

Take-Aways for Small Group Leaders to Consider

Our current culture may not consider the issue of consuming “unclean meat” to be an item of importance, so what can we take away from this passage?

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus brought a radical shift in how one pursues God. Jesus fulfilled the Law by dying on our behalf, because we could not fulfill the Law. Galatians 2.15-16 states, “We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the Law, because by observing the Law, no one will be justified.”

It is tempting to want to “earn” our own justification; after all, aren’t we “good enough?”

But Christ shows us a different way: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” Galatians 3.13-14

More Supporting Scriptures:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil. 2 3-5

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the Law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law. Romans 13.8b-10

We love because He first loved us. 1 Jn. 4.19

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean’, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ... But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean...” Matt 15.11,18-20

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph. 2.8-9

Things to Ponder:

How different would our world look if everyone obeyed the 10 Commandments? Are the 10 Commandments self-focused or others-focused?

Is it better to do right or be right? What’s the difference?

Put Paul’s words in your own words: “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.” Gal. 2.21

SUMMARY AND REVIEW

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss this week's sermon, *Living for Other's in a Self-Centered World*, 1 Cor 10:23-11:1

INTRO TO THE TEXT:

One purpose of Paul's letter to the Corinthians was to instruct and restore the church in its area of weakness by correcting erroneous practices and false teachings. In this passage Paul addresses freedom for the believer that, "everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial or constructive." There was concern among the Corinthians about breaking Jewish laws by eating unclean meat. For Paul, the issue is not the consumption of unclean meat itself; rather his concern is the possibility of causing others to stumble by eating unclean meat. "Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God." (v. 10:32)

READ 1 Cor. 10:23 – 11:1

ANALYZE THE TEXT

1. Summarize the main point of this passage.
2. What do you learn about God's character through these verses, specifically, what is important to God and what is not important to God?
3. Read 1 Cor. 10:24, 32 and 33. What do these verses have in common?
4. Now read 1 Cor. 10:31. One of the themes in 1 Corinthians is the all-inclusive principle that God should be glorified in everything that is done. If you do something that causes another to stumble, can that act bring glory to God?
5. Read Romans 14:13-18. Now reread 1 Cor. 10:25-30. Why does Paul say it's OK to eat unclean meat?

A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER:

It is important to consider the cultural context during the time in which Paul wrote this letter. Before the

birth and death of Christ, being a devout follower of God through Judaism meant following the letter of the law to a "T". But Jesus came to fulfill the law, once and for all. Matthew 5:17 says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Through Jesus' death on the cross, Paul could thank God for and freely consume meat that had been sacrificed to idols (verses 25, 26 and 30) for the idol is nothing and the meat is a part of God's created world. Romans 14:14 states, "As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself." But this was a new and radical way of thinking for those brought up in Jewish traditions.

However, Paul also notes that if eating unclean meat causes another to stumble or fall, then it is a sin to eat that unclean meat. In this case, obeying the law is for the sake of others. But before Christ entered the picture, refraining from the consumption of unclean meat was for the sake of oneself, to fulfill the Law through self-justification.

APPLY

1. Do you ever struggle with wanting to earn the Lord's favor?
2. Do you ever find yourself justifying your actions/behavior? And, how often do you judge others' actions and behavior?
3. How hard is it for you to "seek the good of others," rather than yourself? (v. 24)
4. Are there any shifts you can make in your thinking/habits/ways to allow you to live more freely in Christ like Paul?
5. How do you think you bring "glory to God" in your life? (v. 31) Do you enjoy bringing glory to God or is it a struggle? (Or both)?

MEMORIZE

1 Cor. 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.