

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

THE PRIVILEGE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL

WHY PAUL RESTRAINED HIS RIGHT TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I CORINTHIANS 9:15-18

- Connection to Context: Never exercise a right to the detriment of another...
 - In chapters 8-10, Paul is dealing with what we might consider gray areas of Christian practice. Things that we may be able to do but should not because of the way it may hinder a brother or sister who has not arrived yet in knowledge.
 - The principle that must govern how we navigate these things is that our practice must be governed by knowledge and love. The specific topic at play in chapter 8 was if it was permissible for Christians to eat meat that had been offered to idols. Knowledge said, yes as there is only one God and those idols are nothing. But love said, though I have the right, I will restrain its exercise, so I don't trip up another believer.
 - Last week, we saw that Paul practiced what he taught as he would not take financial or material support from the Corinthians so they would not confuse his motives. V1-14 made clear the right that a gospel minister must be supported by those he teaches, yet Paul did not act on it.
 - Today's text teaches us why Paul came to that conclusion: Preaching the gospel was a dear privilege
 - It was the greatest honor of his life that Christ would count him faithful putting him in the ministry: I Tim 1:12-17; I Cor 15:10; II Cor 3:5-6, 4:1; Acts 20:28; I Tim 4:16, 6:11-14, 20; II Tim 4:1-5; I Cor 4:1-2
- How dearly did Paul hold this privilege?
 - **He'd rather die than be confused with someone who did it for the money** – v15
 - A right laid aside: Perfect tense shows that this was a decision he made in the past and continued to follow to this moment. II Cor 4:11; Acts 20:34; II Cor 11:9; I Thess 2:9; II Thess 3:8
 - A clarified distinction: not speaking of it as a disguised way to gain their support
 - A clear hearted rejoicing: In fulfilling his privilege in dependence upon Christ
 - **As a compulsion given to him by Christ – in irresistible urge to preach Christ** – v16
 - The gospel was not of his invention, nor did it depend upon his power, it is of Christ
 - He preached it because He had been acted upon by the power of Christ
 - If he didn't preach it, he'd be consumed by it: Jer 20:7-9; Acts 26:19-20
 - **As a stewardship given to him by Christ** – v17
 - Willingly: Paul didn't take the ministry by his own choice
 - Unwillingly: Paul was entrusted with a stewardship in the Gospel he will give an account of to Christ
 - **His greatest joy was found in making Christ known to others and building up those that believe** – v18
 - The reward for his unpaid service? The giver's joy – Acts 20:35
- Application: We are prone to become "right" focused when we forget the gracious privilege Christ has given us to serve Him. Never make the task the focus, instead keep in your heart and mind that we are privileged to have any part in His work.