

I. Paul's own great authority and privilege. Verses 1-14

- a. His authority. Vs. 1,2.
 - i. He had seen the Lord, in glory, not just in the humiliation of his flesh.
 - ii. He had established the church at Corinth—proof of his apostleship. Not just to get a following, but also sound doctrine.
- b. His great privilege: vs. 3-14.
 - i. He had the right to eat and to drink. He had a right to receive a salary from the church and to be fed by the church.
 - ii. He had a right to have a wife and family to be maintained by the church. A sister, a wife of a pastor is a sister to the saints, and to the minister: Paul gives great honor to the wives of ministers.
 - iii. Paul could have lived married at church expense just as the other apostles, and John and James at Jerusalem, and Peter. These all lived at the expense of the church. Barnabas and Paul were the exception—providing their own living—but they had a right to a living from the church. This does not mean that the minister is the hired servant of the church, but it does show that the minister has a right to his living from the church, even if he chooses not to exercise that right, as Paul did.
 - iv. Three figures from the natural order: Who goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and doesn't eat of it; who tends a flock and does not live of the flock.
 - v. If I have sown spiritual things; is it improper for me to reap material things. If I have fed you the word of God; isn't it right for me to have bread to eat from you? There is a value system at work here. Will you say that meat and drink are less important than spiritual things? Than the salvation of the soul?
 - vi. Not only human reasoning, but also the law of God: You shall not muzzle the ox....Was this written because God has great care for oxen? Why use this figure? Because Paul would argue from the lesser to the greater. Men are more important than oxen. Men should eat the beef; men should not be sacrificed to the oxen. [Sideline: refutes PETA. “Got beer?”]
 - vii. Old Testament ministers lived of the altar; so it is a right for NT ministers.

II. The application:

- a. Paul does not so write in order to get these things for himself. Vs.15. Paul would not allow them to despise his sacrifice and labor. To turn his glory to shame.
 - i. Of himself he has nothing in which to glory—a necessity was laid upon him. He must preach—he is not a hireling of the church—they did not lay the necessity upon him. 15-17
 - ii. He speaks here of the nature of the call to the ministry: there is a necessity laid upon those ordained of God—such a man cannot be this or that—he must preach, and if he preaches, he has a right to be paid. If he doesn't preach, then he has no right. It is the necessity of preaching that is the nature of the ministry. No one called by God has a right not to preach; he may not choose to be paid of the ministry, but he has not right not to preach.
- b. Why didn't Paul live of the ministry: because he desired to be free from all men. Vs. 18,19. This he did, not because he was lawless and did not want to be under bondage—in reality, he willingly made himself the servant of all men. This was his reward—that illustrated his Gospel, which is freely given to all men. He freely gave up his right to pay, in order to serve them without charge.
- c. Paul became the servant of all men: vs. 19-23
 - i. He became a Jew to the Jew, in order to show that Jewishness was not the issue. He would keep the ceremonies, as long as it opened the door to the Jew and the ceremonies did not become an issue.

- ii. He became of Gentile: dispensed with the ceremonies. [Of course, not all at the same time, which is an absurdity—but as time and place dictated. This was no contradiction—the consistency in Paul, was to do all that was required to gain a hearing for the Gospel.] Paul does not mean he would live lawlessly—but would live without ceremonies.
- iii. It was the gospel, not his ease or contentment or privileges—the gospel was the great concern—there was a great cause to be gained, and he would make every sacrifice, endure every trial, do what was necessary to get a hearing for the Gospel.
- d. The discipline and self-control that was required of Paul, so that nothing would keep him from realizing his goal. How many fail here. How many fail of success in any endeavor, because they are not disciplined to the cause.
 - i. Success or failure often is the result, not of one big choice, but of thousands of little ones. A person may fail a math course in school, not by deciding to fail, but by making many small decisions, so that mastery is not achieved. So it is also in Christian labor and work.
 - ii. Anyone who succeeds in life must master the body, the flesh—if his chief goal is to gain gratification for the body, he will not succeed in anything.
 - iii. It is the gospel for which we strive—do not allow yourself to be shifted from the goal. Keep your eye on the goal, and that is the glory of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.
 - 1. We do not serve men, except in terms of our service for Christ.
 - 2. We do not serve wealth, except in terms of our service for Christ.
 - 3. We do not serve pleasure, except as we rejoice in our service to Christ.
 - 4. We do not serve power, except as we use proper authority in our service for Christ.
 - iv. We do not serve uncertainly—as beating the air—first one direction and then another. There is a boxing illustration here. The purpose is to strike the opponent, not the air? Paul was not a shadow boxer when it came to the Gospel—his goal was to smite the enemy. No empty punches here. What does your service to Christ amount to? Are you going to beat the air. You will if you don't have a clear idea of your commitment and your purpose. You will be all over the place.
 - v. The body is put on the line: if you go after the opponent, he will try to hit you back. There is certain safety in shadowboxing.
 - vi. He did not serve his body; his body was subjected to the goal: serving Christ. There is no self-indulgence here.
 - 1. Physical self-indulgence Will I be at ease? Or??
 - 2. Emotional self-indulgence. Will I feel good
 - 3. Spiritual self-indulgence. How will I profit to be a better person?
 - vii. Castaway: reprobate; same word used in Rom. 1:28 “reprobate mind.” Not approved of God. Self-indulgence is not approved of God. Shall you be approved of God because you indulge yourself?

Summary: The problem at Corinth was this: they indulged themselves. What they praised as Romans and Greeks they fell way short of in actuality. They were not a disciplined and orderly body, but rather they pleased themselves.

- a. In doctrine and wisdom; that's why they cringed at the preaching of the cross. They wanted their ears tickled?
- b. That's why there were divisions among them, and they exalted some teacher who pleased them, and despised others, who did not please them.
- c. That's why there were ashamed of Paul and his persecutions—they were embarrassed for him.
- d. That's why they tolerated abominable immorality—they indulged themselves.

- e. That's why they were litigious and quarrelsome, rushing off to court to gain an advantage over each other.
- f. This is the reason that fornication was prevalent among them—they were self-indulgent, not knowing what the function of the body is.
- g. This is the reason they had questions about human relations—they did not realize that they were called to be servants of each other—the master is not to lord it over the slave; the slave is not to revolt in terms of some lawless freedom. The Christian wife is to serve her unbelieving husband; the Christian husband the unbelieving wife. Stay at your post, and do your job!

How does this apply to you and me:

- a. Husbands, wives—you do not live to please yourself—you are to serve one another.
- b. Church members: not to please yourself. Why should you be faithful in church—not to please yourself. To enhance the church, to serve one another. To be in your place.
- c. Financial support: to build the church—to see that the true worship of God is erected in this place. To put the church on firm, solid, foundation. I say this not for my benefit, but for the benefit of the one that follows me.
- d. Citizen of this great country. Not to please yourself.