

Love, Not Knowledge

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 February 2018

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 0 0] You cannot be a Christian without being a theologian, because theology is a study of God, and to be a Christian means you know God and you pursue greater knowledge of God.

So you cannot be a Christian without being a theologian. But you can be a theologian without being a Christian. What I mean by that is this.

One can know all there is to know about God and yet not know God. One can wax eloquently about the love of God and yet not have a tincture of the love of God in himself.

Thomas Akempis, a 15th century German Christian, writes in the very first chapter of his devotional classic, *The Imitation of Christ*, Quote, Lofty words do not make a man just or holy, but a good life makes him dear to God.

I would rather feel contrition than be able to define it. If you knew the whole Bible by heart and all the teachings of the philosophers, how would this help you without the grace and love of God?

[1 : 2 2] Vanity of vanities and all is vanity except to love God and serve him alone. Some of the Corinthians had fallen into this trap.

And they claimed great knowledge, but it was a deficient knowledge that did not produce love and good works. So it was a knowledge that inflated their pride but deflated their love for one another.

So in this passage, Paul teaches them that love, not knowledge, is supposed to be the basis for Christian ethics, how we behave toward one another. And reminds them that those who have been saved by the self-sacrifice of Christ should build one another up with self-effacing love, not self-inflating knowledge.

And that will be my three points. The first point will be self-inflating knowledge in first six verses, self-effacing love, verses 7 to 10, and self-sacrificing Christ in verses 11 to 13.

Paul begins in verse 1 with the phrase, now concerning, which is now the third time that Paul has used the phrase to indicate a new topic that he is addressing. And this time the issue concerns food given to idols, food offered to idols.

[2 : 3 1] So within the Roman Empire, various cultic festivals and family celebrations were regularly held in pagan temples. And so usually when they have these celebrations and festivals, an animal would be sacrificed to the idols.

And then they would be divided up and served to the masses in the temple's dining halls. For Gentile Christians in particular who had converted from their pagan background to Christianity, there would have been enormous pressure, social pressure and family pressure to partake in these cultic festivals and family celebrations.

Especially, for example, if it happened to be a wedding of a relative happening in this pagan temple, right? With the sacrifice taking place. So the Corinthian believers had written to Paul about this matter, about eating food that was sacrificed to idols on such occasions.

And evidently they had insisted that they had the right to eat such meat at such festivals. And their justification was this. All of us possess knowledge.

That was their justification. The word knowledge is a key word that occurs throughout 1 Corinthians. It occurs nine times, four times in just this chapter. And it's related to other key words that occur again and again in 1 Corinthians.

[3 : 44] Words like speech, wisdom, right? And Corinthians were, as we know from the previous seven chapters, they were people who boasted in their words of wisdom, lofty speech, and so-called knowledge.

And Paul contrasted his own approach to ministry from their perspective in chapter 2, verses 4 to 5 this way. My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The Corinthians believed that they had received special knowledge from God that set them apart from other believers and made them better than everybody else. And because of that, they disdained even the apostle Paul himself and his teachings, thinking that they possessed superior knowledge than he did.

So this passage here is another instance of their misguided, prideful knowledge. And Paul roundly rebukes them. Read what he says. This knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Paul's not saying here that knowledge is bad or that it is unimportant, right? Notice the translators put quotation marks around the word knowledge to help us with that. The knowledge that the Corinthians are boasting of is not true knowledge because it's not grounded in love.

[5 : 02] And such knowledge does, all it does is inflate people with pride so that their heads swell up like a balloon, right? And that's the image that Paul uses here. It makes them puffed up, full of hot air, having big heads but no heart.

And such knowledge destroys people, Paul says in verse 11. In contrast, love builds up. Making them more vain and empty.

It loves, edifies people, builds them up, helping them to grow in a more substantive way. Paul explains this further in verse 2. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

Paul said earlier in chapter 3, verses 18 to 19. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

For the wisdom of this world is folly with God, right? So the Corinthian believers, they valued worldly wisdom over the message of Christ crucified, over the good news of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 04] And because of that, they were, even though they were convinced that they were wise, they were in fact fools. In a similar way, those who imagine that they, you know, possess some kind of special knowledge that puts them a notch above everybody else, they do not yet know as they ought to know.

Because true knowledge of God always begins with acquaintance with God, relationship with God. And when we encounter God, it produces in us humility and submission, right?

I mean, if you read through the Bible, people who encounter God, meet him, they don't, you know, strut around with their chest sticking out and their heads up, held high. They prostrate themselves on the ground and say, woe is me.

Because they're overwhelmed by the exceeding glory of God and their exceeding unworthiness to face him. So all true knowledge of God begins with that kind of humility because that's where true knowledge is.

But Paul continues in verse 3. In contrast to the Corinthian knowledge, self-inflating knowledge that exposed their ignorance of God. But Paul continues in verse 3.

[7 : 10] If anyone loves God, he is known by God. Notice the two parallel, you know, contrasts between love and knowledge. It says, you know, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

And then he says those who think that they know something, they don't know as they ought to know. But those who love, right, are truly known by God. And notice how he doesn't say those who love God truly know God.

He doesn't say that. Those who love are truly known by God, right? You see how he turned it around there from the active verb to know to passive verb to being known by God.

That's similar to what he says later in chapter 13, verse 12 of this chapter. When he says, for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part that I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Right? So there he is saying that presently the knowledge that we have of God is partial. We only know him in part. But he knows us even now fully. We're known by him in a full way.

[8 : 09] Similar thing is said again by Paul in Galatians 4.9. It's, but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God. Right? This is a typical way in which Paul turns things around.

Because for Paul, God's knowledge of us precedes and enables our knowledge of him. God's knowledge of us is a reference to his electing love.

Right? That God chose us to make a covenant with us, to have a relationship with us. So God says to prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1.5, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

He's saying, I chose you for a special purpose. Again, in Amos 3.2, he says, You only have I known among all the families of the earth. God's not saying there that, well, I know who you are, Israel, but I really don't know anything about the other nations.

I mean, that would be an absurd thing to say, right, from an omniscient God. He knows everyone. That's not what he's saying. He's saying that I know you, Israel, in a special way. I have singled you out for a purpose.

[9 : 10] You are my chosen people. So to know when God knows us, when we're known by him, that means he's chosen us. It's his electing love. It's because we were known by him that we now know him.

Think about it this way. It's used in illustration from other parts of scripture. Matthew 7.21-23, when Jesus teaches about the final judgment, he says, Why is being known by God so important?

Because when you seek to be admitted to the king's court, it doesn't matter one bit how much you claim to know him. What determines your standing in the king's court is not whether or not you know him, but whether or not he knows you.

Will the king acknowledge you? Will the king grant you an audience? And our love for God is the evidence that we are known by God, and therefore truly know him ourselves.

But the Corinthian believers had become more concerned with possessing knowledge about God than being known by God and belonging to him. They were using their so-called knowledge to engorge their own pride and advance their own agenda and elevate their own perceived spiritual standing in the eyes of others, when true knowledge would have instead produced deeper humility and submission to God.

[10 : 50] Theology, right, the study of God, must lead to doxology, which is the worship of God. Which theoretical knowledge that we have about God has to lead to personal and relational knowledge of God.

Knowledge of God must lead to the love of God. As Paul says later in 1 Corinthians 13, If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Because if you do not love, you do not know as you ought to know. So Paul wants to bring the Corinthian so-called knowledge back to its proper mooring. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. Unfortunately, the Corinthian church was not the only church that was guilty of what one Bible commentator calls a tyranny of knowledge, as we see here in this passage.

We've seen many of this throughout church history. Sometimes the brightest students of the Bible can be the most insufferable know-it-alls. You guys probably know some of them. I've been that myself in my life.

[12 : 06] I saw an example of this self-inflating knowledge this past week. A friend of mine wrote an article for the Gospel Coalition months ago, and she recently discovered a scathing critique of her article on a Christian blog.

And I read through that critique because she posted it. And the author of that critique was clearly well-versed in the Bible and theology.

In fact, he probably aligns very closely to exactly where I am theologically. But as I read through that, and even when he made a brighter point, he was completely uncharitable and dismissive.

And whenever he could, he assumed the worst of her intentions in her writing. Let me ask you, right? Have you ever used your superior theological knowledge as a basis for looking down on others?

When you meet a fellow Christian, do you always try to see how you measure up to each other in terms of your spiritual history, your Bible knowledge, and theology, so you can establish yourself on the totem pole?

[13 : 17] Do you ever engage in theological one-upmanship in your conversation with other believers? If your knowledge of God...

I struggle with this because I've been guilty of this so many times myself, and it breaks my heart that this is what I've done. If the knowledge of God doesn't make you more like God, then you do not know God rightly.

Knowledge divorced from love, self-inflating knowledge, is a telltale sign that you do not know God as you should. And this is the case even when your knowledge is technically correct.

Having addressed the pride that was the root of the Corinthians' misguided behavior, Paul returns once again to the issue in which their pride manifests itself in verses 4 to 6.

Read with me, verses 4 to 6. Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no God but one.

[14 : 28] For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

The knowledge that the Corinthians were claiming for themselves was the foundational truth that there is no God but one, and that by implication all the so-called gods and idols of their pagan culture were in fact nothing.

They are not real. They don't exist. So Paul agrees wholeheartedly with the Corinthians' belief. Their knowledge that they had about this was true. There is no God but one, and Paul agrees with them.

He says, We too know that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no God but one. This is objectively true. But nevertheless, Paul recognizes that there are many people in the world for whom these idols are very much real in a subjective sense.

Do you follow what I'm saying? So he says in verses 5 to 6, That for them, indeed, there are many gods and lords, yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

[15 : 47] Notice the deliberate contrast there between the many gods and many lords that the Romans serve, and the one God and one Lord, one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ.

So Paul is categorically denying that there are any other gods and lords. That is true. And that's a powerful Trinitarian statement, actually. This is one of the earliest books in the New Testament.

It was written around 55 A.D. And so this is, and it already alongside God the Father, the one God, Paul affirms Jesus Christ as the one Lord.

And Paul has no problem simultaneously affirming that there is one God and one Lord, and at the same time that there is no God but one. Right? So this is the doctrine of the Trinity. That God is triune, that he is three in one, that there is one divine essence, but three divine persons.

This wasn't a doctrine that was made up later and added to Scripture. And of course, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned here because Paul is using the parallelism of the many gods and many lords against one God and one Lord.

[16 : 48] But he includes the Holy Spirit later in the Trinitarian formulae in 1 Corinthians 12, 4-6. So though they are one God, the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father.

They are distinct persons with distinct operations. So look at verse 6. Paul notes here, the Father is described as the one from whom are all things and for whom we exist.

The Father is both the origin and the destination of all creation. But note that Paul doesn't say this. He doesn't say, from whom are all things and for whom are all things.

That's not what Paul says. He says, from whom are all things and for whom we exist. He's making this personal for all of us. not just abstractly, oh, all creation is from him.

No, you are from him. All of us are from him. He is our origin and he is our destination. And this is a question, these are questions that everyone, every human being wants to answer.

[17 : 47] Who am I? Where did I come from? What is the meaning of life? What is my purpose? And apart from God, you search for answers to those questions in vain.

We have the answer. The word of God tells us here that we are from God the Father and we exist for him. Every Christian in this room will tell you that it's only when you renounce your own sinful ways and surrender yourself to God that you truly come to know yourself and find your true identity.

It's only when you give your life to God and live for him that you find true meaning and fulfill your ultimate purpose in life. If you're not yet a Christian, I plead with you.

Give your life to God today. And the Son of God is described in verse 6 this way, as the one through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

If the Father is the origin and destination, the Son is the medium, the road to and from the Father. And this too is personal. Not only are all things through him, it says we exist through him.

[19 : 04] He is the word of God through whom we came to exist. And he's the mediator through whom we receive salvation and are united with God. I've used this analogy before, but if you think of receiving a gift from someone, there's a giver and there is the deliverer and there is the gift itself.

You can think of God the Father as the giver, God the Son as the deliverer, and God the Spirit as the gift. In terms of creation, God the Father speaks things into being.

He creates, he's the planner. And God the Son is described in Scripture as the word of God that proceeds from the Father to bring all creation into being, to accomplish it.

And the Spirit is described in Scripture as the breath of God that brings life, imbues all creation with life. And in terms of salvation, it's God the Father who plans from before the foundation of the world to save his people.

And it's God the Son who is sent by the Father to accomplish that by living and dying on the cross and rising again from the dead. And it is a Spirit who is then sent by the Father and the Son to imbue spiritual life, impart spiritual life to all his people.

[20 : 23] If you want to, and because of this, and because all things are through Jesus, salvation is through Jesus, because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him.

If you want to get to know God and to be known by him, if you want peace with God, if you want eternal life, only way is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you have not yet come to know this Jesus for salvation, you have a great opportunity to do it today. So if this was the knowledge that the Corinthians claimed to have, what's the problem?

Right? Isn't this all great things that they should believe? Yeah, Corinthians believed that there is no God but one. This is a great truth to believe. So what's the problem, Paul? Why are you rebuking them?

The doctrine is true. The problem is not with what they believed about the oneness and uniqueness of God. The problem was in their application of this truth.

[21 : 21] The Corinthians were arguing that because there's only one God and the idols are no real gods at all, that they should be free to attend these cultic celebrations and festivals and pagan temples and eat all they want.

They're filled with the meat that was sacrificed to idols. Their logic was this, why should we let this delicious and expensive meat go to waste? They're just, they're nothing at all, these idols. They were correct in their knowledge, but they were wrong in their application of their knowledge in two important ways.

first, as Paul argues later in chapter 10, even though the idols are no gods at all, food offered to them in sacrifice is essentially being offered to demons.

Therefore, to participate in such feasts is equivalent to participating with demons. So the Corinthians were wrong to think, their knowledge was deficient, they were wrong to think that they could participate in such feasts with immunity.

But that's not Paul's concern in the present passage. He'll deal with that in chapter 10. Paul's concern with them is this, the second problem with their application of their knowledge, that their application of knowledge did not stem from love and consideration for their fellow Christian brothers and sisters, but instead, they were acting out of self-inflating knowledge, not self-effacing love.

[22 : 37] That was the problem. They were behaving with a sense of selfish entitlement. Oh, I could do that. Not selfless love. And that brings us to the second point, self-effacing love.

In verses 7 to 13, Paul explains why their insistence on participating in such pagan feasts was selfish and unloving. Because while their knowledge that idols are no gods at all is correct, Paul adds this in verse 7.

Read with me. However, not all possess this knowledge, but some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

Even though all Christians believe cognitively in their mind that the idols are no gods at all, there are some, because of their former association with idols, still do not share this knowledge in an experiential, emotional way.

Do you guys see what I'm saying? It's similar to how many people in our culture view superstitions. Most people in the U.S. do not believe in superstitions. They know that superstitions, they're not real.

[23 : 43] There's no substance to them. But, even though they know that objectively, many people still believe in superstitions subjectively. So, they still avoid walking under a ladder.

They try not to cross paths with a black cat. They try not to put an umbrella indoors. They try to be extra cautious on Friday the 13th. You guys all know people like that, right?

So, yeah, they know that these are not true. They know the superstitions are not true, but subjectively, in their experience, they can't live like that. They believe it.

In the same way, when you have worshipped idols year after year at those pagan festivals, even if you know that they're not real, they sure feel real when you're offering a sacrifice to them, and that could lead them to idolatry.

And for them, because of their weak conscience, it would lead to their defilement. So, then in verse 8, Paul offers a brief concession to the Corinthians. He says, food will not come to God.

[24 : 50] We are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do. So, he's conceding this to the Corinthians. You're right. Food doesn't command us to God. It's not going to make us more acceptable to God or less acceptable to God.

You're right about that. But, Paul returns to his main objection in verse 9, but take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

Even if you have the right to eat such things, you should not follow through with it and exercise your right to do so because our actions affect other people and we need to be considerate toward them.

Our right must not become a stumbling block. What does Paul mean by a stumbling block? This is commonly misunderstood. Paul explains it in verse 10. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating at an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged if his conscience is weak to eat food offered to idols?

And so, by your knowledge, this weak person is destroyed. So, if a Christian asserts his right and with a clear conscience eats a sacrifice made to an idol, a Christian with a weaker conscience might see that in the temple and be like, oh, he's doing it.

[26 : 03] Maybe I can do the same but he himself cannot do so with a clear conscience. And so, in doing so, he will be sinning against the Lord. So, to be a stumbling block, then, it doesn't just mean to offend someone's sensibilities.

It means to cause that person to sin, to lead that person to sin. And when Paul says that the Christian with a weak conscience will be encouraged to eat food offered to idols, the word translated encouraged is actually the exact same Greek word that was used earlier in verse 1 to mean build up.

So, Paul's saying, literally, they will be built up to eat food offered to idols. So, he's using that word in an ironic way because he said that knowledge puffs up but love builds up.

But Corinthians, in contrast, think that they're building up one another by imparting this so-called knowledge to each other. They think that they're building each other up and they're saying, oh, brother, it's no sin to eat this meat.

Let me show you. Watch me eat this meat. Come, eat it with me. Let me show you how to live in freedom. That's what they're doing. They think that they're building the other brother up but Paul says, you're building them up to be destroyed because they might be led to idolatry and apostasy.

[27 : 19] They thought they were building them up. They thought they were being constructive but they were just being destructive and how selfish and self-centered is this, what they're doing. Because Paul says in verse 12 that by doing this, what they're doing is sinning against their brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak.

It's the strong that should accommodate themselves to the weak not the other way around. Instead of bearing your weaker brother and covering up his weakness in love, you are wounding him while he is weak as a predator would do.

How selfish is that? This seems to be a recurring problem for the Corinthians because remember that one of the Corinthians slogans is all things are lawful for me.

Paul quotes that slogan twice in chapter 6-12 and chapter 10-23 and in both instances he sharply qualifies their slogan by saying that while all things are lawful, not all things are helpful.

And Paul's addressing the same idea here. Yes, it might be lawful for you to do that. It turns out that it's not even lawful as we find out in chapter 10 because they're participating with demons. But Paul's saying let me grant you that for the sake of my argument.

[28 : 34] Okay, let's say that it's lawful. Even if it's lawful for you, is it helpful for you to do that? Does it build up your other brothers and sisters for you to eat there? You might have the right to do it but that doesn't mean that you should do it.

And so this is the principle, the two-fold principle. If you're not fully convinced that what you're doing is lawful and you do it anyway, your action does not stem from faith and therefore it is sinful.

That's what the weaker brothers were doing. But even if you are fully convinced that what you're doing is lawful, if what you're doing is not helpful for building up others and you do it anyway, then because your action does not stem from love for others, it is sinful.

For the Christian, love, not our individual freedom, is the higher code. So Paul says in verse 13, it's so inspirational, therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat lest I make my brother stumble.

Paul himself was willing to forego meat altogether out of his love for other Christian brothers and sisters. He was ready to, willing to, curtail his own rights out of his love, self-effacing love for others.

[29 : 56] This idea is probably offensive to a lot of you, right? You might say to yourself, why should I change how I live based on what other people think? Why should I give up my freedoms for them?

Why should other people have any say in how I think and behave? You do you, I'll do me. Right? That is the prevailing narrative attitude of our culture.

We supremely value our individual freedom and believe that everyone should have the right to believe what they want and behave the way they want. But as the renowned Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor insightfully observes, while our culture has uncritically adopted the truism that, quote, nobody should have the right to tell others what to think or how to behave, it is clear that to have any kind of livable society, some choices have to be restricted, some authorities have to be respected, and some individual responsibility has to be assumed.

unrestricted individual freedom, the idea that each person should be completely self-determining is an illusion. No one who thinks and lives that way will be able to stay married for long.

No person who lives and thinks that way will be able to function as a normal member of society. That kind of radically libertarian attitude toward human freedom destroys relationships.

[31 : 29] it erodes community. And the church is an intimately related and intricately interdependent community.

It is described as the family of God. That's why Paul calls these people brothers. And if the family is to thrive, some individual rights must be restricted.

If the family is to be built up, some individual rights have to be given up. But Paul doesn't demand this. He doesn't enforce this. He encourages each believer to do so voluntarily.

For the members of the church, self-effacing love, not self-inflating knowledge, is the rule. It's not enough to be oriented inwardly toward yourself. We have to be oriented outwardly toward others.

And Christian love demands that we forego our rights for the sake of others. not insist on our rights at the expense of others. And here's the reason why this ethic makes so much sense from a Christian perspective.

[32 : 38] That brings us to my final point, self-sacrificing Christ. Paul says in verse 11, And so by your knowledge, this weak person is destroyed. And who is this weak person?

Paul continues, The brother for whom Christ died. this is not some stranger we're talking about here. It's your Christian brother, it's your Christian sister, shouldn't you gladly give up your rights for his or her sake?

And if he is a Christian brother, that means he is someone for whom Christ died. The one Lord Jesus Christ, the one through whom all things were created, that Lord Jesus Christ died for him.

He died for her. Christ died on the cross for sins so that they might be forgiven and live. And when your God and when your Lord did this for him, you, a mere servant, you would selfishly and pettily insist on your trivial rights to destroy him.

The height of arrogance. The height of ignorance and selfishness. When you do this, Paul continues in verse 12, not only are you sinning against your brothers, you sin against Christ.

[34 : 04] Why is this so? Because your Christian brothers and sisters belong to Christ because they are members of the family of God because by virtue of their union with Christ by the Spirit through faith, they are parts of the body of Christ.

So by sinning against them, the parts of the body, you are sinning against Christ himself. And look at how closely Christ identifies with his people.

Jesus says in Mark 9, 42, whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it's the exact same word, it would be better for him if with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.

What a fearful prospect. We should tremble at the prospect of leading any one of our Christian brothers or sisters into sin. Do you see how loved a Christian is by the Lord Jesus Christ?

Take a moment to examine yourself. Is there anything that you are doing in your life that might lead others to sin? Are you wounding another brother or sister's conscience in any way?

[35 : 21] Are you leading a weaker Christian sister into sexual immorality and fornication by the way you show physical affection to your boyfriend or girlfriend? Are you leading a weaker Christian brother who was formerly addicted to alcohol back into drunkenness by drinking beer in front of him?

Are you leading a Christian? Are you leading a weaker Christian who was formerly involved with Hinduism back into idolatry by going into a Hindu temple to do some yoga?

Are you leading a weaker Christian into sin by watching TV shows and listening to music laced with profanities and vulgarities which they themselves cannot watch with a clear conscience?

even if you can do all of those things with a clear conscience are you just thinking about yourself or are you thinking about your brothers and sisters?

My examples might cause considerable discomfort to some of you but let me ask you if you're thinking to yourself well why should I care for them is your attitude that of the attitude of Christ? Christ is the sinless one yet he died for our sins he had a perfect relationship with God the Father yet he was forsaken by him so we can be reconciled to him restored to communion with him we were his rebels eneemies yet Christ took the punishment that we deserved and you can't give that up for the sake of your brothers and sisters see how Paul responds therefore if food makes my brother stumble I will never eat meat lest I make my brother stumble let that be your resolution today let that be your attitude today far be it from me that I should make a brother or sister stumble on account of my indulgence and if you are not yet a Christian

[37 : 32] I hope from this passage you see the gravity of sin and the intensity of God's love for his people first the life of sin is a pathway to eternal destruction you must stop being your own God you must stop living for yourself and turn to the one God the Father from whom are all things and for whom we exist you must stop being your own Lord and you have to turn to the one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things and through whom you exist secondly note the intensity of God's love for you he loved us enough to die for us Jesus Christ the Lord of life died the death that we deserved on the cross so we might live the life that only he deserved to live Christ has earned our righteousness he has won our victory and he has flung open the gates of heaven for you only if you would repent of your sins and believe in Jesus

Christ for salvation don't wait until next week or next year we're creatures who do not even know what tomorrow holds for us you can be known by the almighty creator you can know him personally intimately you can know him and have a relationship with him today stop spurning his love receive his love today let's pray together God we know that this this truth this principle that you enjoin on us it makes no sense to the world it makes no sense when we live with worldly attitudes it only makes sense in so far as we take on the attitude of Christ who though being in very nature God did not consider himself considered equality with

God something to be grasped but humbled himself so Lord help us to love as you love us with self-effacing love help us to build one another up for your glory in Jesus name we pray amen ■■■■■■