

Give Me Liberty, Or ... Part 1 (1 Cor. 8:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. Review of the overall themes of 1 Corinthians –
 - 1. chapters 1-4 UNITY
 - 2. chapters 5-7 HOLINESS
 - 3. chapter 8-14 LOVE (particularly as expressed within the church)
- B. Read the text / Outline of the sermon / Prayer

II. Understanding the issue being addressed (1 Cor 8:1-6)

- A. **The pagan influence in Corinth and ubiquity of “idol-food”**
 - 1. The role of pagan temples and *idol-food* in Corinthian culture
 - a. The societal pressure on Christians to partake in *idol-food*
 - b. Parallel pressures on Christians in this age (east and west)
- B. **What were the circumstances that prompted Paul to write?**
 - 1. The *traditional view* (a conflict between “*strong*” and “*weak*”)
 - a. Paul agrees in theory with the freedom to eat idol-food
 - b. nevertheless, he tells them they shouldn’t eat for the sake of those with a weaker conscience
 - c. This is similar to the situation in Romans chapters 14-15
 - 2. Weaknesses of the *traditional view* and an *alternate view*
 - a. Paul would have been dead-set against partaking in *idol-food* (Acts 15)
 - b. Paul never addresses “*the strong*” (as he does in Rom 14-15)
 - c. It does not harmonize with the counsel in chapter 10:14-22
 - 3. Application: ***Flee idolatry in all its forms*** (worldly and religious)
 - 4. What might have been the content of the Corinthians’ letter?
 - 5. Paul’s reply in 1 Corinthians 8:1-6 first agrees with their common belief and knowledge of monotheism, but ...
 - a. *mere knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*
 - b. Application: Take care how you use the knowledge you have

III. Paul’s initial response on *idol-food* and loving each other (1 Cor 8:7-13)

- A. Paul does not take a rigid theological stance against *idol-food*
 - 1. verses 7-8: a concern for the weak
 - a. Shouldn’t we be concerned that our weaker brothers inform their conscience with Scriptural standards?
 - b. To go against conscience is a dangerous thing
 - 2. verse 9-12: the severity of the sin of “those in the know”
 - a. Take note of the intensity of the language in vss 11-12
 - b. Can our knowledge be the dagger that destroys our brother?
 - 3. verse 13: just how far is this self-sacrificial love supposed to go?
 - a. Give me death, rather than offend with my liberty
 - b. Application: Are we loving others in this way?
- B. A word to the non-Christian

IV. The example of Paul’s restriction of freedom for the sake of love (1 Cor 9)

- 1. ***Be imitators of me as I am of Christ*** (1 Cor 11:1)