



Message **Transcript**

Living In Liberty

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Well, thank you so much for worshiping us with us today. Would you do me a favor? Would you welcome our brothers and sisters at our Broomfield campus who are worshiping along with us? So great to have you.

And as we've been worshiping and seeking the face of the Lord, let's continue that spirit by praying. And as we pray today, let's pray that we would be ready to receive all that the Lord would have for us. So, Jesus, we come before your throne right now, Lord, as we've been celebrating you and telling you that you're so worthy and worshiping your name, Lord, we pray right now that you would speak to us through your living and active word, Lord, that you have a word for every person who's here who's ready to receive it. And, Lord, that you would help me be faithful in the proclamation of it, Lord, so that your holy spirit could use your word to transform hearts and lives for your glory. And so, Lord, we're just telling you right now, as we're praying silently, that we're ready to hear you.

And so, Lord, we just pray you would speak and speak right now in the powerful name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Lord, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise, and all God's people who are ready to receive, receive his word this morning very loudly agreed with me by saying, amen. Amen. I want to encourage you. Open up

your bible this morning to one corinthians chapter ten.

One corinthians chapter ten will be in verse 14. If you do not have a copy of the scripture, there's one underneath every other seat, so feel free to reach underneath and grab that and follow along. And while you're turning there, let me just bring you up to speed. Paul has been talking to the corinthian people not only about their salvation that they share in Christ, but also how to live that out. Because it's one thing to come to know Jesus.

It's another thing to live that out. And what the corinthians have been doing is saying, well, since Jesus loves us, no matter what, we'll just live however we want. And that's what Paul has been trying to address and correct for the last three chapters. And in chapter ten, what we're gonna do today is we're gonna take a look at his summary statement to all of that truth. And if you look in one corinthians chapter ten and verse 14, it really sums up everything that we're gonna do.

He says this. He says, therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry so everything he's gonna set up for the rest of this chapter is that right there? That's the whole

sermon. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. Now, isn't it awesome the way that Paul addresses his church?

Paul knows all the sins that they're in. He knows all their sexual immorality. He knows all their temptations. He knows they're out getting drunk. He knows they're doing all these things.

And even though they're christians and they believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, they're not living it out. And how does he refer to him? My beloved, I love you. And the reason I love you is because Jesus still loves you, and I love you too. Isn't that good news this morning?

He says, therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. He's going to give him an instruction to get away from idolatry. To flee from it. To run away from it in the same way that he expressed the same truth about sexual immorality a few chapters ago. Flee from it.

Run away from it. So we'll talk about what idolatry is in a second. And then he says, I speak to you as wise men. You judge what I say. I love that.

Here's what he's saying. He goes, if you have the Holy Spirit in your life, you can tell if I'm telling you the truth. So you judge for yourselves if what I'm about to reveal to you is truth of everything that I've been talking to you about is truth. And let me just give you a little setup here before we get into the word this morning, because you need to know this. I mean, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest news on the planet.

If you've never been in church before, just get ready. Cause you're gonna hear the greatest news you've ever heard in the world. And it's this, is that God loved the world so much that he sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate flesh. And what Jesus did for us is something you could never do for yourself. You see, the world is always trying how to figure out how to get right with God.

And they have all these man made ideas, ideas as to how to do that, and all these different religions that were formed as to how to do that. And all these different

instructions. And what God reveals in his word is, says this, you can't get to me. I'm coming to you. So Jesus Christ, put on flesh, was born of a virgin, came to this earth, lived a perfect life.

And guess what he did in your place. For all your sins, for everything you've ever done wrong to offend a perfect, holy God. Jesus Christ stretched out his arms on a cross. He died, he bled out to death, and through his broken body and through his shed blood, paid for every single one of your sins, which means this. Any shame, any guilt, any I'm not good enough, any I'll never measure up, any there's no way God could love someone like me.

Jesus said, it is finished, and he paid for it all. Better news than that. Three days later, he rose from the dead. He's alive. He ascended back into heaven.

He's as alive as he's ever been. And he began to offer life from the day that he rose from the dead up until now to anyone who would want to come to him. Is that not good news or what? It means no matter who you are, no matter what your gender is, skin color, height, weight, background, whatever sin pattern you've had, Jesus says

this, I love you with an unconditional love. I've already paid the penalty for all of your sins.

Would you come to me? Isn't that great news? The living God of the universe, for free of charge, that he paid all four, says, you can have a relationship with me. That's great news. Here's the problem for many people.

After they accept Christ, they don't know how to walk in freedom. How do you live out your liberty? The Bible says it is for freedom that Christ Jesus set us free. The Bible also says where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom for those of you who are believers. Do you remember when you first came to Christ?

You remember the first time that Jesus Christ was revealed to you as Lord in your life? And you knew that. You knew that. You knew that you were totally loved and that all your sins were forgiven, and that he washed away all your past and that he was indwelling you with his holy spirit. And you're like, ah, remember that?

That's what it's supposed to be like all the time. That's not like a one time thing that you refer back to in your past. And then you just kind of hang on and say, well, one day I'll get to heaven. I remember that one day that it was really cool to be with Jesus. All the rest of my life's been really hard.

But here's the problem. There's two different roads that Christians walk down, and they're the roads of legalism and libertarianism. Legalism says this? Yeah, you're a Christian now. And yeah, God paid for all of your sins.

But I'm gonna tell you something. There's a lot more things you gotta keep in order to keep God happy with you. There's a lot more rules that nobody really told you about when you came to Christ. So let me tell you about all these rules, because if you don't perform well for God, yeah, you still might be saved, but God doesn't really like you that much. So it's really important that you read your Bible.

I would say it's important that you read your Bible, but I want you to read your bible, and you need to do it every morning for at least a half an hour. Cause if you don't do that, let me tell you something. God's mad at you, and you may have a bad day.

And the reason you had a bad day is cause you didn't read your Bible. And if you're not reading your Bible every day, you're not really being a good Christian.

And prayer. Prayer is important, but we make rules about prayer for how we should pray, when we should pray, the posture we should have when we pray. And if you don't do it in that specific way at certain specific times, then you're probably not doing it right. And God still loves you, but he's really disappointed in you. And there's certain kind of foods you can eat, and there's certain kind of drinks you can drink, and there's certain kind of foods you can't eat, and there's certain kind of drinks you can't drink.

And there's certain kind of church you can go to, and there's certain kind of churches you can't go to. And let me just fill you in, because you didn't know when you came to Christ, there's like 500 more rules that you've got to keep in order to keep God pleased with you. And it's called this, it's called religion, it's called legalism, and it's 100% wrong. It's a group of people that think that they have to perform to keep God happy with them. It's false.

When Jesus died on the cross, let me just tell you, it was 100% sufficient. There is nothing you can do to make God love you anymore, and there is nothing you can do to make God love you any less. If you read a different version of the Bible than I do, you're not loved any less. Right? If you pray at different times than I do, you're not loved any less.

If you attend a different church than I do. You're not loved any less, right? Legalism says there's a certain way to do it. Now, it's really interesting, because when you get into legalistic groups, they're the only group that knows everything. That pocket knows just what the rules are and how you need to do it.

And there's a tendency to think that, yeah, God, I know you forgave me, but I'm going to try to be real good. I mean, when Paul writes to the Colossians, he says this. They had this statement like, do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. In other words, legalists are always like, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this. We're known by what we don't do.

And so people that don't know Christ will say, I don't want to become a Christian

because I know all the things I can't do anymore. And Paul says about that in Colossians 2:23, these are matters which have to be sure. The appearance of wisdom and self made religion and self abasement and severe treatment of the body. In other words, he goes, they appear to be good. I mean, you kind of treat your body bad and you fast, and you do all these religious rules, it seems to be really good.

But notice this, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. In other words, they mean nothing. I mean, Paul wrote the entire book of Galatians to the Galatian people because they lived in legalism. They believed, yeah, I got saved, but if I mess up, I'm probably going to hell, right? I grew up in the Midwest.

That's how people in the Midwest think. Like, when you preach the book of Galatians in the Midwest, people are like, no way. You mean if you're a Christian and you swear God still may take you to heaven? Yeah, if you swear God's still going to love you, no way. Didn't think he would still love you.

But what? What? What? But what about somebody who's a Christian, who's truly trusted Jesus, and they get drunk one night, they're not going to heaven anymore?

Yep.

They would still go to heaven. No way. You mean God still loves people no matter what they do? Yes. Right.

Legalists don't get that. Legalists think God only will continue to love you if you continue to perform by your certain potential rules that you've set up for yourself. That's called legalism. On the flip side of that, which is what Paul's addressing in Corinth, is libertarianism, which is us in Denver. I know God loves me.

I can do whatever I want and I'm still going to heaven, so I will. That's what he's addressing. Because just as much bondage as legalists have, so do libertarians have. And when you live with the idea that because I'm saved, I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, however I want, nobody can tell me what to do, you're in just as much bondage as legalists are. Way libertarians like to talk sometimes to legalists.

You guys can't do any of that stuff. Let me tell you this. I know I can do all of it

and I'm still saved. And we addressed this last week when Paul says, flee from idolatry, idolatry is simply this. It's giving your ultimate allegiance and focus to that which is not ultimate.

Right? Paul's going to talk about food sacrificed to idols here in a bit. Most of us don't have idols. Most of us don't have food that we sacrifice to idols. But it's idolatry is this anything that takes our total focus and ultimate attention?

It's where our heart goes, right? There's things in this world, like we said, that aren't bad. Money is not a bad thing. As a matter of fact, if you're living on your own or you're providing for a family, I'd encourage you to work and make some. It's good.

The love of money and the idolatry of money is wrong. Legalists ask, well, then how much is enough? Jesus would say, whatever I provide, just receive and use for my glory. Right? Just don't get caught up in the idolatry of things in this world.

Family is a good thing. God created it. Marriage is a good thing, God created it. Just don't make it your idol where that is your focus over and above the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's saying, flee from idolatry because what the Corinthians were hearing Paul say, which he was saying correctly, is, we get it.

If we're saved, no matter what we do, we're going to heaven. So all things are okay for us. And Paul was like, hmm, you're still loved, but it doesn't mean that all things are okay. And that's what he's addressing here. Christians, listen to me.

I'm telling you, I'm, say it again. I already said it earlier. No matter what you do, God's not going to stop loving you. He demonstrated his love in Jesus Christ on the cross. This is not an issue of his love.

For you, this is not an issue. Will God stop loving you? He'll never stop loving you. Here's the question. Are you being pleasing to God?

Are you doing your best to bring God glory? That's what this whole summary statement is about. And in our christian life, we have to ask ourselves, God, is there anything in my life that's getting in the way of you being on the throne of my heart? Is there anything in my life that I give more time, attention, effort, energy, money, or allegiance to than you? And Lord, if there is, would you correct me so that you can be the Lord of my life?

Can I just give you one word of advice? Here's what legalists and libertarians miss. Legalists come up with all these rules to keep God's pleased. Libertarians tell you you don't have to keep any rules, and God's still pleased. Here's what they miss.

Jesus Christ is God. He's still alive. We're talking about the God man, Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's a person. We're not talking about some distant God in heaven that just sits on the throne that we never get to be a part of.

Well, do this, don't do that, do this, don't. We're talking about Jesus who indwells us with his holy spirit, who is living and active, who we can have a conversation with, who we can hear from his word, who's saying, hey, listen, I want a relationship with

you. Will you come to me and have relationship? Don't abuse your liberty and don't get locked up in legalism. Stay right down the center, making Jesus Christ Lord of your life.

And listen to the Father through the Son. Pour out his blessing on your life, saying, I love you. You are holy, you are righteous, you are good, you are forgiven, you are mine, you are beloved. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remain in his love.

And so that's what Paul's saying here in one Corinthians, chapter ten. He's summing up his whole argument to the Corinthians, and he's gonna basically tell them three different things when it comes to living out their liberty. Cause it's one thing to live in the church, which is sometimes difficult because everybody else has an opinion for what you should be doing. And here's what I'd say about everybody else's opinion. Just go to Jesus and be very concerned about his opinion.

And don't worry so much about everybody else's opinion. You'll live a lot more free. That's free of charge. Okay, so in one Corinthians, chapter ten, verse 14, he says, therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak to you as wise men.

You judge what I say. Here's the first thing he's gonna say when it comes to your christian liberty. Flee from idolatry because the Lord is jealous for your love. The Lord is so jealous for your love. Notice what he says.

He's gonna talk about christian worship, he says, is not the cup of blessing which we bless, a sharing in the blood of Christ and is not the bread which we break, a sharing in the body of Christ. Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. He's sharing a couple things here. He says, hey, when we come to worship, the reason we have relationship with Jesus Christ is because of his body and blood. And when we come together, when we take the Lord's supper and we share in that communion, we realize the reason that we come together, the only thing that we have in common is that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

And the reason he's our Lord is not because we performed really well or not because God really liked us. It's because God sent his son Jesus, who died for us. And through his body and through his blood, we have life in the son. Right? And because of that, when we come together and worship, we're sharing.

Now, notice what he says. Because there's one body. We who are many are one. We're going to talk about that in a couple weeks. When it comes to spiritual gifts, we're one body.

So how you live. Just check this out. How you live out, your christian walk impacts everybody around you. Did you know that? You're not just on an island.

If you're married, it will impact your spouse and your kids. If you're single, it will impact our church. I mean, everything you do. You can't just live in isolation. Your christian walk is either benefiting or hurting those that are around you.

And he said, when we come together and we share or participate in Christ, and we go through the worship of Christ, we're saying, hey, this is the Jesus we believe in. He's going to use Israel as an example. He says, in the same way in verse 18, look at the nation of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? He's looking back at Old Testament Israel.

He's like, when they came together and made sacrifices and they went through their religious routines that God had established for his covenant people, were they not sharing in the worship of almighty God. He's like, when people come together and perform acts of worship, they're doing it to share in the God that they say that they believe in. We do that as a church. Israel did that as a nation. And now he's going to talk about the Corinthians hanging out with people that are sacrificing meat to idols.

He's going to say this in verse 19. What do I mean then, that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything. See, here was the corinthian question that you're not asking. The corinthian question was, hey, people invite us out to dinner and we go to their house and they're serving meat. But sometimes that meat is sacrificed to idols.

And, like, if we're going to be real christians, do we eat the meat knowing that they're sacrificing to their idol gods, or do we not eat the meat? That becomes the question. And what about when we shop in the marketplace? Like, can we buy meat anywhere? Or, like, in other words, here's a question.

How do I live out my christian walk around non christian people? How many of you have non christian friends? Anybody? I hope every hand goes up, because if you don't, we have a hard time sharing the gospel. Right?

The question becomes, how do I live with my non christian friends and be a Christian? Like, what does that look like? That's what the Corinthians are asking. You ever wonder that, like, do I go with them? Do I not go with them?

Do I hang out with them? Do I not hang out with them? I mean, when do I go with them? When do I not go with them? How do I know I'm not offending?

What does that look like? That's what he's answering here. And he's like, am I saying that the meat sacrificed on the altar is something or the idol something? In verse 20, he says, no. He's basically going to say, no, there's no demon that's going to jump out of the altar and get into your meat, and you're going to swallow the meat, and all of a sudden you got a demon in you.

There's nothing in the meat. And he's like, as a matter of fact, the idol's made of wood or stone. It's nothing wrong with it. So in your personal liberty, big WHOOP. But here's what he's going to say.

But I say that the things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. In other words, here's what he's saying. You may know that there's no demon in the idol, and you may know that there's no demon in the meat. But the people that are sacrificing to that idol, I want to tell you why they're doing it. They're doing it as an act of worship.

And the pull in their act of worship is a demon that's behind the idol drawing them to worship. And I don't want you to participate in their worship. Now you say, I don't have any friends that are sacrificing meat to idol. So how does this apply? I'll tell you how it applies.

In your christian liberty. You may find at times that you have the ability to engage in certain behaviors or eat certain foods or drink certain drinks or go to certain movies or go to different places, that in your christian liberty you say, I'm good with that. But when you go with a non christian and that's their act of worship, guess what? You are sharing in their worship with them. That's what it means.

Let's just get real. It could mean this. When I was a new Christian, I'll just tear about, I'll just talk about me. It's easier to talk about me because then you don't think I'm talking about you. I'll talk about me.

When I first became a believer, I ended up in one of these kind of more legalistic circles, like, well, what's your testimony, Jeff? I'm like, I don't know what a testimony is. I've never heard one. And then I heard it had a before Christ when I came to Christ and an after Christ story. So I started listening to all these stories.

And all the stories were, I lived all this bad life, you know, I slept with all these different women. And then, or I got drunk, or then I did all these drugs, and then I came to Christ at such and such a time. And then they would kind of say with this face

that was kind of plain, like, now I'm a Christian. And now I know I just kind of live for Jesus. And they seem bored with that.

I'm like, I don't have a testimony. I really didn't do all that much bad stuff before, and now I came to Christ. So you know what? I thought I gotta go beef up my testimony. And so I did.

And. And it's not fun. It's not fun because here's what happens. I had friends of mine in my fraternity. They go out to the bars.

I knew as a Christian I could have a drink. I was 21 years old. It's okay. Nothing wrong with that. In my christian liberty.

Here's what's wrong with it. It was my friend's act of worship. They were going to worship. They were worshipping the God of the party spirit. And if I went along with them, even if I didn't drink as much, even if I didn't, quote, party as much, even if I was

the good guy in the group, what was I doing?

I was sharing with them that as a christian, it's okay for you to worship how you worship. And as a matter of fact, I'll worship with you. Do you know what happened in my senior year? God began to reveal to me the truths of my identity in Christ, and I began to receive the love of the father in a new way. And I began to want what God had for me, and I was willing to do whatever God wanted me to do.

And here's what I began to do. I began to say no to my friends that were going out. They would say, hey, you coming out? No, I'm not gonna do that tonight. Hey, you coming out with us?

No, I'm not gonna do that tonight. After about 15 or 20 times, they're like, hey, how come you never come out with us anymore? I'm like, because I don't want to. Because it doesn't honor the God that I say that I believe in. Well, what are you gonna do tonight?

Well, you know what? I actually have a Bible study tonight, and I'm gonna stay at home. Do you know, during that season, now, during the season, I was hanging out with my friends, and I would tell all my christian leaders, dude, I'm like an evangelist. And they would ask me this question, how many have you led to Christ? That's not a fair question.

Just trust me. I'm there with them. They see God in me. Right? Do you know, after I made a choice just to live for Christ, you know how many people came to Christ?

Tons of people came to Christ. I was leading a Bible study for 50 people at the University of Illinois. I didn't even know what I was doing, but people were just coming out of the woodwork, like, how do you know this Jesus, and how do you grow in this Jesus? I'm like, I don't know. I'm going to get some more information.

Come back next week. We'll talk about it. Right. When you live for Christ and you don't participate with others, so how does it look in your life. Like, where is it in your life that there may be some things that in your christian liberty you could say, I can

totally do this and God's not upset with me.

But if I walk with this group, if I go down this business deal, if I hang out with this group of people, if I share in their jokes, they're going to see me as a Christian, and they're going to say, hey, they worship with me. I mean, I see it all the time in christian circles. I'll hear non Christians say, you know what? I'm no different than the christian guys I know. We bet the same amount on the golf course.

We swear the same way. We miss the same shots. I mean, it's the same thing. We drink as many beers as each other. There's no difference.

There is a difference, but they don't see the difference because you're not living a difference. The question becomes, how do I live for Jesus so that non believers see a difference? And here's what Paul's saying. If you truly are sharing in the blessing of Jesus, why would you share in the worship of somebody else? Flee from that.

Don't worship what other people worship. Let them know that there's a difference in you. He says this in verse 21. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

He's like, if you say you're a believer and you're sharing with Christ, but then you're also sharing in the worship of nonbelievers, you can't really do that. You're a hypocrite. Notice what he says in verse 22. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than he.

Are we provoking the Lord of jealousy? I, the Lord your God. Exodus 20 05:00 a.m.. A. Jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love and kindness towards those who love me and keep my commandments right.

I'm a jealous God. A lot of people are like, hey, we're told not to be jealous. How come our God's jealous? Here's what it means that he's jealous. It means he's jealous for your attention and your love.

He died on the cross for you, and he's wooed you to himself, and he loves you with an unconditional love, and he wants relationship with you. If you're married, you'll get this. I love my wife. I'm not jealous of my wife, but I'm jealous for her love and her attention and her emotion and her touch and who she is. And if my wife decided to start hanging out with some other dude, which she would never do, but if she did, I wouldn't sit back at my house and be like, oh, okay, so you're out with Tony time tonight.

Okay, I'll see you when you get home. That never would happen because I'm jealous for her love. I would be invading space. I would be wooing back. I would be getting things out of the way.

And he says, listen, listen, listen. If you're a christian, God will move heaven and earth to keep you close to him. And even if you say, well, I'm a libertarian, I'm just going to kind of walk over here, trust me, God will have a way of bringing you back. It just may not be as fun as you think. It's always better to remain with Jesus.

Hey, one of the best examples I ever heard was from a book I read about this time some 30 years ago, was called classic Christianity by a guy named Bob George. And he gave the analogy like this. Now, they have a little dog that you know about. I can tell you about it. I mean, when you have a dog or a little puppy and you live in a neighborhood, you got to be real careful where that puppy goes, right?

Because the puppy doesn't have a mind of its own, at least ours doesn't. And it can't think for itself, and it can run out in the street and do all this stuff. So you got to keep your eyes on it. Maybe put a chain down. You know, you make sure that that puppy's fenced in properly.

But what happens when that puppy's not chained in? There is no fence. What's the puppy do? Gone, right? It's going to chase a person, a jogger, a mailman, anything.

Is it because the puppy doesn't love its master? No, it's just because he wants to be free. He wants to roam. What's a country dog like? You ever go see a country dog out on the farm?

100 acres, can go anywhere it wants. And where do you see that dog? Just sitting in the shade, lapping up water, maybe under a tree, saying, I can go anywhere I want. But why would I want to go anywhere away from my master? Because he's the one that provides everything I need.

I mean, that's the difference. See, when you truly understand grace, why would you want to run away from God into legalism or libertarianism. Just remain right where he is. He loves you and he's jealous for you. He loves you with an unconditional love, and he'll come after you.

And if you feel a conviction in your heart as a Christian, it's not because he doesn't love you. It's because he does love you, and he's asking you to repent of your sins and come back to him so that he can unite with you and live with you and be with you so you can experience the fullness of God's joy. Amen. And so this is what Paul's telling the Corinthians. He's like, hey, you're not living this thing out.

Flee from idolatry because the Lord is jealous for your love. I mean, he wants you. He loves you more than anyone else loves you. Then he says this. If you want to, when it comes to your christian liberty.

Let me give you a second point. Enjoy God's world by making choices that edify others. Enjoy God's world, okay? That's a mandate. By making choices that edify others.

Notice what he says in verse 23. Here's where the Corinthians get, if the gospel is preached in its fullness, there should be people that ask this question, wait, wait, wait. If God's forgiven all my sins, past, present, and future, does that mean I can keep on sinning and God will still love me? If the gospel is preached, right? People will ask that question if you go to a church where that's not asked, like, I know my pastor told me, if I do anything wrong, I'm going to hell.

That's not the gospel. It's just not. Paul had to write the entirety of Romans chapter six to say, what then shall we go on sinning? So grace will abound all the

more. May it never be.

You died this sin. How can you live in it any longer? The Corinthians were taking Paul's understanding of the gospel and saying, hey, God's going to love us no matter what. So here's what they would always say. They would always say this, all things are lawful.

We can do whatever we want. Jesus took the law. He nailed it to the cross. He fulfilled it all. And now Jesus lives in me through his holy spirit.

So the fulfillment of the law is in me. I don't need to do anything to please God. All things are lawful. And Paul says this. Yeah, all things are lawful, but not all things are profitable.

All things are lawful, but not all things edify. What does it mean to be profitable or edify it means to build up yourself and to build up others, because notice what the next verse says. Let no one seek his own good but that of his neighbor. See, christian

liberty. We're not even talking about you in Christ and how you can be free.

We're talking about how you being free in Christ allows you to love the Lord and serve other people. How does your christian liberty impact other people? So that they can see the freedom that you have in Christ, so that they can see the joy that you have in Christ. So they'll want the Christ that they see that you have. And the Corinthians are saying, well, we're free to do whatever we want.

And Paul's like, no, you're free to serve the Lord and love other people in any way that you want. That's what you're free to do. And then he says this. Eat anything that is sold in the market without asking or the meat market without asking questions for conscience sake. For the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.

That's psalm 24, one. For the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. It means this. Enjoy this world, christians. Listen, enjoy this world.

But Pastor Jeff, haven't you heard that this world is the devil's? And he prowls around like a roaring lion looking for somebody to devour. Yeah, under the authority of Jesus, he's been given some power. The earth is the Lord's. You ever met Christians like this?

They can't enjoy anything. I mean, it's like you're walking around on eggshells all the time. I mean, you can't go to that. You can't stop at that store anymore. Cause you know what that store does?

You can't shop at that store. You can't shop at that store. Let me give you a list of all the stores you can't shop at. Here's the only place you can get your car fixed. Here's what Paul says.

Eat whatever you want. You can eat the meat. If you go to the marketplace, you can go to King Super, you can go to sprouts, you can go anywhere you want and buy meat and not have to feel like, oh, my gosh, this is a demon meat. What are people going to? You're free.

Eat it. Enjoy it. Hang out with non christians. It's okay. Enjoy it.

Hang out in the world. Go to ball games. Enjoy it. But then he's going to give some caveats. He says, if one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go eat anything that is set before you without asking questions, for conscience sake.

But if anyone says to you, this meat is sacrificed to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who informed you. And for conscience sake, in other words, a non Christian invites you to their house. Paul says, go eat. They set meat before you eat it. You don't need to say, is this a sacrifice to idols?

Because I'm a Christian, I can't eat that. You don't need to do that. Just eat the meat. But if the guest at the house says, just want you to know before you dine with me tonight, my wife and I sacrificed this to our idol here. And this is demon sacrifice meat.

He says, at that point, don't eat it. Why? He says, he gives us the reason for the sake of the one who informed you, for the non Christian, who told you that they were sacrificing to idols, and for conscience sake, whose conscience? Paul's going to go on and say, look at the very next verse. I do not mean your own conscience, but the other man's.

For why is my freedom being judged by another man's conscience? In other words, this. Here's why. You don't eat the meat. Not because you can't, not because your conscience says, don't eat the meat.

Don't eat the meat for their sake. Don't eat the meat for them. They tell you, here's our worship. And you're like, hey, listen, gotta draw the line here. I can't worship with you tonight.

I'm not gonna participate in that. Why? For their conscience. For the one who informed you. Why?

Because when a Christian shows genuine love to somebody else, but draws the line at the place where they will not cross, because it interferes with their worship, right. Here's what happens then. The Holy Spirit can bring conviction of sin, judgment and righteousness on that nonbeliever. Because if you eat the meat, here's what you're doing. You're telling them, hey, you sacrificed to idols.

Cool. That's your worship. I would love to worship with you. And what happens? It does not allow the Holy Spirit to have his work done in the nonbeliever.

So it's great to hang out with non believers, but you want to worship the Lord Jesus Christ at all times. And if you cannot be worshiping the Lord, being with a nonbeliever, then flee from it and get away from it and do it in a loving way and say, listen, love you, but that's not something that I can participate in in good conscience. It's not good for you or for me, right? Not because you couldn't, but because it's not good for them and it's not good for the gospel. He says this, if I partake with thankfulness, why am I being slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

In other words, hey, listen, I have freedom to act any way I want and I don't need to listen to a bunch of other Christians tell me what I can and what I can't do. Hey, listen, let me tell you something about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. He's the third person of the Trinity. He's co equal with the Father and the Son.

He has a job in every Christian of convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment. You do not need to be the Holy Spirit in someone else's life. It doesn't mean that you don't love people at times. It doesn't mean that you don't tell other Christians, hey, hey, how can you live like that and call yourself a Christian? It doesn't mean that you don't bring corrective.

Because what can happen is if you live your libertarian or legalistic lifestyle, you can grieve the Holy Spirit where you're not really experiencing him very much. You can actually quench his work in your life where you're a Christian, but you're like not experiencing anything of God. It's okay to point that out. I'm talking about those and I know they don't go to our church, but you'll meet some people like this. They think it's their job to run up to everybody they know and be their Holy Spirit.

I can't believe you call yourself a Christian and shop there. I can't believe you call yourself a Christian and wear that. I can't believe you call yourself a Christian and live in that house. How can you call yourself a Christian and drive that kind of car? I can't believe you call yourself a Christian and go to that place.

You don't need to be that person that doesn't help God. He doesn't need your help. He's been doing fine without you before you were born. Right? The Holy Spirit's good.

What it means is, in my life as a Christian, how am I bringing the best honor and glory to God? And if you study the life of Paul, you'll see at times he ate certain kinds of meats and at times he didn't. And you would look at him and say, what an inconsistent guy. He's totally, I mean, sometimes he's eaten. Sometimes he's not.

I mean, here's what we want to know. Cause as humans, God, just give me the set of rules, I'll keep them. That's what you say. Until you hear the rules. And you're like, yeah, but I don't like those rules.

We don't want rules. There's no steps. Here's the step. Honor the Lord Jesus Christ in every situation that you're in, then you know you're doing right. That's why it gets to.

.3.3. It comes out in the next verse in verse 31. When it comes to your christian liberty. Glorify God in all circumstances by learning his word and learning from other disciples. Learn from God's word and learn from other disciples.

And your goal as a Christian is to honor and glorify God no matter what you do. It means this. God's created each one of us different. Did you know that? I mean, God's created you for a certain kind of kingdom, work that nobody else is called to do.

It doesn't mean that if you give your life to Christ, you have to be a pastor or an evangelist or a Bible teacher. You don't. God's going to call everybody to be something different, but whatever you're called to be, here's the question. How do I best honor God in the lot of life that I'm in? So no matter whom I'm in contact with, they see the

Lord Jesus Christ in me.

They know there's something different in me. Right? That becomes the question.

Glorify the Lord. This is what he says.

You probably heard this verse before, whether then you eat or drink. Okay, so Paul's gonna talk. Cause he's been talking about getting invited and food, sacrifice, whether you eat or drink. And these are gonna include everything. Notice this, or whatever it is that you do.

That means all things at all times. That means when you're on the golf course. That means when you're at a sporting event. That means when you're at your job. That means when you're driving your car down the highway.

That means when you're at your kids events. Do it all to the glory of God. And do you know that Satan has a strategy for your life? He knows you better than you know

yourself. He knows what's gonna punch your buttons better than you.

And the more you walk with Christ and the more you realize your areas of weakness, the more you'll be aware when they come. For me, I tend to be a very competitive person, right? I mean, I've always been that way. God's been working on that with me for the last 30 years. But I can tell you this.

I mean, two years ago I went to the Iwana games with my kids. You know what the Awana games are? I mean, we have Awana for kids on Wednesday night here. And then they go do these games. It's like running around a circle and throwing bean bags.

I mean, it's really no big deal. Deal, kinda. And I was there and I was watching my kids compete and there was a bad call. I just want to go on record. I hope the guys watching this sermon, it was a bad call that went against my son.

And I found myself standing to my feet and I told my wife, I'm just gonna walk

outside real quick and take a deep breath. It's the Awana games, right? And I wanted to go down and give that guy a piece of my mind and be like, I mean, who let you here to be the official, right? It's the Awana games, right? Do you know where your areas are?

Like, I didn't want to go down and do that. You know, I shook hands with the official afterwards. And you know what he said? He's like, hey, man, I listen to you on the radio every day. I hope he's listening to this.

Okay, so anyways, sorry, forgive me. I'm just kidding. Okay, so verse 32, notice what he says. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. There were Jews, there were gentiles, and then there was the collective believers in the church that were the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't offend people in the church and don't offend people outside the church. The gospel itself can be offensive. No problem with that. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Let the gospel be the offense.

Don't you be the offense. Some people think that they need to be the offense. I'm going to offend every non Christian that I know. Let me tell you, it doesn't work. It's not winsome.

You love non Christians. You love them as much as Jesus loves them. But you draw the line where you don't worship what they worship, allow the gospel to be offensive in their life, but don't you be offensive. You be loving to every single one, okay? That's what he's saying.

He goes, just as I. This is what Paul's saying. Just as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many so that they may be saved in other words. Paul's not saying, I'm a people pleaser. I'll do whatever they want.

No, he's saying, here's my call. Because Jesus Christ has saved my life. Because through his shed blood and his broken body and his resurrection from the dead, I have life in him for all eternity. I mean, for those of you who trusted Christ, let

me tell you something. You know, 10 billion, 20 billion, 30 billion years from now, we're gonna be like, dude, we're just getting started.

I mean, this is awesome. I mean, that's what God has secured for you. And because Paul says, because I already have that and because God already loves me with an unconditional love, I want others to be there with me, experiencing the love of God in the coming kingdom. I want other people to experience Christ's love. So I don't do anything to offend anybody else.

But I do all things that I can do so that whether they're Jews or Greeks or church people, whoever they are, that they can see tangibly the love of Christ in my life. That's what he's saying. And if you flip over, it's an unfortunate chapter break in. First Corinthians, chapter eleven, verse one. He really summarizes everything.

He says this, be imitators of me. Just as I also am of Christ. Be imitators of me. Now think about this. When Jesus came onto the scene and he called his disciples, Matthew 4:19 says, he said to his disciples, come, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men.

That's Jesus. That's God's one and only son. That's perfection in the flesh. Of course he can say that. Was Paul perfect?

That's not a rhetorical question. Was Paul perfect? No. Huge sinner. He even said of himself, of all sinners, of whom I'm the worst.

And yet, what is he saying? Follow me and be imitators of me as I am of Christ. It's not the only place that he said that. I mean, there's several places. I'll give you one other.

It's in Philippians four nine. He says this. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. In other words, watch me.

How I live, how I act, how I talk, how I speak. Just watch my life as I follow Christ and then do what I do. Can I just tell you this? As a Christian, every single one of you should be saying that. You should be able to say to your kids, hey, if you want to follow Christ, just follow what I do.

When I say to people in the church, you want to follow Christ? Just follow what I do. You should be saying to people in your workplace, hey, you want to know what it's like to follow Christ? Just watch what I do. And most of us are like, I'm just going to share the gospel.

Don't follow me. I mean, I'm not even living it. No, you can. You can live it if you just remain under the blood of Jesus and who you are in Christ and what your identity is. Just live it out.

And I would tell you this. If you're new to the faith, if you're young in the faith, find those that you see that are growing in an area that you want to grow. When I first came to Christ, I knew nothing about the Bible. I didn't grow up in a church that taught the Bible like we teach the Bible, which is why I'm passionate to teach the Bible. I

knew nothing about it.

And so I found people, and I'd ask them questions like this. Like, what's a corinthian? What's a Philippian? Like, where do all these books come from? How do you know that they're true?

How do you know this is right? I mean, I found people that knew this book, and I said, hey, teach me everything that you can about this book. After I got married, I started finding people 10, 15, 20 years older than me that I said, man, this guy really loves his wife. Hey, what do you do? How does this work?

Have you ever had struggles in your life? And for me, one of the beautiful things about following somebody other than Jesus, that follows after Jesus, is when I follow Jesus, I know it's always right and always true. Like, if you want to know, like, God in this situation, what should I do? Here's your answer. It's his word.

He's never gonna waver from this. But sometimes it's good to see with flesh on, you know? But when you follow Paul, one thing that'll be different than following Jesus is Paul was a sinner. So one thing you'd see in Paul is, here's where I got this wrong. Here's where I got that wrong.

Here's what I didn't do right. I mean, Paul, probably later in his life, was like telling Barnabas, hey, maybe I was a little too hard on John Mark. Hey, maybe I should have just brought him along on that missionary journey. Hey, maybe I'm sorry about that. And, hey, tell John Mark, bring me my parchments.

I mean, there's forgiveness here. And maybe I should have calmed down from my intense view and perhaps Barnabas grew from being a son of encouragement and said, you know, I encouraged him and all that, and that was good. But maybe I've grown in my ability to set aside standard and live a life. I mean, we're always growing. None of us have mastered anything in the christian life.

Did you know that? So listen, here's what I'm saying. Don't walk on eggshells and feel like I'm not good enough, I'm not smart enough. I mean, there's nothing I can get

right. I don't know my bible well enough.

I'll never be one of those good christians. There's no such thing. If you've been saved, you are one of those good christians, that your identity is rooted in Christ. And if you know the gospel that he's died and raised for you and you know who, what God says about you, all the rest falls into place. The basics and foundations of the christian faith are just as true in my life today.

And it's what Satan tries to rob. And Satan wants me to become a legalist and form all sorts of rules for me and our church, or Satan wants me to become a libertarian, to tell people, hey, you can just do whatever you want. And here's what Jesus wants. Just tell people I'm raised from the dead and that I love them unconditionally and tell them who I am and how much I love them and just remain in me. Isn't that good news?

And I would just encourage you, if you're young in the faith, find somebody to follow. If you've been in the faith for a while, who's following you? Who are you looking in the eye and saying, hey, be an imitator of me as I am of Christ. And I'm not saying

you waste your time. I mean, when you begin to pour into somebody and they don't want it, that's okay.

Go find somebody else that does want it. Doctor Howard Hendricks taught me that a long time ago. He goes, don't pour your time into people that don't want to hear it. But there's always a few out there that do in your sphere of influence, I promise you. Because sometimes as christians, we look around like I want to pour into that guy or I want to pour into that girl.

I want to do this. That may not be the people, just pray about it and see who God brings into your face that's sitting right here, and those will be the people. And just ask them this question, hey, how would you feel if I just shared some things about my faith with you? They'll eat it up. And if you pour into somebody that's hungry, God will multiply that effort.

You want to live free? You don't live free by following the rules, and you don't live free by doing whatever you want. You live free by allowing Jesus Christ to remain center as the Lord of your life. And here's good news, because for some of you walk in

here today with guilt and shame and all sorts of stuff. Here's the great news about the gospel.

You can get a start fresh. You can get a do over any moment that you want. See what the enemy tells you is, hey, go home and work on this. And then when you mature a little bit, you'll be where Pastor Jeff says, no, I'm telling you right now, in this moment, you can be totally freed up to serve the resurrected Christ and go, yeah, but I'm a sinner. But look at how bad I sinned before I came into church.

Yeah, that was then. That's already been paid for. Leave this place free and go on the mission field and tell other people about the love and hope found in Jesus Christ and what he's done in your life. Amen. You can be as free as you want to be right now in this place.

So would you stand with me as we close in prayer? Father, we give you all the praise, glory and honor for who you are. And the best news on the planet, the gospel of your son. Lord, we just thank you. Thank you so much for coming into our lives.

If you've never trusted Christ and you're saying, what do I do? You just pray like this. You say, Jesus, I realize that you're the God of the universe. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and rose from the grave. Right now I repent of my sins and I place my faith and trust in you.

And for those of you who are here who have believed in Jesus but have kind of been in different streams of legalism or libertarianism, here's what you're gonna say, Lord. From this moment on, I want to glorify you. So, Lord, hear specific sins I'm repenting of right now. Have your way with me, Lord. Use me for your glory.

In Jesus name, amen.