

1Corinthians 18-05-27a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday Morning Services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It's great to see everyone here and to, like the lady on TV in California, look through her little magic mirror and see everybody out there in the land on the other side of the screen. Yeah, well, what really dates me is I can't remember who that was.

It was Romper Room? Yes, Romper Room. Yeah. I see Kenny, and Vicki, and Paul, and Danny, and Lori, and Anna, and possibly Denise, and who knows, Elizabeth, if she is awake.

She's still in recovery mode. But anyway, it's great to have all of you here and there, and we're going to continue this morning our study in the book of 1 Corinthians, resuming in chapter 8. And we're going to not only look at chapter 8, but we're going to raise our eyes onto the hills a little bit and see what's coming in the next few chapters, because the portion we're going to look at this morning is key. If you want to understand significant sections of Corinthians, having to do with Bob Thieme had a book called Doubtful Things in Corinth that addressed some of these parts.

You have the Lord's Table discussed, certainly in the traditional view. You have a lot of, even up to and including the spiritual gifts, in chapter 13, and the love chapter in chapter 14. So we have to be heading in the right direction back here at chapter 8 to fit those into their context, their historic context, their theological context.

And so what we're about to look at here, as we turn a corner into what your Bible will label as sensitive to conscience, nothing wrong with that, but there's quite a lot going on. So we're going to embark on a journey here, so to speak, where when you plan travel, you typically look at the destinations you're going to go to and plan your route. And we're going to take a quick look at some of those destinations so that as we travel we'll know where it is we're heading.

Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer and ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our time of worship and study. Father, we are so grateful for the privilege we have to represent ourselves before you. We come confidently knowing that we have been cleansed from our sins, that we have a standing in your presence because of the Lord Jesus Christ and because of our relationship to you through Him.

We thank you for His example. We thank you for His faithfulness and His love and yours that was expressed toward us in securing our salvation, not just in the sacrifice alone, but in the life that He lived as a demonstration and example for us of how to walk by faith and not by sight, of how to live by every word that proceeds from you. We thank you for your Holy Spirit and His presence in encouraging and comforting and bringing to our minds the truths that we learn in times such as this where we formally study.

We thank you for His ministry in interpreting our prayers and bringing our concerns and requests before you. And we thank you that we not only exist in this life, but are preparing to

dwell in your presence in the next. And we pray that as we look at this part of your word this morning that it will be a blessing to each heart, that it will be stimulating and motivating and encouraging as we seek to make the most of the time that is available to us and as we try to be those who reflect the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth, even as we hope to be in His presence and yours in this coming life.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you will remember last time that we reviewed chapter 7, which had these various paradigms of marriage, prospective marriage, marriage in the past because of death and widowhood or losing one's wife, and that this served as one example of an area of application for principles that obviously pertain not only in that area but in many others.

And the primary theme, Paul says, is you should be living your life without worry. You should not have a sinful level of care. I would have you be without care.

And it's sort of a startling thing. We were talking, Patty and Matt and Jeannie and I were talking on the way over this morning about some of the things we've learned in Scripture that are a little bit off the traditional well-worn path of understanding. And this strikes me as another example of that where we typically think, well, it's okay to worry about how to please the Lord.

It's okay to worry about how to be holy in mind and body. And that chapter taught us, no, it isn't. We certainly are occupied with that.

It is a goal, but you cannot worry about your spiritual life. Worry is a sin no matter what it is you're worried about, even a good thing. Worrying about a good thing doesn't make the worry okay.

And so I can think, and you may be able to think of times past where you actually got into a sort of degenerating loop of concern that is almost disabling in terms of what if, what if this, what if that, what if the other. And Paul says this merimnao verb in Greek, m-e-r-i-m-n-a-o, merimnao is the verb, and it has noun derivatives. It is almost always, it's like yeast in the Bible.

We think yeast is a wonderful thing and people exist with it and use it in daily cooking, but in the Bible it is almost always a negative symbol. And merimnao and its derivatives is almost always. There's one or two places you can make a case that maybe it's okay.

Paul says, not only do I have all of these other troubles, but also the daily merimnao for the churches, my daily worry for the churches. But you get the idea that even he is saying, I have to watch out that I don't worry about the churches. But the theme there is centered around how to make application of these principles in the marital area because that was the issue in Corinth.

Engagements and whether to consummate and fulfill those with a marriage or to go their separate ways. Whether to remain with somebody that was not of like mind and not of faith. So we've, I think, covered that fairly well.

There were issues of, and do you remember that in the effort to achieve the goal of not worrying, we had four principles. There is the principle of submission. There is the principle of self-control.

The principle of observing clear commands of Scripture and pursuing peace. And if you need to examine options and figure out which is the better course, I am being pushed toward a decision point. And it's difficult because many of these things, and marriage is a great example, and I think the reason it is used in Scripture for our benefit is that it has so many complexities.

And you're not just on an island and there's one other person and you marry them. There are families. There are in-laws and out-laws.

Sometimes there are people who have a past history and it gets very complex. And so by addressing these things in some detail, Paul shines a light on our path. What is the path that reflects godly submission to godly authority? You don't submit, there's a huge splash in the news these past weeks, and a seminary president lost his job because he made public pronouncement of what he felt Scripture was teaching with regard to divorce and his counseling of abused women who were in deeply unhappy relationships.

Just to give you a quick example, a woman came in and said she was being abused and he said, well, Scripture says you're not to leave, you're to submit. And she went back home and came back a few days later and had two black eyes and she said, I hope you're happy now. And he said, well, I am because your husband came to church for the first time last Sunday.

And that has come back, that and some other things have come back to haunt him. And I think it's a complex area that requires not looking at just one principle. He cited the principle of submission and that was it.

Well, what about self-control or the lack thereof on the part of someone else? What about peace and the lack of it in that household and impossible to achieve? What about the command that says, if you understand it rightly, and this is where digging in a little bit and understanding what faithless means, somebody claiming that they got saved as a child is not the same as somebody who is pistea versus apistea. And so I think it's helpful for us to have a balance and to look at all of the witness of Scripture in situations that have many aspects like this. And again, what have we observed time and time again in Scripture? For every principle of Scripture, there will be other Scriptures that give you principles that balance and inform that one aspect.

You don't pursue peace at the cost of your security, even nationally. Are we willing to just destroy all of our weapons and say, we just want peace, come in and be our dictator and turn us all into commies or whatever. We pursue peace, but there are limits to what we will do for peace.

We are submissive to governmental authority, but there are limits to what I will submit to. Christians did not recant their faith in the Lord Jesus when the government told them to say,

Kurios Kaisar, Caesar is Lord. And they said, no, Christos Kaisar, or Kurios.

Kurios Jesus, Kurios Christos, not Kurios Kaisar. And there were people that died for that. And that's not peaceful, that's not submissive, but we have to look at everything that bears.

And so we had those four examples last time in 1 Corinthians 7. Now he's going to turn to a new topic. Let's read chapter 8 so we kind of see where we're going. Now concerning things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge.

Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him.

Therefore, concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and many lords, yet for us God the Father, notice there is one as all in italics, for us God the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things, and through whom we live. However, there is not in everyone that knowledge.

For some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food does not commit us to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware, lest somehow this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block to those who are weak.

For if anyone sees you who have knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall a weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Then, rather strangely, if you look at the first verse of chapter 9, Paul shifts over into his apostolic office and authority.

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? And then he spends a good portion of the first part of chapter 9, seeming to have just taken a weird left turn. But we're going to see why this makes sense, and we're going to see why we have a return to this subject in chapter 10. If you flip over to the middle of chapter 10, it seems like there is sort of an interruption.

It's like the church age interrupting the age of Israel here, where we go into Paul's apostleship, and then he goes into serving all men and striving for a crown in chapter 9, and then he goes to the Old Testament example of the Israelites leaving Egypt and crossing the sea and eating manna, and telling us all things happened to them for us as examples, in the middle of chapter 10, 10-11. All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. But he's going to return, and you saw

what we read in chapter 8. It's all about idols and the brother that is going to have his weak conscience troubled, if you partake, even though you know that an idol is nothing and the food offered to it is nothing.

He's going to return to that theme in 10-14. So I want to pick up there. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

I speak as to wise men. Judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of the Lord? And we though many, one bread, one body, all partake of the one bread.

Observe Israel after the flesh, are not those who eat the sacrifice partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, verse 20, these things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Then, verse 23 of chapter 10, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

Does this sound a familiar note? All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but the first time he said it, I will not be controlled by any. And so he's returning to that theme.

Let no one seek his own, but each the other's well-being. So, he's going to talk about conscience. In chapter 11, he's going to talk about head coverings.

Then, interestingly, toward the end of chapter 11, beginning of verse 23, actually beginning of verse 17, in giving these instructions, I do not praise you, you come together, not for the better, but for the worse. And now he's going to talk about what's been traditionally understood to be the Lord's table and communion and taking the bread and the cup and how there is an example of this lack of looking out for the brethren in this exercise. Each one takes his own supper ahead of others.

In verse 21, one is hungry and another is drunk. And the admonition in verse 27, not to partake in an unworthy manner because you're guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. So, this is looking ahead to some of the topics that are coming up.

And we'll be looking back here to chapter 8 when we get there. We're laying a foundation for those things and why they are in here now. You would say, well, okay, it's all about sensitivity and love.

Yes, and a lot more. And we're going to see that right now. So, turn back to chapter 8. Of course, after that you've got 12 and 13 and 14, spiritual gifts and that.

But that really does turn something of another corner. So, we're in 1 Corinthians chapter 8. And we begin here with the issue being stated much as it was in chapter 7. Now, concerning things of which you wrote to me, that's the big heading. And then Roman numeral 1 would be, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

And then we had chapter 7 with that whole discussion of application of these principles of submission, self-control, peace, and clear commands of the Lord applied in that arena. Now, Roman numeral 2 under the things of which you wrote me. Now, concerning things offered to idols.

And the subheading here is, we know that we have all knowledge. In the same way that in chapter 7 he sort of quoted them saying, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. That's what you said in your letter.

Well, let me talk about that. Here in chapter 8, concerning things offered to idols, we know that we have all knowledge. That's a quote from the Corinthians letter, I believe.

They're saying, and you remember we've talked about this in the introduction to the book, that Paul had written a previous letter that is not in our canonical scriptures. There's no copy of it extant. But this is obviously a follow-up.

Paul had established the church, done a bunch of teaching, was there nearly two years. He left, heard some things, wrote a letter back. They responded to his letter with the letter that he is quoting here.

And this is his response to, this is Paul's letter number 2 responding to Corinthian letter number 1 that they wrote him. He told them some things in a letter and they wanted further clarification and wanted some answers. And they said, well, I know you said don't do this or you said this.

But here's our objections and we think we have some standing and some say. And who are you to be telling us? And Paul has said this and Peter said that. And so Paul is writing this letter clarifying what he told them both in person and in his first letter.

And responding to specific points that they sent him in writing. So this is point 2, big point 2, in terms of quoting what they said in their letter. And they said, we know that we have all knowledge.

And this is an interesting claim to make because it is a, not a claim to say we know everything. What is it they know? They know that they possess gnosis. We know that we possess gnosis.

Not we know everything we need to know, but we have gnosis. We have this body of knowledge called gnosis. And later on, within a hundred years, there's going to develop a whole movement called the Gnostics.

Who pride themselves on this secret knowledge. And not to pick on anybody, I've got ancestors that were involved in Masonic Lodge and Eastern Star and all the rest of it. And those used to be organizations that were sort of, had a duality.

There was some ritual and some rote and some sort of doctrines that they had. But they were like the Elks and the Moose Lodge and a lot of others. And even the Shriners, the Shrine Hospitals and things like that.

Where they're trying to do community service. And they wanted to better the community by getting together and doing projects. And a lot of people participated in those.

Not so much for the mumbo-jumbo they kind of put up with that. But they wanted to be a part of efforts to help the poor, to improve the infrastructure of the community and so on. So with that caveat, let me say that this idea of secret knowledge.

And I'm kind of in the in group. To the extent that that is the reason somebody joins an organization like that. And to the extent that they take pride in it.

It is a corrupting influence. And it happens even in church. It has happened historically in the type of church that we loosely look like.

Which is your ice churches. The ones that have come out of the Baraka mold. And were influenced primarily by Robert Thame.

And guys that grew up in Baraka or went to Dallas Seminary. Came out and said, I like the way he gets at the truth of scripture. With isagogics and categories and exegesis.

Ice churches they were known. And there were lists of them. I was looking at a list of those churches.

And seeing a friend of mine's church on the list. And wondering if we ought to be on it or not. But I got to looking and the church that had the list is gone.

And the website is gone. And I actually found this list on Wayback Machine. Which is an internet archive.

If you haven't looked at it, it's fascinating. You can see old copies of websites and things. But anyway, I thought here's this list.

And these are the churches where if you want to really dig in with Hebrew and Greek. And ice teaching, here are the guys. And it was almost like an informal denomination.

Where we're all speaking the same language and using Bob's vocabulary and whatnot. It is dangerous. Nothing inherently wrong with that.

But if you read some of the online groups that were in these churches. And got together and

were having discussions online. There was an us and them mentality.

Where, well, you don't know what I know. Because my pastor talks Hebrew. He teaches out of the Greek.

He's verse by verse and word by word. And your church is topical. There was an us and them.

And we're on a little bit higher ground than you. And I've achieved super grace and you haven't. And on and on.

So it's a danger. And Paul is preaching against it here. The Corinthians lead in this section of their response to Paul.

With, we know that we've got the gnosis. And there are going to be four things that they say. And all of them are true.

But they're not right. A thing can be true, but not right. You may be saying, what? I'm going to show you four things here that are true, but they're not right.

The first one is, we have the gnosis. We know that we possess the gnosis. And Paul, we got it from you.

You gave us the gnosis. You taught us when you were here. You wrote us the letter and told us what's what.

Not only did we get it from you, but we got it from Apollos. And we got it from Peter. And we've got the traditional sayings of the Lord Jesus.

There are early copies of the gospels circulating. And we've got the gnosis from Jesus' own mouth. We've got the knowledge.

And what is it that we know? Skip the last half of verse one and verse two and verse three and get back to the topic in verse four just for a moment. What is it we know? What is a part of this gnosis? Look at the middle of verse four. We know that an idol is nothing in the world and there is no other God but one.

That's the specific piece of gnosis that they claim to possess. Okay? True? Yes. But is it right? Truth is an objective conformity to reality and fact.

Rightness is a moral judgment. What do you do with your truth? How do you apply, implement, and live in the light of your truth? Now concerning things offered to idols, verse one, we know that we all have gnosis. We all know an idol is nothing, right? And there's no other God but one.

We know that. That's part of what we possess. But Paul says, and this is Paul responding, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

I'm going to encourage you to write this down if you're taking notes, and I want you to write it

in a specific way. And even if you're not taking notes, get a napkin or a piece of paper or something and just write this much down because it's important to see. It's very clear in Greek.

It is obscure for two reasons. Partly it's obscured in our English because of the way we format our text, but it's also obscure because there is a big textual problem in this verse. And out of nowhere, as if by magic, we were talking about, Patty said, oh, I really need to clean your windshield.

And I said, you know, every time I look at that windshield, I think about how I can see. I don't even notice. It's bug splattered.

I took a long trip in the truck with a trailer and never cleaned the windshield much. And when she pointed it out, I shifted my focus to the windshield. I thought, wow, that thing really looks terrible.

It's embarrassing. You know, you've got people riding in your truck, and your windshield looks like it was, you know, I drove through a rock concert of bugs somewhere. But I was focusing on the road, and I had no difficulty.

I was unaware of anything obscuring my vision. I can see clearly despite all of these bugs because your brain just fills in from context what might be behind some particular contents of some bug's exoskeleton that has now squirted all over a particular spot. But there is a big textual problem here, and normally the New King James is pretty good about telling you that there's a variant.

But this variant is not widespread, and the ones that they say are quote-unquote minor, they don't cite. But I believe in my deepest heart of hearts that this is one case where P46 and Clement preserve Paul's original letter, and everything after that is modified and amended and edited and changed. I'm going to read you the real reading, and you'll see why it's the real reading.

You'll instinctively recognize it as, oh, sure, that's what Paul said. This is word-for-word translated from P46 and a quotation by Clement of Rome of this verse. So on the first line, write, knowledge puffs up.

And that's perfectly fine. Knowledge puffs up. On the second line, write the word but.

You can even indent it a little bit, or not. But knowledge puffs up, but. This is the Greek post-positive-adversative conjunction *da*, D-E.

Delta, epsilon. *Da*. Sometimes translated now, but it's adversative in a use like this.

Knowledge puffs up, but. Now your third line. Love builds up.

Knowledge puffs up, but. Love builds up. By the side of that third line, put 1 Corinthians 13, 4. What is the love chapter? 13.

So you would expect that Paul is talking about love in 13, 4. What does he say in 13, 4? Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not parade itself.

Love is not puffed up. Knowledge puffs up. Love is not puffed up.

Love builds up. And by the way, this is a good argument for trying to be as honest as you can when you are encouraging someone in love. You want to build someone up as you're encouraging them.

You do not want to puff up. Loving somebody doesn't mean that you pay them absurdly untrue compliments. Be realistic.

Give them something that is factual and that builds up. You see this. I see the occasional piece of entertainment.

And there's some part of the plot where everybody's in trouble, and they're trapped, and the water is rising. And somebody absurdly says, It's going to be okay. Or somebody has been blown in half by a shotgun, but the top part of them is still alive.

And the person is holding their hand saying, It's going to be okay. You're going to be fine. The ambulance will be here any minute.

When everybody knows they're on their way out. Well, love doesn't puff up. And love is not puffed up.

There's no false enlargement involved here. Love builds up. There are plenty of true and helpful and encouraging things you can say without getting into the puffing up category.

So, right now you've got three lines. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. And you've got 13-4 next to that, because Paul is going to come back to that as a contrast.

Now, we get to the important part in verse 2. This is where we've got our textual variant. Line one. This will be your fourth line of your note here.

If anyone thinks he has arrived at knowledge. Arrived at knowledge is a three-word translation of a perfect tense word. It is from Norizo.

Norizo is the verb to know. And the perfect tense of this is eggnocanai. Eggnocanai.

It's E-G-N-O-K-E-N-A-I. Eggnocanai. That's in P46 in Clement.

It is not in the text that was translated into your Bible. That perfect, and it's important. If anyone thinks he has arrived at knowledge, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

And that part's okay. So that would be your fifth line. He knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

Verse 3 has the other half of our textual problem. But. And I would put that on its own line, just like we did up above.

Now, your text says, If anyone loves God, this one is known by him. The words God and by him are not in P46 in Clement. And they're also not in some of the other texts that do undergird the New King James and other translations.

Cross out God, cross out by him. All that next line says is, If anyone loves, and then your final line, this one truly knows. Or this one has come to know.

This is another perfect. This is a perfect middle from Norizo. It's agnostai.

Not agnostai, but agnostai. E-G-N-O-S-T-A-I. Look at the perfect parallel between, and that's a pun for Dan.

For Dan Godbold, he'll love that. But it's a perfect parallel because those are two perfects that end those lines. There is agnokainai and agnostai.

They're both perfect. One is a perfect active, and this other is a perfect middle. And what it means is, this one, I said truly knows, but it means in the perfect tense, has come to know, and the middle voice, for himself.

Has come to know for himself. So this one truly knows, parentheses, has come to know for himself. If you want to reflect the force of the middle voice here, which is reflexive.

It can be passive, and some people take the passive, he is known by God. But you have to add by God, and God is not in the original at all. But because Paul is being a little bit cryptic here, and he's relying on the force of these parallel perfects, early scribes thought it wasn't clear, and so they started adding helping words.

And this is a well-known common practice. So what we have so far, and this is what we will go to the break thinking about, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone thinks he has come to know anything, he does not yet know as he ought to know, but if anyone loves, this one truly knows.

Got it? Okay, that is our foundation. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see how this thematic statement makes sense of everything else Paul is going to say, all the way up to when he formally returns to love and expands it and explains it in chapter 13.

But you can see now why I wanted to kind of put the high beams on and show you the road ahead, because right here, love is the theme, and it's garbled with introducing God and being known by God and all of that. In verse 3, you miss the road map to get to where we're going in these next several chapters. So, be sure you have that written down so that we can refer back to it as we go through the rest of chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10, chapter 11, chapter 12.

Chapter 13 is going to be, of course, that's his theme. He introduced it back in chapter 8. Let's pause here and take our break.