

September 27th, 2020



Session 8

9:1 – 10:33

Giving up our own rights isn't considered normal in the world we live in. But living for Christ requires us to surrender our rights because we love and follow a savior who did it first. He is our ultimate example.

Our goal is to be able to show others the love of Christ, and we do that by setting aside our own agendas, selfishness, and pride. This may seem like a difficult sacrifice, but as followers of Christ, our lives may be uncomfortable from time to time.

Personal sacrifices can look different for all of us. For you, it could mean giving up some money to take a friend to lunch or giving up time to visit a church member in the hospital. Or maybe it's sacrificing energy to help a neighbor with their lawn or garden.

As you reflect on the people in your life, think about one thing you could do to make a sacrifice for them over the next week.

1. "Do Not Muzzle the Ox"

In chapter 9, Paul lists reasons why those who work have the right to receive pay—even those preaching or in ministry. He uses an Old Testament passage to make his point.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-12 and Deuteronomy 24:4.

What is Paul saying in this passage about getting paid for ministry? How does his quote from the Old Testament in verse 9 play into his overall point?

In the middle of his explanation, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 to emphasize his point. In the Old Testament, oxen served the people of Israel in a good way by threshing the grain for them. God made special provisions for the oxen by asking Israel not to muzzle them while they worked.

Paul is saying that in the same way the oxen labors on behalf of the people, he and any other laborer of the gospel serve God's people and should therefore be taken care of. **What does the passage from Deuteronomy tell you about God's character? What does this passage say about his care for you?**

Paul explained to the Corinthians that those who work have the right to receive pay—he had the right to be supported financially by those he ministered to—but he chose to support himself. **In what ways does Paul's perspective impact the way you think about money?**

2. Temple Services

Paul continues his argument for those who preach the gospel to earn their living by the gospel with another example from the Old Testament.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:13-14.

What do the men who perform temple services receive for their work? What do those who serve at the altar receive?

Why would this reference be important for Paul to bring up to the Corinthians?

As we've learned from Paul, those in ministry have just as much of a right to earn a living by their ministry work as those who work in other fields. Paul gives the example of priests who serve in the temple to reemphasize his point.

Read Numbers 18:8-18; 21-24.

What are a few of the rewards or payments that the priests and Levites received for their work? Since the priests and Levites spent majority of their time in life at the temple, in what ways are the specifics of their payments unique and necessary?

The priests and Levites were dedicated to their work for the Lord at the temple, and in return they were given everything they needed to survive. **What does this passage say about God's faithfulness to provide for those who love him? What have you learned about God's provision after reading 1 Corinthians 9 and Numbers 18?**

What's one area of your life where you could trust God's provision this week?

3. Sitting at the Table with Demons

In warning the Corinthians about the severity of idolatry, Paul wants the Corinthians to know they can't be both selfless and selfish at the same time. The selfishness of idolatry and the selflessness of living for God won't work together.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:18-22.

How would you summarize this passage in your own words? What does this passage say about God's desire for our whole heart—not just part of it?

What specifics does Paul use to illustrate participating with Jesus and with demons? How does the intimate nature of sitting at the same table and drinking from the same cup showcase the seriousness of Paul's point?

Paul says that when we take the Lord's Supper, we're actually participating in Jesus's sacrifice. But when we worship anything else that isn't aimed at God, it's demonic.

How do Paul's words influence the way you think about the Lord's Supper?

Paul explains that God wants us completely dedicated to him. We can't live selflessly and sit at the table of the Lord while also living selfishly. **If you were to look at your life, which "table" are you sitting at? Or have you been trying to sit at both?**

Following Jesus is an all-or-nothing gig. We can't sit at two tables in this Christian life. **What could it look like for you to be fully committed to living for God this week?**

4. Everything for the Glory of God

In the latter part of chapter 10, Paul gives some insight into Christian liberty and how it is not just about our personal desires. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know their freedoms, but if the freedom to eat sacrificed meat was hindering other members from spiritual growth, then they should glorify God by abstaining for their friend's sake.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-33.

Verse 31 says that no matter what decisions we make regarding food, drink, or anything else, we should do it to the glory of God. **How could giving God glory in every decision we make help us when we face temptation? How could giving God glory in our decisions help expose idolatry?**

Paul doesn't seek the benefit of his own life in order to achieve a bigger goal than himself. **For what benefit does Paul say he strives to please everyone in verse 33?**

What do you typically associate with glorifying God?

Paul's idea of glorifying God is being considerate to other people and their consciences. **With Paul's definition in mind, in what ways can you glorify God this week? When you're at work? In your relationships? When you're at church?**

As Christians, it is our job to seek the well-being of other believers in order for God's will to be done. As we navigate through a world of cultural idols, we must live out our Christian liberty with an others-centered attitude.