

Monday, 30 October 2017 1 Corinthians 10:23-28

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—

This is a test---which part of Romans 14:13-23 applies in this situation. Has my host set a well prepared and tasty meal before me or is he challenging the reality of my faith? If the former, enjoy. If the latter uses the opening to refuse to violate your conscience graciously and as a demonstration of the depth of your faith, it is not a time for a "holier than thou" performance.

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 1 Corinthians 11:17-19

But in the following instructions, I do not commend you, because when you come together, it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

If Paul was able to believe that contentious factions within a congregation indicated varying degrees of belief, what must our 30,000+ denominations, many of which will not speak to each other, indicate to the secular culture. Paul read the situation in Corinth correctly; there were some whose faith was genuine. The world does not understand nor even care about our turf wars over minor and arcane points of doctrine.

Wednesday, 1 November 2017 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

“Love believes all things.” Yah, sure; listen to some of the whoppers I've heard (and told) over the years and then tell the

person that I still love them or hear it from others. But I think this passage should be summed up as “Love transcends all disappointments or perhaps love continues in spite of lack of reciprocity.” Think of the passage in John 21:15-17 where the Lord reassured Peter that He loved him; after Peter's denial of Him a few days earlier.

Thursday, 2 November 2017 1 Corinthians 14:21-25

In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

How often do we use Christianese, code words whose meaning is apparent only to believers? I have attended worship services in the Netherlands, conducted in the language of the country, Nederlands. Unintelligible to me. I did not suspect that my cousins were out of their minds, but it is the closest example to help me understand this passage. My relatives understood; they were able to enter into the worship, but I, the non-Dutch speaker, was lost for much of the service. I was cast in the role of the non-believer.

Friday, 3 November 2017 1 Corinthians 14:21-25

In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

My cousins were the believers that morning, understanding the prophetic Word as it was given; entering into the joy of the Lord. Most of them were unable to translate the service into

English, some because they were not English speakers and some because they did not know the English equivalents for the Nederlands Christianese.

My joy came from knowing that I was in the Kerk (church) where my grandfather worshiped as a youth and among relatives who were still following the faith given once for all (Jude 3)

Saturday, 4 November 2017 1 Corinthians 14:21-25

In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

So, I must speak in the tongue of the unbeliever if he is going to be led into the Kingdom of God. I must present his need for a Savior in terms and concepts that are comprehensible to him. No Nederlands. No Christianese. The lingua franca, the patois of the streets. The onus is on me to speak in a way that he can see his need and Jesus Christ's plan of salvation as a unified whole.

I am not called to convince him that I am a Biblical scholar and apologist par excellence, but that I have been forgiven in a way that is also open to him. This is the proper application of tongues and prophecy in this passage.

Lord's Day, 5 November 2017 Psalm 119:25

My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word!

Doesn't it cling! A piece of cellophane clinging to my finger is nothing. My soul clings to the sin that is in me and refuses to let go. Only the transforming power of Your Name is sufficient to break that grip and give me life.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



October 30-November 5, 2017

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Philemon 25

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Once again, we find Paul praying for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with the recipient of his letter. I think, without checking, that it is always used as his closing prayer for individuals and congregation that he loved very intensely.

Shouldn't that be our closing prayer when we correspond among ourselves, whether by email or s-mail or by phone or when we speak face to face? Shouldn't that also be true of all our communication with all other saints? Amen

Creational Theology hint for the week—Where are you seeing the Hand of the LORD, God, the Almighty at work in creation? We, like those Celtic Christians of over 1000 years ago, need to be vigilant in searching for Him in every aspect of our lives.

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