

1 Corinthians

Chapter 9:1-27

May 12, 1996

- **1 Corinthians Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
- Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.
- Chapter 3 All Christians will have their labors tried by fire.
- Chapter 4 Boasting in our leaders puffs up and destroys fellowship.
- Chapter 5 Maintain the purity of the Church.
- Chapter 6 Do not dispute before the world and do not partake in sexual immorality.
- Chapter 7 Principles of marriage
- Chapter 8 The responsibility of liberty
- Chapter 9 Those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel

- **1 Corinthians 9:1-27**

- **Introduction & Review**

In the previous chapter, Paul taught that although we may have various liberties in Christ, still if the exercise of the liberty causes a brother to stumble who has a weaker conscience, then I may not use my liberty. The principle is that there is a greater right than being right.

In this section Paul gives another example of a right that he had which he gave up so that the church at Corinth could receive the gospel without struggle.

- **Exposition**

1 Corinthians 9:1-27

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.

- Again, there were those who were challenging Paul and the validity of his apostleship. Paul's argument was since he was the one through whom God saw fit to bring the gospel, that he, even more than others, was given apostolic authority. Also notice that Paul is building up to his point by establishing that he is free 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?⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? 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?

- Here Paul specifically mentions the accusations against him and sheds light on the substance of the critic's arguments. Apparently, there were those who accused Paul of being only concerned with the financial gain. Although he had used his right to receive money from other churches, Paul establishes here that he, and the others, have a right to be compensated for ministering to them.
- Paul is not defending his right to be married, but rather, he is establishing his right to bring along a believing wife and have *her* needs satisfied by them as well.

⁸ Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?¹⁰ Or 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.¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of

- The basis from Paul's argument goes beyond simple pragmatism, we have a command from the law of Moses to not muzzle the oxen. The application of this OT law is made upon the NT church that God has built the world in such a way that labor has a reward; hard work should yield benefit to the laborer.
- Paul teaches that he who labors should hope in the benefit or the reward. He should expect such a thing. This means, by way of application, that a minister who labors, should hope that his labor will grow and produce benefit.
- Here Paul demonstrates the principle taught in the previous chapter; if his liberty was to make them stumble then he should not exercise his liberty. A minister who thinks that the primary point is his compensation misses the principle just as much as the congregant who thinks that he is not obligated to support those who teach him.

¹³ Do 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?¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

- Here Paul ties the Old Testament practice of supporting the Levites with the New Testament Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists.
- **Principles of Tithing:**
 - The tithe was a tenth of anything, but specifically, it was a tenth of the fruit of our labor. 1Sam. 8:15,17; Lev. 27:30; Lev. 27:32; 2Chron. 31:6
 - The tithe came from the increase not from capital. Deut. 14:22
 - It was to go to the Levites for all of the activities of the temple. Num. 18:21,24; Neh. 10:37
 - The Levites offered a tithe of the tithe as a heave offering. Num. 18:26,27
 - Both tithes and offerings were only to be made to the Lord and were obligatory. Lev. 27:30; Ex. 22:20; Judges 13:16
 - Gifts are not obligatory.
 - Elders are to be paid by those whom they minister to. 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6.
 - God will not be mocked by withholding support. Gal. 6:7-10
 - Obedience in tithing produces a blessing. Malachi 3:8-12; Phil. 4:14-20
 - The tithe is not a gift and is not a purchase of influence.
 - Disobedience of the church tempts leaders to ask for money, yet, the church must be wise in its tithing.
 - Ten average tithing families can support one average Christian worker.

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.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.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.

- Paul demonstrates that a minister's attitude should be that receiving the tithe is not a condition for teaching or proclaiming the gospel. If a minister thinks of his calling as just a payment for services he doesn't understand Paul's example. However, Paul's actions were an indictment on the immaturity of the church at Corinth. Therefore, he teaches them the proper things so that they might come to maturity. He would rather die than to not fulfill this service.

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.

- Paul's general attitude, which went well beyond just receiving compensation, was that he wanted the gospel to get out. He would give up himself, his rights and continue with no slowdown for the sake of delivering an unhindered gospel.

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. NKJV

- Paul strove to be disciplined and rigorous in his ministry. There are those who see ministry as an occupation with no heavy lifting, flexible hours, and moderate respect. This was not the attitude of Paul nor should it be the attitude of ministers. They are to labor, even to the point of fatigue, on behalf of the gospel. They are to be wise in the way they labor but always doing so by faith because it is God who grants fruitfulness.