

1 Corinthians 9 - The Case for Christian Responsibility

This is a continuation of Chapter 8 - not using your freedom to cause a stumbling block (in a world where we all push for our rights, sometimes there is a greater good that moves you to forgo your rights)

- 1Co 8:9 ESV But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

I see this as a ***Responsibility***

- **Do we have responsibility to Jesus? What about to our brothers in Christ?**
- **Are there obligations we have simply by being a member of the body of Christ?**
 - (Rom 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other)
- Verbs frequently used with **responsibility** as the object
 - abdicate, accept, assume, bear, evade, exercise, fulfill, shirk, shoulder, take

Paul makes a case for his “rights” (continuation of Chap 8 - not to become a stumbling block)

1Co 9:1-27 ESV Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, **for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.** 3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 **Do we not have the right** to eat and drink? 5 **Do we not have the right** to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I **who have no right to refrain from working for a living?** 7 Who serves as a **soldier at his own expense?** Who plants a **vineyard without eating any of its fruit?** Or who tends a **flock without getting some of the milk?** 8 Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "**You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.**" Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? **It was written for our sake**, because the **plowman should plow in hope** and the **thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.**

- **Relationally** - they exist as a church because of Paul's ministry
- Some were **Examining Him**
 - factious - "Does he have the right to speak?" (I am of Paul, Peter, Apollos, Christ)
 - Maybe "he is not confident of his calling" he is not expecting payment - like the others
- He gives some **natural examples** (soldier, vineyard, a shepherd) - don't muzzle the ox

His comments in 2nd Corinthians give insight into his thinking

- 2Co 11:7-9 ESV Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you **free of charge?** 8 **I robbed other churches** by accepting support from them **in order to serve you.** 9 And when I was with you and was in need, **I did not burden anyone**, for the **brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need.** So **I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.**
 - He looked to exalt them and serve them, and **not be a burden (not use his right to be a stumbling block)**
 - The fact is Paul had a need, someone had to serve it...he robbed others because Corinth did not bear their responsibility

- People from **Macedonia had a heart, and a burden** (300 miles away)
- When there is a need, there is a burden, and someone must take responsibility for it

The LORD has placed a financial responsibility on the church

11 If we have *sown spiritual things* among you, is it too much if we *reap material things* from you? 12 **If others share this *rightful claim* on you, do not we even more?** Nevertheless, **we have not made *use of this right***, but *we endure anything* rather than put an obstacle in the way of the **gospel of Christ**. 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? 14 In the same way, ***the Lord commanded* that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.**

- Paul taught **the church has a responsibility** (is it too much to reap material things?)
- It seems the **Macedonians were willing** to carry the burden and shoulder responsibility, where as the **Corinthians shirked and abdicated** it - may God give us joy in our responsibility
- Paul calls this a **RIGHTFUL CLAIM** - *ye he did not use the right*
- BECAUSE HE also carried a greater RESPONSIBILITY - and that is for the Gospel of Jesus **“we endure anything”** rather than put an obstacle in the way
- **It is a command of the LORD** that those who proclaim the gospel should make their living
- So by default if it is a command that they should make a living, then it is a command to the recipients of that ministry to give financially
- **When you don't give**, not only are you abdicating responsibility, *others are robbed* in order to supply what is lacking from your portion

But Paul chose to NOT use those rights - and he was not cajoling them to give

15 **But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision.** For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of *my ground for boasting*.

- **VS 12** = “rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.”
- He gave up his right for a greater good...to preach the gospel free of charge
- There would be no question that he is NOT a mercenary

The stewardship of the gospel - this is his sense of responsibility

16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For **necessity** is laid upon me. **Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!** 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a **stewardship**. 18 What then is my reward? That in my preaching **I may present the gospel free of charge**, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

- **Necessity** is laid upon me
- **Woe to me if I do not preach** the gospel
- He has been entrusted with a **stewardship - so even if I don't want to do it I am responsible**
- I am not doing this as a mercenary - I am not doing it for money, I am doing it because of Christian responsibility

We have Christian responsibility, financial yes, but a responsibility of the gospel

19 For though I am free from all, I have ***made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.*** 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, **in order to win Jews.** To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) **that I might win those under the law.** 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) **that I might win those outside the law.** 22 To the weak I became weak, **that I might win the weak.** I have become all things to all people, ***that by all means I might save some.*** 23 **I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.**

- What are you willing to do for the gospel?
- What rights are you willing to give up for the sake of the gospel?
- Do you see it as “not my gift”? something better left to professionals?
- Ask God to help us see this as our responsibility as Christians

Whatever happened to the Hot Pursuit of God? Run the race to win!

1Co 9:24-27 ESV Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but **only one receives the prize?** So **run that you may obtain it.** 25 Every athlete exercises **self-control** in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So **I do not run aimlessly;** I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But **I discipline my body and keep it under control,** lest after preaching to others ***I myself should be disqualified.***

Disqualified = unapproved, that is, rejected; by implication worthless (literally or morally): - castaway, rejected, reprobate. (WORTHLESS Heb 6:8 ESV, UNFIT Tit 1:16 ESV, DISQUALIFIED 2Ti 3:8 ESV, REPROBATE 2Co 13:5 ESV)

SUMMARY

This chapter outlines only a couple of Christian Responsibilities

- 1) The responsibility to financially support the work of the kingdom
- 2) The responsibility to preach the gospel
- 3) The responsibility to take my walk with the LORD seriously - to run to win

May God help us to be faithful in all these things.