

FBC - 10/7/84
Sun. P. M.
From Tape/mc

SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP

1 Cor. 9: 19 - 22

Paul is saying 'there is no price too high to pay that we might win souls to JC.' Though we're free in Christ, we must deny our rights, if need be, that we might be a winning witness for Jes. Let's look at this. In 1 Cor. 9:

V. 19 (read) 'servant' is really 'slave'. Think of that statement, friends! 'Though I do not belong to men, yet have I made myself a slave unto all'. Why has he made himself a slave unto all? 'In order that I might gain (or win) the more' (or everyone I can). Are you amazed that God used this man in winning so many people to Jes? He says 'I'm free and yet I have placed myself at the service of all people in order that I might win people to Jes.' This is one of the greatest sections on Evangelism in all the Bible. He says in

V. 20 (read) what is he saying here 'that I might win the Jews'? To a Jew, he would say 'why listen, you say that you're a Jew? I'm a Jew. I'm of the great tribe of Benjamin; I was trained as a Rabbi; I speak Hebrew'. You see, he related to the Jew in order to win the Jews. He says 'to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might win them that are under the Law'.

V. 21 (read) he says 'I am not lawless; I am under the law of Christ; but to them that are outside the Law' he says 'I live as those that I might win them that are without the law'. And these were the Gentiles. So to a Gentile 'You're a Gentile? You'd be interested to know that I went to a great Gentile University. I was born in a great Gentile city - Tarsus. Some of my greatest friends are Gentiles. I love Gentiles'. You say 'well, what Paul was doing, he was just in Rome, doing as the Romans do'. No, he's not sinning, he's not violating the Word of God. What is he doing?

He is simply accomadating to social and cultural patterns, in order to gain confidence in the hearts of those people so that he will have an opportunity to share Jes. That was the most important thing in the world for Paul - was having an opportunity to share Jes. That ought to

be the most important thing in our lives; is to have an opportunity to share Jes. And to say nothing and do nothing ~~WAXXWAX~~ that would ever take that opportunity away from us, as the people of God and as a church. This ought to be our life - that we would ever pray that we would have an opportunity to tell the world about Jes.

This is the type of heart we've got to have to win people in our day. Paul had it and God used him mightily. He goes on to say in

V. 22 (read) 'I became as weak' and in the 8th chapter, he speaks about the weak believers, who would not eat the good meat that had been sacrificed to idol gods. Well, Paul knew there were no idol gods. But he says 'I will not eat any meat, as long as the world stands, if it were to offend a brother or I'd lose my opportunity to win them to Jes. Do you act like me? Would you deny yourself of something that you REALLY like to eat, in order to win someone to Jes.?

Sometimes we're called on to deny ourselves of things that we love and that would mean so much to us, but we cannot cling to them and win people to Jes. The most glowing case I've encountered in my life was my neighbor who looked me in the eyes and in all sincerity said 'I have confidence in you but if you bought a television, if you put it in your home, I would lose all my faith in you. To me it's one of the greatest sins in the world'. And I never bought a television. There's no sacrifice too great for us to make as an individual or as a church, that we might have an opportunity to share the Gospel with this world.

Because the greatest thing in the world is a soul that it might be saved and that's what Paul is saying here. He says 'I am made (or I became) all things to all men in order that I might, by all means, save some'. What a statement this is. Latter part of V. 22), is what I just quoted. Now the person who takes this attitude is gonna win people to Jes. And if we don't take it, we could be a stumbling block. If I mentioned the name of Hudson Taylor tonight and you've read much of Xtn history, you'll know that I'm talking about one of the greatest men

who ever lived. But do you realize there was a time in his life that he did not win people to Jes.? He was an Englishman and he went to China and he wasn't winning anybody to Jes. He was burdened and it suddenly dawned on him that he had not even started wearing Chinese clothes. He had never tried to use chop sticks and eat his food and had gone as a proud Englishman to China and they didn't buy it. God broke his heart and convicted him and you know what happened? He went back to China and he put on a Chinese garment and began to eat Chinese food, including chop sticks - using chop sticks, which to me would be one of the most difficult things on earth. How anybody can eat with a chop stick, I don't know!

That was a trial time, when we were in Korea, was eating with chop sticks. Doris gets along pretty well with it. Why anybody on earth would ever use a chop stick, I don't know. Now if you're an Oriental, listen, I wouldn't offend you for the world. Chop sticks are wonderful, if you're an Oriental, but oh, I hate chop sticks - how in the world can you eat with a chop stick? But he went back and he began to eat with chop sticks and began to live with the Chinese and speak Chinese and God used him mightily!

That's EXACTLY what Paul is saying. Did Jes. incorporate this in His life? Oh, did Jes. incorporate - turn to John 4: 7 - He's talking to an immoral woman who's living with her sixth man and He gets right down on her level. He doesn't say 'you immoral, good for nothing woman, who has thrown yourself away. You're not worthy of anything'. Look what He goes. He engages her in conversation, sits down with her and V. 7 (read) asks her for a drink of water.

You know when I read that, that impressed my heart so much that I've done that hundreds of times in Ft. Smith. That's one of the finest things in the ~~xxx~~ world to do; is to go into a home where you're trying to win someone to Christ and ask them for a drink of water. I've never known anyone that it didn't touch their heart where you just asked them for a drink of their water. It might look like a little thing but we have got to go where the people are and they have got to know that we care for them. That we're not there to say that we're better than they are; but we're down EXACTLY where they are, speaking their language and feeling their needs

and getting on their level. Becoming what they are in order that we might win them to Jes. and no matter what it costs us and sometimes, we will find ourselves in situations that are almost unbearable.

We'll find ourselves in filth and in odour and among people who are uneducated - unbearable situations to us - but we must go in the Name of Jes. and go willingly and be willing to deny ourselves of ^{an} all our rights. I'll never forget in my first pastorate, there was a little lady in the congregation, had a house full of children, her husband wouldn't go to church, she went every Sunday and she'd say to me every Sunday 'Pastor, I've got to have you in my home'. Well, I had visited in their home; they had no screens. It was so dirty and I didn't know what on earth I would do, when that lady invited me to her home.

I just didn't want to go there and eat! One day she caught me - I'd put her off as long as I could, but one day she caught me at church and said 'Pastor, I've got the meal prepared and today's the day'. Of course, I said yes. I had just got married and my mother was so - she was just a stickler for decency and her kitchen - my mothers kitchen, was so clean and I was just brought up with the idea that you've got to be clean and you just can't be unclean! - My mother, many times, said 'I could not eat at this home'. I've heard my mother say it 'I could not eat one meal at certain homes'. I was brought up with the deep sense of decency, especially in food.

We got in the car and Doris was sitting there with me and I said 'Honey, this is one of the most difficult things that I've ever been called on to do!! To go to this home and eat'. You know what Doris said to me? She said 'Jes. would go. Jes. would go'. I felt so ashamed of myself and I'm so thankful I went and I'm thankful that I'd go anywhere in the world. I really would because I know Jes. would and I know Paul would and I know that the soul of a person is a million times more important than my social feelings and my background and anything!

We're in the business of winning souls; not pleasing ourselves and serving ourselves. This

was Paul's heart - was to win people to Jes. Are you willing tonight to pay the price that's required for you to win people to Jes.? There's a price, often, to pay and if we're not willing to pay it, we can't win them. You know, even in the area of education, it's important that we come right down to the level of people. God impressed my heart years ago, that when I preach, to preach in utter simplicity. If I could use a one syllable word - never to use a two syllable. Never to bring learning in this pulpit. Never try to impress people with my learning.

I was thinking of an incident in my ministry: a S.S. teacher; her name was Alice Watson, I never will forget her, she was visiting in a home one night and she encountered some hard-shell Baptists. They don't believe in an educated ministry. They think education is of the devil they do not want to hear an educated ~~preacher~~ preacher preach. So Alice was visiting this lady, trying to reach her and she said 'I just want to ask you one question!! Is your pastor educated?'

Alice said 'yes, he is!! But you'd never know it, come on to church anyhow'. I consider that one of the greatest compliments that could ever have come to me. You know what would break my heart would be for some one, who is lost, to come to this church who could not understand the message of the Cross because I couched it in language I learned at the University. We are to deny ourselves of anything that we might get the Gospel of our Lord, JC, out to a world that's lost.

1 Cor. 4:3 (read) let's not hide the Gospel by language or let's not hide the Gospel by our wrong attitude or our failure to get right on the level with the people where they are, whatever the cost is. There's no cost too great to pay for lost souls. No cost too great to pay for a lost soul! That's what Paul is saying. 'I have become all things to all men in order that I might win as many as I can.' Let's take this to heart this week and if we're called on to deny ourselves of anything, let's do it for Jes. and souls.

Let's stand.