

Real Love-Building up Others

8:1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God.

4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8 But food does not bring us near to God; **we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.**

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11 So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12 **When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.** 13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? 2 Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. 4 Don't we have the right to food and drink? 5 Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? 6 Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? 8 Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? **14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.**

15 But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. 16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. **I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.** 23 **I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.**

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Acts 10:24 What about this letter from the apostles?

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ ***You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols***, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

Three vital legs of Christian life: Knowledge, Love, and Transformation

What areas would we argue about today?

1. Holidays: Christmas tree, Easter eggs, Halloween all have pagan roots.
2. Drinking: cause stumbling more than just physically...
3. Yoga, TM: whatever is wrong with meditation...
4. Is the church building "holy"?

Topics in Corinthians

1. Divisions over teaching (1-4)- 1 Cor 1:10 "all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."
2. Marriage and sexual issues (5-7)- 1 Cor 6:19-20 "you are not your own; you were bought at a price."
3. Doctrinal differences (8-10)- 1 Cor 8:1-3 "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God. "
4. Church Order (11)- 1 Cor 11:31-32 "But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."
5. Spiritual Gifts (12-14)- 1 Cor 13:13 "13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
6. Meaning of Resurrection (15)- 1 Cor 15:19 'If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."
7. Giving (16)- 1 Cor 16:1-2 "Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up..."

Sacred Space by Brian Orme

<http://www.the-next-wave.org/sacredspace>

Is there anything more sacred about a church building than there is about the tavern down the street? I don't think so; hear me out. I think sacred space is something moving in conjunction with our hearts and our bodies. I believe that someone who has Christ living in them is more sacred than the elegant church cathedrals in Aberdeen, more holy than the holy land, more sanctified than the latent church structures in a hundred cities. What makes something sacred: the very presence of God. Just like Moses, who was asked to take his sandals off because he was stepping into the presence of the Holy God. The beauty of God's plan is that he now dwells within the hearts of people.

There is a notion that is prevalent today that tells us that church buildings are holy ground. Since this is true for so many - we are asked to change the way we dress, and the way we conduct ourselves while we are within the church walls. Many scholars would say that this view comes from the institution of Christendom by Constantine. When Constantine made Christianity the official religion the church developed into an institution; the time of persecution was over and the church enjoyed a time of importance in society and here we are hundreds of years later with holy buildings and professional pastors.

We even allocate our church meetings to the more revered rooms. I have a friend that has been a pastor for many years that told me a story from his past. He was asked to conduct the ceremony for a young couple in the church, but the girl had become pregnant before the wedding day. In view of the circumstances my friend told them that he would do the ceremony but he would not conduct it in the sanctuary, it would have to be done in another room. My friend was upset to think that he ever had this perspective. Why would we ever place a building before the repentant person, as if the building would cry out in protest?

Why do people even want to get married in church buildings anyway? For many it's because they see the church building as a place that will provide a sacred space for their ceremony. There are couples that come from our local community that want to have their wedding in our sanctuary even though they have no connection with our church; tradition tells them that the church will make their wedding holy. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with having a wedding in a church, for many it symbolically represents what they hold dear, but when we look to the actual building to find the sacred we are missing the point. I love the fact that I don't have to rely on a building to immerse myself in something sacred. The sacred space is within me where God dwells, where my spirit lives, where my body breathes.

There is a church in L.A. that meets in a nightclub. During the week everything that goes on in the actual building is worldly, the pastor tells stories about cleaning up vomit before the morning service, there is nothing sacred about that; but on the weekends the people of God invade that space and it becomes sacred. It isn't sacred because of the building but because God's people come together in that building. I believe that my living room becomes sacred when others from our church community come together in it.

Still, today there are so many cathedrals and opulent places of worship that we conclude are holy, sacred space, as if God still dwelt in a building and not in hearts. The wildness of God never wanted a building; that was man's idea. God's plan was to find the sacred space within the hearts of men and women. The truly sacred can only be something that God designs, something in his image, something beautiful.

I think we all should get an unsettled feeling when we point to buildings as sacred and not to our own lives. God's plan, his wonderful mystery, is revealed in his life within us, those who call him Lord. No longer do we look to the external for the sacred, we look no further than our own hearts. The command to be holy, to be set apart, was never asked of a building, it is only asked of those who would follow Jesus Christ. **We** are his sacred space.