

Bible Study November 8, 2023

I Corinthians 8 - 11:1 Food Offered to Idols

Pagan temples offered parts of animals in sacrifice to the gods. These same temples often functioned as butcher shops and banquet halls. Often the meat from these sacrificial animals was sold in the marketplace. Paul exhorts believers to not eat meat from sacrifices, not to eat in the temple banquet halls, and not to eat meat from the market, or even to abstain from eating meat, if any of these causes a weaker brother to stumble.

“All of us possess knowledge” is actually a quote used by people in Corinth, implying they know the animals sacrificed to the gods are not created by those same gods. The idols have no real existence, and the only true existence is from God. For the Christian, there is only one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Spirit.

The people of Corinth worshiped the gods because they feared what the gods might do if they did not worship them. This was a problem for the new believers. This was similar to what happened to ancient Israel when they entered the promised land. They worshipped the Baals and the Asherah's as did their Canaanite neighbors, out of fear they would not have good crops or flocks.

Paul warns the Corinthian believers to not be “stumbling blocks” to those weak in their faith. He warns them not to eat in the pagan temple banquet halls, as this would cause the weaker members to stumble.

I Cor 9: 1-27 Paul offers his own willingness to give up his rights for the church as an example that those with superior “knowledge” should follow:

1. As one free in Christ, an apostle, one who saw Christ, as one with the seal of the Lord through his ministry, he surrenders his right to receive material support, to take a wife, all for the sake of the Gospel.
2. As one free in Christ, he still followed Jewish customs to not offend the Jews, he became as one under the law.
3. As one free in Christ, he followed the ethical teachings of the Gospel, and the law of Christ; to the weak, he became weak.

Like an athlete, Paul has a single-minded goal: to bring as many people as possible, from whatever station in life, to faith in the Gospel.

I Cor. 10-11:1 next week