

BACK TO WORK

Dear Crossroads Family,

Christians who lived outside of Judea in the 1st Century faced a serious problem. They were immersed in a very religious culture. Many pagan gods represented by various idols were a part of the everyday life of virtually every person. Paul described the world in which these early believers lived when he spoke to the city council of Athens. He said,

“People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:22-23).

They worshiped a god for just about every aspect of life. Zeus was worshiped to maintain state order and justice. Hera was thought to bless marriages, women, and childbirth. Athena brought victory to the military. Apollo was the god who blessed health. Artemis worship enabled hunters to be successful. Almost every trade and business had a god whose worship enabled that realm of business to be successful.

Those who accepted the message of the gospel understood that all these “so-called” gods were idols; that Jesus was the only one worthy of their worship. But how could they show their allegiance to Jesus alone when every meeting of their business community centered around the worship of that group's god? How could they separate themselves from pagan worship when virtually all of the meat sold in the local markets came from the excesses of the sacrifices offered to these myriad of gods? Could they still attend the meetings of their trade guilds? Could they eat meat that had been part of a pagan sacrificial ritual?

Various New Testament authors attempted to help Christians deal with these very challenging questions. One such attempt was by Paul. It is recorded in **1 Corinthians 10:23-33**, which is the text for my sermon this coming Sunday. (Sermon notes are provided below)

Even though we don't face the exact same challenge that the believers in the 1st Century faced regarding pagan worship and meat sacrificed to idols, the principle that Paul promoted to help them answer their questions is a vital principle that can help us live faithfully for Christ in 21st Century. I hope you will be present for Bible study and worship this coming Sunday as we consider this essential principle for faithful Christian living.

It's going to be a great Lord's Day.

On another note, thank you so much for your generosity in giving me both time and a wonderful love offering for my just-completed sabbatical. Angela and I had a wonderful time and I feel truly restored. When Monday came and it was time for me to return to my office, I was excited to get busy again for the Lord's work here and for you—exactly the way I think a pastor should feel after a sabbatical. You are a wonderful congregation. I could not be more blessed!

See you Sunday!

Love,
Bro. Doug

Have It HIS Way
1 Corinthians 10:23-33

The Christians in Corinth _____ rather than _____ the culture around them. Paul was concerned that they were a self-centered bunch. Paul challenged their “_____” approach to faith.

The Corinthian church knew the clear message of the gospel—that Christians are _____ from the bondage of believing that we must earn eternal life by doing certain rituals and good deeds. But they had taken their freedom _____. They had begun to act on the belief that they were free to do anything they wanted. They believed they were free to live a “me first” kind of life. Their slogan, which Paul repeats back to them, is “I have the _____ to do _____.”

Paul reminds them and us that, as followers of Christ, “_____” is not the standard by which we are to live. What is “allowable” isn’t Jesus’ bar for us. God’s word says, our bar, our goal, is to do what is “_____” and “_____.”

These two words in the original language are _____ words. They are _____ words. The 1st one literally means “to bring together,” like pooling resources for the benefit of everyone. The 2nd word combines the word for _____ or family with the word meaning “_____,” so “to build up the family.” The bar God’s word sets for our behavior is to bring together our strengths, resources, and abilities and to build up the family of God.

It’s so easy for us to slip into the spirit of the Corinthians’ day, of our day, and think almost exclusively of our own _____, our own _____, our own _____. Then we start to ask, “What is the _____ I have to do? I can’t worry about other people’s needs or feelings. They can worry about themselves.”

The challenge of God’s word to each of us is to be able to say with Paul: I am not seeking _____ good but the good of _____, so that they may be _____. Is that the testimony of your life before your Lord who didn’t seek His own good so that you could _____?

A Few Announcements:

AWANA resumes Sunday, August 16! Children in Kinder-6th grade are invited to join in the fun and be part of this Bible-based discipleship program. AWANA will be meeting in the Community Center, Sundays 5:00-7:00 pm (doors will open at 4:45 pm). Go to cbcsa.net to register.

The AWANA Store Needs Donations! Small toys, stuffed animals, games, trinkets, books, etc., donated to the store are used to help motivate the kids to learn scripture. Cash donations would also be appreciated (designate them for AWANA Store). Additionally, please pray about partnering with the Kings to help with the actual running of the store. For more information contact John (210.818.2248) or Mary Sue (210.313.3877). Any help would be welcomed!

Grief Share, a grief support group will be meeting every Thursday, beginning on August 20, and continuing through November 12, from 9:15 –11:15 am in the Community Center, classroom #1. Learn more about Grief Share and register at griefshare.org.

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