



THE CHURCH AT ELLERSLIE
SUNDAY SERMON NOTES

ERIC LUDY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2015

A PASTOR'S DILEMMA

A Study in the Challenging Terrain of 1st Corinthians



Paul - The Tripping Beam

. . . (Paul's epistles) in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

2 Peter 3:16

Is Paul Confused?

All things are permissible to me, all things are lawful for me . . .

Remove from your midst the fornicator, for what he is doing is not permissible and lawful

It's not a big deal to eat food sacrificed to idols . . .

Don't eat food sacrificed to idols

Do not judge . . .

I judge your behavior even though I'm not with you

Don't get married . . .

Marriage is fine

Prophecy is passing away . . .

Seek to prophecy

When a woman prophecies . . .

Don't let a woman speak

A woman ought to have her head covered . . .

We have no such practice in the church

Speaking in Tongues is empty and of no value . . .

I speak in tongues more than you all

You ought to relate one unto the other in absolute purity . . .

Greet each other with a kiss

You should agree with one another . . .

if you don't agree with me, you're wrong

Context, Context, Context

- Every word must be interpreted in light of its sentence
- Every sentence must be interpreted in light of its paragraph
- Every paragraph must be interpreted in light of its chapter
- Every chapter must be interpreted in light of the entire book
- And every book must be interpreted in light of the entire Bible and in light of the nature of God as revealed throughout the text of Scripture.

Corinth

The Church Splattered with Controversy

1st Corinthians: Chapter One

Paul Shares His Reason for Writing

The Author and the Audience

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

The Primary Motive for Writing

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

1 Corinthians 1:10-11

So, What are the Contentions?

Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:12-13

What Really Matters? What is this Christian thing all About?

... We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ... that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

Pastor Paul Has His Hands Full with Corinth

- **Contentious and Denominationally-minded** - making every peripheral doctrinal theme a dividing point while forgetting the doctrinal theme that is the most important
- **Arrogant and Puffed-up** - thinking they are immune to correction and are free to live out their Christianity any way they see fit
- **Controlled by the Flesh, Babes** - carnal and controlled by self's passion for comfort, control, and recognition

- **Sexually Immoral** - exercising their “liberty” in Christ in a manner that feels good to them though it may harm others
- **Aggressively separating from all sinners the world over** - hyper-eagerness to please God out of distancing from all that is sexually immoral
- **Taking each other to court** - allowing the secular world to make decisions in regard to the church
- **Eating Food Sacrificed to Idols** - Enjoying liberty at the expense of another’s conscience
- **Unwillingness to give up anything** - their rights, their earthly pleasures, their possessions, and their control over their life
- **Refusing to cover the head properly** - showing shocking disrespect and dishonoring to their God-given authority
- **Handling communion with utter disregard** to the preciousness and sacredness of it - diminishing the value of the shed blood of Jesus
- **Chaotic and disorderly in their use of spiritual gifts** - out-of-control tongue-talking and prophesying
- **Women jumping ahead of the men** - dishonor and disrespect, undermining God’s clearly appointed leadership
- **Audacious questioning of the resurrection** - after all that’s pretty preposterous to think that people can rise from the dead

Some Helpful Interpretation Tools

- What is the Context?
- Is this Prescriptive or Descriptive Writing?
- What is Paul’s Great Purpose in Writing the Letter?

The Two Ditches and the Centerline

Liberty

I am free to do whatever I please - I’m a Christian

All things are lawful unto me . . . all things are lawful for me . . . Am I not an apostle? am I not free?

1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:21; 9:1

The Liberty Ditch - *just a little to the left*

The Christian Sadducee

Law

I am required to not do this or do that wicked thing, for my ability to show personal righteousness is proof of my genuine Christianity

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators . . . Flee fornication . . . I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway . . . flee from idolatry . . .

1 Corinthians 5:9; 6:18; 9:27; 10:21

The Law Ditch - *a little to the right*

The Christian Pharisee

Love

the missing ingredient in Corinth

And yet I show you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 12:31

Though [**I aggressively defend the doctrines of Peter**], but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though [**I vigorously argue on behalf of the conclusions of Apollos**], but have not love, I am nothing. And though [**I animatedly champion the exhortations of Paul**], but have not love, it profits me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

. . . When one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

1 Corinthians 3:4

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us **not to think of men above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

1 Corinthians 4:6

The Problem in Corinth

They Made Something Other Than Jesus Christ The Focus

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

The “Love” Christian - *right down the middle*

The *Christian* Christian

Love Harnesses Liberty

—————
Love Fulfills the Law

—————
*Only That which Flows out of the Power of Heavenly Love
is worth anything in the Grand Landscape of Eternity*

The Anatomy of Love

God's Nature of Humble, Selfless Giving

Self-Denied Decision-Making

- Sexual Immorality - what's love in this situation?
- Food Sacrificed to Idols - what's love in this situation?

- Head-Coverings - what's love in this situation?
- Communion - what's love in this situation?
- Tongues - what's love in this situation?
- Prophecy - what's love in this situation?
- Order in the Church - what's love in this situation?
- Women Speaking - what's love in this situation?

How Does Culture Play Into This Discussion?

The All-Important Attitude

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:3-5

Liberty Leveraged Lovingly

But **take heed** lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak . . . But when you sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, **you sin against Christ**. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, **lest I make my brother to offend**.

1 Corinthians 8:9,12-13

Am I not an apostle? **am I not free?** have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? . . . For though I be free from all men, **yet have I made myself servant unto all**, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, **that I might by all means save some**.

1 Corinthians 9:1,19-22

But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. **Give none offense**, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, **not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.**

1 Corinthians 10:28-33

The All Important Ingredient

Love

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **Love** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Love** never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Jo-Jo and the Fancy Shoes

My Movies and the Pastor

Love-Infused Living

- The Car I Drive
- The Food I Eat
- The Clothes I Wear
- The Things I Watch
- The Music I listen to
- The Way I Spend my time

Love is the Most Excellent Way

- Love is patient
- Love is kind
- Love does not envy
- Love does not boast
- Love is not arrogant
- Love is not rude.
- Love does not insist on its own way
- Love is not irritable
- Love is not resentful
- Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing
- Love rejoices with the truth

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples . . .

John 13:35

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, **if ye have love one to another.**

John 13:35

Jesus and Him Crucified

The Message that Answers Every Dispute