don't use your freedom in Christ – to destroy someone who Jesus died to save!
 - Suppose you knew a brother who struggled with gambling - lost everything...
 - He got saved – stopped gambling– and stated to get his life back...
 - One day a 'brother' invited him over to a cockfight – ‘just to watch’...
 - ‘We have freedom in Jesus’ – the brother told him – what can one fight hurt...
 - He ends up falling back into his old lifestyle – walking away from the Lord!
 - One man's freedom in Christ – can be another man's undoing...
 - Be sensitive to each other's weaknesses – protecting each other from sin!
 - If we stumble our brother through our 'knowledge' - wounding his weak conscience
 - We are actually sinning against Jesus!
- o It's all about Love...
 - So if eating stumbles your brother - then don't eat meal offered to idols...
 - Be considerate of the convictions of your brother in Christ...
 - If eating food offered to idols stumbles your brother – don't eat in front of him...
 - If watching a movie stumbles him – then don't watch the movie in front of him...
 - If playing with cards stumbles him – then don't put out the deck when he comes by...
 - Don't abuse your knowledge - remember it's about Jesus...
 - Don't just have the knowledge of the truth - use that knowledge in love...
 - Consider your brother before yourself - **Ephesians 4:15**