

Wednesday

Not All Things Build Up

Today's Scripture 1 Corinthians 10

1 Corinthians 8–10 form one discussion on matters of religious liberties (matters about which God has not spoken, therefore we are at liberty to choose our own course of action). The main issue he addresses has to do with eating meats offered to idols.

Paul begins chapter 10 by referencing the example of the Israelites during the wilderness wandering. He emphasizes that these Old Testament references are examples for us (10:6, 11). They prove that even the mighty can fall (10:12), and remind us that God provides us ways to escape spiritually dangerous situations (10:13).

Those were needed reminders in light of Paul's earlier warning: "Knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up" (8:1). Just as the Jews lost their focus, so Christians could lose their focus on what really matters. Twice in this chapter Paul specifically warns them of idolatry (10:7, 14). While it was true that idols were fake, and eating meats that had been offered to them was not anything (10:19), some Christians could become arrogant in their knowledge, causing them to let down their guard and slip into idolatry.

What does all of this mean for the church today? Paul's final charges in the last 10 verses of the chapter summarize the issue of eating meats offered to idols. They also provide five principles we should remember today.

[1] Seek to build up the church (10:23–24). [2] Don't worry about whether someone's conscience is bothered by a matter of Christian liberty (10:25–27). [3] However, if they bring up the issue, then refrain from that activity for their sakes (10:28–30). [4] Never intentionally offend another Christian (10:31–33). [5] Ultimately, this is about helping our brothers and sisters in Christ to go to heaven (10:33–11:1).

Today, I will...carefully consider whether my actions build up the church or tear it down. I will be intentional about encouraging and strengthening God's people.