

2020-2021 Bible Study

#19

2/9/21

Review of our Last Class

- Last week, we began with a discussion of what we would share with someone seeking information about the Catholic Church, and what were the early sources used by the Apostles that would be useful for this discussion
- We then began our review of Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians, which he wrote from Ephesus in response to the letter delivered to him from Chloe concerning problems in the Corinthian church
- Problems centered around the Corinthian culture and "Christian dualism" (good vs bad gods)

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- Divisions within the Corinthian church were based on who performed their baptism
- Paul's principle mission was spreading the gospel (not baptism)
- His movement from simple language to philosophical and rhetoric language to counter attacks on his educational credentials (especially when dealing with the death and resurrection of Jesus)
- His reminder of the sacredness of the body as the temple of God
- Paul's desire to visit them to address these issues

1st Corinthians 6

1st Corinthians 6

- **1st Corinthians 6:12** *“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything”*
 - In this section, we hear about where the heretical problems were manifested within the *Corinthian* church which dealt with some members going to temple prostitutes, and eating food offered to idols
 - The quotations (imposed by the translators) indicate that the letter was written to Paul
 - This means that there was a letter written to Paul from the Church in *Corinth* that was delivered to Paul by *Chloe*

1st Corinthians 6 (Cont)

- *Chloe's* letter indicated that some members were doing certain things that were lawful for them, (as they were not Jews under the Law), but that were not helpful for the church as a whole
- So Paul asked in his reply what they meant by “all things were lawful”
- Because they were not Jews under the law, they were not prohibited from eating meat offered to idols
- Paul reminded them that although all things may be lawful for them, some of these were not helpful

1st Corinthians 6 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 6:13-14** “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food - ... And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power”
 - Father said that this phrase was most likely in Chloe’s letter
 - It appears that they believed that they could eat meat offered to idols
 - Paul responded that this was not true because God “in power,” will destroy both (so they should be careful with what they did with their bodies)
 - He then told them that they could not join themselves (their bodies) with prostitutes or eat food offered to idols because what they did with their bodies meant something

1st Corinthians 6 (Cont)

- Many of the *Corinthians* believed that what one did with his body meant nothing (dualism heresy)
- They believed that your body was to be abandoned at death in order for your spirit to fly off into the clouds
- But, there were those *Corinthians* who knew, based on the gospel from Paul, that their bodies would be raised from the dead
- This meant that what they did with their bodies in life mattered because that same body would someday be raised from the dead

1st Corinthians 7

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 7** contains the most thorough teaching on Christian celibacy in the New Testament
- Father pointed out how important it is for us today to understand the relationship between priestly celibacy and marriage
- Within the Christian tradition, celibacy is the giving up of a good (marriage) for the sake of a higher good
- Father pointed out that The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has a good explanation on priestly celibacy (CCC 1620, 2349*)

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 7:1-4** *“Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman...but the wife does”*
 - Again this quote may have been in *Chloe’s* letter, as this was strange language to be from Paul
 - Father said that this was not about “touching” a woman, but about “sexual relations”
 - Some of what the *Gnostic* dualists believed were not only about rejecting the goodness of the created world, but they chose to be celibate, and not eat meat, or drink wine to weaken the body
 - They saw sexual relations as something that strengthened the flesh, while others saw it as giving into the appetites of the flesh (this included eating meat and drinking wine)
 - For them, all this did was to strengthen their “prison walls” and made it harder to get out of their “prison cells”

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- They wanted their bodies to be as weak as possible so that their spirit could escape and float into the clouds at death
- They worried that if your spirit was trapped by the body, it would be buried into the dirt
- Thus, their goal was to maintain their bodies as weak as possible at the moment of death (thus avoiding anything that would strengthen the body in life)
- As mentioned, Paul had to fight both types of dualism at that time

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- One group was going to cult prostitutes and eating meat offered to idols
- The others were abandoning their wives or refusing to get married
- This was why Paul told them to avoid temptations to immorality, and each man should have his own wife, and they should not avoid conjugal relations (except perhaps for the time of prayer)

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- But, God gave this ability (celibacy) to a certain few to remain unmarried for the sake of the Kingdom and to allow them to give full-time to their missionary work
- Remember, *Peter* and *James* initially remained in *Jerusalem* with their wives and families
- It would have been very difficult for them to take a family along on the missionary journeys

1st Corinthians 7 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 7:8-9** *“To the unmarried and the widows I say it is well for them to remain single as I do. If they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it’s better to marry than to be aflame with passion”*
 - This means that if they had not been given this gift of the grace from God, they should get married
 - Paul goes on to talk about those who are married and why they should remain as they are
 - Further, the unmarried should remain that way unless they did not have the needed graces, in which case they should get married

1st Corinthians 8

1st Corinthians 8

- **1st Corinthians 8:1-4** *“Now concerning the food offered to idols: we know that ‘all of us possess knowledge’...and that ‘there is no God but one’”*
 - Father reminded us to pay attention to the phrases within quotes as they may have come from *Chloe’s* letter
 - Basically, the question being asked was that if an idol had no existence, why could a person not eat the meat offered to *Zeus*?

1st Corinthians 8 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 8:7** *“However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, though being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled”*
 - Paul was saying that not everyone possessed the knowledge that *Zeus* was not a god which would allow them with a clear conscience to eat meat offered to him
 - But the problem, as Paul saw it, was that some of the former pagans, who believed that eating food offered to an idol meant that the idol was a god, might revert to their pagan ways after seeing another member of the church do so
 - Paul said that such actions might defile the conscience of a fellow believer allowing him to slip back into paganism

1st Corinthians 8 (Cont)

- Paul told them they should love their brother more than their bellies
- Father pointed out that this was Paul's first argument against eating food offered to idols
- Father did not present any information concerning **1st Corinthians 9**

1st Corinthians 10

1st Corinthians 10

- **1st Corinthians 10:1-5** *“I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud,...not to desire evil as they did”*
 - Paul said that the Old Testament life of Israel could be seen as a “type,” and a life in the church as an “anti-type”
 - Since the members of the Church in *Corinth* had been baptized into Christ, had received the “Spirit of God” upon themselves, and had eaten and drank the supernatural food, they could see their life parallel to the life of Israel
 - Paul further wanted to talk to them about another event in the life of Israel that related to them

1st Corinthians 10 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 10:6-8** *“Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did.... and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day”*
 - Paul told them that there were all types, images, and warnings for them, not to be “idolaters” (as had happened to Israel)
 - He indicated that the reason why Israel had failed to enter the “Promised Land” even though they had been baptized into Moses, ate and drank the supernatural food (Manna), and had the spirit of God over them was because they still fell into “idolatry”
 - The original group was not saved in the end and all died in the wilderness
 - Paul warned the *Corinthians* that this too could happen to them

1st Corinthians 10 (Cont)

- He reminded them that even though they were baptized into Christ, they could still fall into idolatry by returning to the pagan temples and worship their former pagan gods
- They could lose their salvation and never make it “across the Jordan” with Jesus in the end
- Next, Paul gives them one more example

1st Corinthians 10 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 10:14-17** “Therefore, my beloved, shun the worship of idols. For we all partake of the one bread”
 - Paul was reminding them that if they went into the temple of Zeus and ate the sacrificial meat, they were participating in the worship of Zeus
 - Even though Zeus was not god, he still was a demon, and therefore eating this meat was a very bad idea