

October 19, 2014

Series: Living As the Cross-Centered Community

Message: Engaging the Culture Around Us: Part 1

Passage: 1 Cor. 8:1-13

Overview: Having confronted issues arising from the culture's impact on the lives of people in the Corinthian church, Paul now turns his attention to how we should engage the culture around us for the sake of the gospel. In order to be "all things to all men in order to win some" how will we decide which things in a culture can be useful tools for proclaiming the gospel and what are some boundaries and guiding principles that will help us navigate this terrain? In this week's message we will focus on the interesting issue of how we proceed when believers disagree on the acceptability of certain practices. What should govern how we think about these issues? Are there limits to our freedom in Christ?

Engaging with each other

1. What are some of the dietary restrictions that people adhere to these days? Why do people choose to embrace these restrictions?

Engaging with the Bible

1. In 1 Cor. 8:1-3 Paul introduces a discussion on the propriety of eating meat sacrificed to idols in what seems like a strange way. In contrasting knowledge and love, what do you think Paul is trying to say? What is the importance in this context of the statement in verse 3 about our relationship with God?
2. In verses 4-6 what is the focus of Paul's comparison of the pagan gods to the one true God he (and they) believe in? What difference does this make in evaluating the issue of eating the meat sacrificed to idols?
3. According to verses 7-8, what do some people still believe? What do you think he means by a "weak conscience"?
4. In verses 9-13 Paul gives instructions on how we should treat these sensitive issues. In what way might the strong lead the weak into sin? How is this different from someone simply being offended by your behavior?
5. What is the controlling concern that we are to have?
6. From this context, how would you describe Paul's main point about the following:
Knowledge
Love
Freedom

Engaging with our lives

1. What are some of the cultural issues that believers disagree on?
2. In what circumstance should a believer restrict their behavior?
3. Can you think of an instance where you would restrict your behavior solely out of love for another person?