

Hello. /We will begin our 7<sup>th</sup> lecture on 1 Corinthians. /In our last lecture, we studied up to 7:28. /Paul is answering the questions asked by the believers in Corinth.

/He is teaching them about marriage and about celibacy and divorce. /Today we will start at 7:29. /We can divide it into three sections. /Verses 29-35. Whoever has a wife should live as if he does not have a wife. /Verses 36-38. Teachings concerning unmarried daughters. /Verses 39-40. Teachings concerning widows.

/Verses 29-31. Let us read. /This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

/Paul says, “This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short.” /This means there is not much time left. / “Appointed time” is “kairos” in Greek. /This refers to the time of the Lord’s return.

/Paul is saying that the time to work for the Lord has grown very short, that the end of the world is coming. /That is why he emphasizes Christ’s return. /This word is not only for the believers of the early church, but it is a word of great encouragement and comfort for us today.

/Because we do not have a lot of time, we must not be carried away by the things of the world, but we must walk properly in our walk of faith. /The verse says that those who have wives should live as though they have none. /This does not mean they shouldn’t do their duties. Rather, the wife must obey her husband and the husband must love his wife.

/But there are times when a husband and wife are bound to each other so they cannot properly live their lives of faith. /Rather than being bound or having our hearts stolen, we must go beyond the things of the world to walk in faith.

/Verse 31 says, “For the present form of this world is passing away.” /In other words, everything in this world is temporary and is passing away. /On the other hand, God’s kingdom is eternal. /It is also emphasizing the end of days, which is the impending return of Jesus Christ.

/This world will pass, all our desires will pass, and everything will pass. /Remember this. /1 John 2:16-17 say, / “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

/Also, all of the world’s glory is like the flower of grass, and all flesh is like grass. /The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. /1 Peter 1:24,25.

/Everything that man has achieved and all of man's value will crumble to nothing when Jesus returns. /Therefore we believers must not cling to the things of the world. /We need to prepare for the Lord's second coming.

/From verse 32, we learn about the attitudes of faith of the married and unmarried. /Verses 32-35. /I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

/The main point of these verses is that someone who is unmarried can serve the Lord with all his heart, but because the married person has to tend to their spouse, this person will be negligent in his duties of faith.

/Verse 32 says, "I want you to be free from anxieties." If we have anxieties of this world, then it means our faith has left us. /Normally, don't men who are married make an effort to please their wives? /Also, because a woman who is married tries to please her husband, her heart is divided and she has anxieties.

/It is easy for an unmarried person to keep their body and mind holy to be offered completely for the Lord. /In that sense, Paul is encouraging celibacy.

/But if someone who is married does their duties in marriage and is not hindered by it, as it says, "Let those who have wives live as though they had none," then this person may walk with God like Enoch did and be completely devoted in doing God's work.

/Paul encouraged celibacy, but he did not force it upon them as a command. /He was encouraging it. Only those who are able to receive it will receive it. The reason is they must be born with it in order for them to be celibate.

/Matthew 19:11,12 say, "But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

/Verse 35 says, "But to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord." /To make sure our hearts are undivided, we must live simply and purely in our lives of faith.

/Verses 36-38 are teachings concerning unmarried daughters. /Paul says these words of admonishment to the parents of unmarried daughters, daughters who are at the optimal

age for marriage. /Paul says that it is good for their unmarried daughters to get married, but it is also good for them to stay unmarried if they wish.

/However, the final decision about marriage is left to the person. /Thus the parents' will to send or not send their daughter into marriage is important, but it is more important that the daughter herself makes the decision.

/There are harmful effects of parents keeping their daughters unmarried. /For example, the daughter may be tempted by others and fall into sin. /Also, they need to consider what will happen to their daughter when she grows old. /In that sense, it is good for them to send her into marriage. /If the parents wish for their daughter to remain unmarried, but the daughter wishes to get married, the parents must let her get married.

/Verse 37. /But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

/Paul is saying that it is better for parents to be in agreement with their daughter and not give their daughter away in marriage. /Therefore it is good for the daughter to be given in marriage as is the Lord's will, but it is better to not give a daughter in marriage if the daughter does not have to get married. /It may be more helpful for that daughter to stay single and live in faith, for she will be able to do more of the Lord's work.

/Verses 39-40. Teachings concerning widows.

/Verse 39 says, "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord."

/What does it mean when it says, "Only in the Lord." /First, it means doing things in faith. /Second, it means getting married to a believer. /Third, it means following God's guidance.

/The widow must act according to the truth and her spiritual conscience that she has come to understand. /If she compromises the truth and her conscience that she has come to understand and gets married to a nonbeliever or a cult member, she is betraying her faith.

/Verse 40. /Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

/In verse 39, Paul permits the widow to get married again, /but here in verse 40, he encourages the widow to remain unmarried. /He says, "She is happier if she remains as she is."

/Because a widow is not bound to anything, she is able to give her heart completely for the work of the Lord. /Because she is able to completely devote her time, heart, and body, she will be more blessed by God.

/But in the last part, it says, “And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.” /Paul believed that although God did not directly command him to stay unmarried, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to do so.

/The “Spirit of God” is the Holy Spirit. /Paul believes that his remaining unmarried happened because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that it is God’s will. /Also, when Paul encourages others, he is doing so under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

/We will continue with 1 Corinthians 8. /The title of chapter 8 is “Food offered to idols.” /Chapter 8 is an introduction to food offered to idols. /It is composed of four main points.

/First, verses 1-3. Knowledge, love, and building up. /Second, verses 4-6. Knowledge about idols. /Third, verses 7-10. Eating food offered to idols defiles the conscience. /Fourth, verses 11-13. Do not stumble your weak brother.

/Overall, chapter 8 is about the superiority of love over knowledge. /True freedom for the Christian is not found in a narrow-minded mentality of only seeking one’s personal gain. /The word tells us that we need to adopt the principle of building up our brothers.

/First, knowledge, love, and building up.

/Verse 1. Let us read. /Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.

/During this time, people all over the world, not only those in Corinth, gave offerings to idols. /However, the people took the food offered to idols and shared it with their relatives and friends, sometimes selling the food in the marketplace.

/Thus Paul is talking about believers eating the food offered to idols. /The churches at the time were knowledgeable about idols. /But if they only speak based on their knowledge but lack love and building up, they become proud.

/The reason is the knowledge does not help others. /Verses 9-12 tell us that the believer, for the conscience of others, must not eat food offered to idols. /1 Corinthians 10:18 says that whoever eats food offered to idols are “participants in the altar.”

/Believers, remember this. The Council of Jerusalem of the early church came to certain decisions. /One of the four prohibitions says that they are not to eat food offered to idols.

/Verse 2. /If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

/If someone imagines that he knows something, he needs to know that what he knows isn’t everything. /In other words, there will be something he does not know. /Idols are made of stone, dirt, or iron by human beings.

/In reality, idols are nothing. /But having knowledge about this isn't everything. /1 Corinthians 10:20 says that the sacrifice of pagans are a sacrifice to demons.

/When pagans serve idols, they are serving the devil through these idols. /The devil is an evil spirit. /Therefore, knowledge without love or building up is useless and it induces pride.

/Verse 3. /But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

/Whoever loves God loves other people. Whoever loves God edifies and builds up. /Therefore we must not use our knowledge on idols to make our brothers stumble.

/Verses 4-6, knowledge about idols.

/Verses 4-5. /Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—

/ “We know that “an idol” has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”” /This is right. /Idols have no real existence, but pagans, by serving these idols, serve demons.

/Demons are existing evil spirits, pawns of the devil. /Pagans worship the devil, and they make many gods and lords and serve them. /But we believers serve God alone.

/This does not mean demons do not exist. It means that we only serve God alone. /The devil is another name for Satan. /Satan has many servants, which are demons and evil spirits.

/However, there is no God but our God, the God who saves us and who is our life. /There exist many demons, but to us believers, they are nothing. /God alone is our King and he is our Lord.

/He is the only one who rules over us. /Also, all things were created by Jesus Christ, and we exist because of him. /Thus we cannot tolerate any other god apart from God.

/The believer must defeat the devil and do away with all idols. /Verse 7 tells us that our conscience is defiled when we knowingly eat food offered to idols. /As it is says in verses 4-6, idols have no real existence. We must serve God and no one else and be governed by him alone.

/It is okay for someone to unknowingly eat food offered to an idol. /But someone who knows that the food was offered to idols and eats it without a guilty conscience has their conscience weakened and defiled.

/What does the conscience do? /The conscience is a person's reason. /It determines what is right and wrong. /The conscience tells us to do what is right and to not do what is wrong through intuition. /The conscience is an organ used by our souls.

/Therefore if our conscience becomes weak and defiled, we cannot properly live in faith. /Today's Christians have several idols. /First, anything we love more than we love God is an idol.

/Second, Colossians 3:5 says that "covetousness" is idolatry. /Third, anything that is governed more than God is an idol. /Fourth, 1 Samuel 15:23 says that stubbornness is an idol. /Loving one's self more than God makes the person the idol.

/Whatever we do according to our stubbornness and not according to the will of God makes our stubbornness our idol. /If we believers abandon the will of God and profit from chasing these idols, the profit becomes an offering to idols. /If we go against God's word and earn a profit, it becomes an offering to idols. /We must not serve idols or eat food offered to idols.

/Verses 8-9. /Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

/ "Food" here does not refer to food offered to idols. /No food can commend us to God. /In other words, food does not qualify us to stand before God.

/Eating food will not bring us before God, nor will not eating food bring us before God. /There is a reason why Paul speaks in this manner. He wants us to know that we must not eat food offered to idols and have our conscience weakened and defiled.

/Verse 8 is about the logic behind all food. It does not say that we can eat food offered to idols.

/Verse 9. /But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

/This "right of yours" refers to freedom from the law, the devil, and from the restriction of idols. /We believers believe in Jesus, and our spirit is free in Christ. /Therefore, we must, with the power of life, defeat the devil and do away with idols.

/Furthermore, we need to continue doing the works of saving people. /If a believer who has this freedom in faith eats food offered to idols, it may become a stumbling block to weak believers. /No one must do anything that harms those who are weak in faith.

/Verse 10. /For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?

/If we have the knowledge that idols have no real existence yet sit in an idol's temple eating food offered to the idol, a brother who is weak in faith may find the courage to eat food offered to idols. /In the city of Corinth, there were many temples for pagan idols.

/If a believer sits there and eats food offered to idols, a brother who is weak in faith will have his conscience defiled. /For this reason, it becomes a sin against Christ. /Verse 12 speaks of this.

/That is why the knowledge of "idols have no real existence" means not knowing everything that we ought to know.

/We will continue with our fourth point. "Do not stumble your weak brother."  
/Verses 11-12. /And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

/If those who are strong in faith eat food offered to idols while they have the knowledge of "idols have no real existence," a brother weak in faith may see that and hesitantly eat the food as well.

/That is how a weak person's conscience is defiled and the person himself destroyed.  
/However, Christ died for this weak brother. /If we sin against our brothers, then we sin against Christ.

/That is why Paul, in conclusion, makes this confession of faith in verse 13. /"Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."

/This "meat" is meat offered to idols. /Paul says he will never eat meat if it causes a brother to stumble. /Here, we observe Paul's high level of faith.

/Rather than having knowledge about idols, it is better to act in love. We need to focus on our brothers' gain and not our own.

/In conclusion, both the strong and the weak must not eat food offered to idols. /Some people argue, based on 1 Timothy 4:1-5, that we can eat food offered to idols if we pray and eat.

/However, the food in this passage is not food offered to idols. /I hope that you too study the Bible carefully. /1 Timothy 4:1-4 criticizes ascetics.

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/Take a look at Romans 14:1-3. /Romans 14 says that we can eat a certain type of food, or we may not. This is not about food offered to idols.

/This passage lifts the ban on food that was forbidden in the Old Testament times.  
/Because Jesus Christ fulfilled the ritualistic law of the Old Testament, we Christians today do not have to keep the ritualistic law.

/Leviticus 11 forbids people from eating animals that are not cloven-footed, animals that do not chew cud, or fish that do not have fins or scales. Now in the New Testament times, these laws do not have to be kept.

/In conclusion, 1 Corinthians 8 teaches us that love is greater than knowledge. /A Christian who is truly free must not seek only his personal gains. /Therefore we must build up our brothers.

/This concludes the 7<sup>th</sup> lecture on 1 and 2 Corinthians. /Thank you.