

1 Corinthians 9:1-27

Liberty and the Gospel

Intro: What would you be willing to forfeit for the sake of the gospel?

A) Interesting question – one that probably most of us – never thought about

Not Paul - **For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,** (Romans 9:3)

B) That is a heavy statement – I would not be willing to do that for you. - Sorry

C) But what would I be willing to forfeit – in order for other people to be saved? – Anything?

Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. Colossians 4:5,6

Last week we looked at Chapter 8 – Paul shared this principle that Love and fellowship – supersede – personal liberty

A) If my personal liberty might cause my Christian bro/or sister to stumble and violate their conscience –

B) I need to be willing to forfeit my liberty – out of love for my brother Look at 8:13

¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

C) As we move into Chapter 9 Paul is still on this subject of the exercise of our liberty –

D) Here in Chapter 9 he changes the focus from exercising our liberty amongst believers –

1) To the subject of **exercising our liberty amongst unbelievers** – for the sake of the gospel

Now some people have viewed Chapter 9 as an interruption in this discussion on Christian liberty – picks back up in Ch.10

A) But in reality – it is not an interruption- but an illustration

B) He is going to use his own life and the privileges that belonged to him as an apostle –

1) to illustrate sacrifices that he made for the sake of the gospel and his witness amongst unbelievers

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working?

So Paul is speaking here of the freedoms or rights that he had as an Apostle.

A) He had the right to have a house V.4 - ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink?

NLT . ⁴ Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals?

B) Free to marry – like the other apostles V.5

C) Free to be provided for in our ministry. V.6 ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves?

Not exactly sure what Apollos did for work – but Paul was a tent maker

A) 1.5 yrs he was in Corinth – he worked at tent making turning the day

B) Preached the gospel and taught the word at night

C) Paul is questioning – His and Apollos right to be supported financially by the ministry.

Now Paul proceeds to give some reasons why he deserved these rights

Reason #1 Human experience V.7

A) ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? – Do we take a Pilot who is fresh out the air force academy and say: **Now you have to buy your own F-16**

Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?
Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk
of the flock?

B)Farmer partakes of his crops and a shepherd –
milk from his flock

C)So Paul starts off logically - Human experience
tells us – Soldiers are provided for with the
weapons needed

1)Farmers – partake of their own crops

Reason #2 OT Law V.8-11

⁸Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not
the law say the same also? ⁹For it is written in the
law of Moses, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it
treads out the grain.*”

A)Paul quotes Deut 25:4 here and Paul uses this
same verse in 1 Timothy 5:17,18 *17 Let the elders
(Pastor) who rule well be counted worthy of double
honor, especially those who labor in the word and
doctrine.*

*18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an
ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is
worthy of his wages."*

B)Paul is sharing with Timothy – those who
minister in the word should be compensated for
that

C)We See Paul’s sense of humor - Is it oxen God is
concerned about?

1)Paul asked the question was this written in the law
for the oxen ?

D)Is the oxen going to read this - No !

¹⁰Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our
sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows
should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope
should be partaker of his hope.

Hope= Expectation of coming good –

A)Farmer plows with an expectation of a crop

B)When he threshes the wheat – throws it up –
Chaff blows away – the wheat is heavier –

1)Expectation some wheat is going to fall

Paul is illustrating this principle of Sowing and
reap – you sow with an expectation of reap

A)Paul is saying it is not wrong for a minister of
the gospel to sow with an expectation of
compensation

¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a
great thing if we reap your material things?

Reason #1 Human logic

Reason #2 OT Law

Now before Paul gives his next reason –

A)He is going to give a hint in v.12 of where he is
going with this conversation

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure
all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

A)We have this right – but we have never used
this right –

B)He sacrificed – working during the day –
preaching at night –

1)because he didn’t want to in any way hinder the
work of the gospel

C)He will explain more as we go along

Reason #3 The OT practices of the priest and
Levites V.13-14

¹³Do you not know that those who minister the holy
things eat of *the things* of the temple, and those who
serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the
altar?

Numbers 18 Leviticus 6 & Lev 27 lay out the
regulations governing their part of the
offerings, and the special tithes they were
to receive.

A)The priest actually ate a part of the offering

B)The application is clear: If the Old Testament
ministers under Law were supported by the
people to whom they ministered,

1) should not God’s servants who minister under
grace also be supported?

C)#3 The OT Law

Reason #4 The teachings of Jesus V.14

¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

A) When Jesus sent his disciples out

Matthew 10:10 *A worker is worthy of his food.*

B) Luke 10:7 *"And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages."*

C) So even Jesus supported this concept

D) So Paul gives these 4 strong reasons of why as an apostle he had the right to be compensated as a minister of the gospel

But then he throws this curveball into the conversation in V.15

¹⁵ But I have used none of these things, Do I have the right? Yes

A) He had the right to be compensated – but he chose not to – why? V.12 again

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

B) The word Hinder means to impede progress – like a road block

C) Paul said – I am so passionate about sharing the gospel – that I don't want to do anything to impede its progress

1) Anything that would hinder its effectiveness

¹⁵ But I have used none of these things nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

A) Paul says I have this right but I have never used that right and I don't want to start now.

B) In fact I would rather die than lose my right to boast about preaching without charge.

C) Paul is essentially saying – I would never want people to think the reason why I do this is for the money.

Ministry is not a Job – it is a Calling.

A) If our economy goes in the tank – great depression again – and I have to go find outside work –

B) Would I still show up to preach and teach and minister to people – YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT.

C) Everyone on our staff feels the same way – in fact we all served a lot before we were ever in ministry full time

D) Being on Staff just allows us to do more – than we could do if we were working full time and keep a better balance with our families

1) But no one is doing it for the pay check –

2) If someone was – it would be time for them to go do something else. – CALLING

¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

Now some would have been tempted to exalt Paul for his stand - Wow Paul you are really special - being so giving -

A) Paul says I have nothing of which to boast - I preach out of necessity -

B) Romans 1:15 Paul called himself a debtor - to preach - duty

C) A duty that was motivated by love – The Love of Christ compels me

1) So overwhelmed by the love of Jesus that saved him – no other response but the preach

Jeremiah Tried to not preach because of such a poor response - but he said that it was like a fire in his bones - couldn't keep silent !

A) THAT IS HOW PAUL FELT

B) Like when someone tells you a secret – great news – super excited

1) But don't tell anyone - Annoying –
Honestly – Broken that?

C) Finally say - Ok now you can say something – You tell everyone

D) SO Paul says don't boast in me - I am not boasting or saying this to get you to support me – 1) no in fact - I have my reward

¹⁸ What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

My reward is being able to do this at all – Being used by God – Privilege

A) Jesus and the woman at the well- John 4

B) The Disciples go to get food – come back – Jesus isn't hungry – **My food is to do the will of him who sent me**

C) Ask anyone serving in ministry – tell you this – it is draining and filling at the same time.

D) Paul said - My reward is to preach the gospel and to do it without charge – PRIVILEGE

Now Paul is going to share his Motivation in forfeiting this right or freedom – to be compensated

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might **win** the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I **might win** Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might **win** those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might **win** those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might **win** the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

The Legendary Green Bay Packer Coach – Vince Lombardi – Winning isn't everything – it is the only thing

A) Paul was into winning - read that text again – note the word Win – saying it loud

B) Paul's 1st Motivation - See People get SAVED – WIN people to Jesus

B) I became a Jew – followed the customs – Win the Jews – **looking for common ground.**

1) Paul was a bridge builder

C) Those under the law – bound legalism - he subjected himself to their customs –

1) one example – Minister to Jews – He had Timothy circumcised – Bummer for Timothy right ?

D) The Jews in that area were hung up on circumcision – Paul acquiesce –

1) in order to get an opportunity to tell them about Jesus

E) Me with the Youth guys – Tyler Aaron – Guess what?

1) Been places – ate crazy food - not offend and build a bridge to tell them about Jesus

Paul said – to those without the law – gentiles – I became as one without the law – Win those without the law

A) Gentiles – adopt their culture – talk about sporting events – cultural nuances – anything build a bridge

B) To the weak – Context – those not eating meet sacrificed to idols

1) I became as weak – Not going to eat meat – If that is what it takes for me to be able to talk to them about Jesus

C) I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Note: Paul isn't doing anything that is sinful –

A) I am going to smoke dope – reach my stoner friends – NO

B) I SLEPT with that girl – hoping for an opportunity – talk to her about Jesus – NO

C) CH 10 Next week - MISTAKE of Israel – abused liberty – resulting in bad witness and bondage. -

So this brings us back to my opening question- What would you be willing to forfeit- to share the gospel?

A) Think of it this way - What in your life might be a hinderance to you sharing the gospel –

B) Impede the progress of the gospel in a person's life – Are you willing to forfeit that?

But Paul has another Motivation he is willing to do that V.24

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. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul SAYS– I discipline myself in this way-

A) I am willing to sacrifice in this way – not just because I want pp to get saved

B) That was a big part of it – But also because he looking forward to his heavenly reward –

1) 2nd Motivation – Heavenly reward

C) The Christian Life is like a race – NOT RUNNING JUST TO RUN.

1) Running to Win

There is a difference - those who run just to run – THEY - take days off

A) Times – I don't feel like it – take breaks – not focused

B) Me – Running – Ice Cream truck – Stop – Looking for reasons to stop – looking for excuses to not do it

C) But Someone who is Running in a Race or training – race – ONE GOAL – RUNNING TO WIN –

1) RUNNING TO BEAT MY TIME

Paul says I Run with an Aim – a purpose

A) Box – there is a target –

B) For Paul the target was – to tell as many people as possible about Jesus – HIS CALLING

C) I discipline my body and bring it into subjection – I don't want to be disqualified

Your life called to an Ambassador – Witness

A) How are you running ? training ?

San Francisco Chronicle: "Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle; when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."

Spurgeon wrote likewise: "If you are not seeking the Lord, the Devil is seeking you. If you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels."

HOW ARE YOU RUNNING?

A) YOUR WALK

B) YOUR WITNESS