



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – February 11, 2018

Heart to Heart...

In our day and time people seem consumed with rights. The Declaration of Independence states we are entitled to “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*” Many believe they have the “right” to do whatever they want, whenever they want being controlled by the thinking they have a right to do what makes them happy. Rights and freedoms can run quickly to excesses and problems. People stand on these rights while the Lord Jesus Christ leads us away from our rights and to be given to Him. Many that push their rights walk after their flesh. Just read carefully Galatians 5:19-21.

Paul showed the Corinthian brethren that he and Barnabas had a right to reap physical benefits from the brethren for proclaiming God’s word to them (I Corinthians 9). “*If we sowed spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?*” (I Corinthians 9:11) Listen to his next teaching: “*If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.*” (I Corinthians 9:12) His rights were given to the Lord’s cause. Paul made certain his rights caused no hindrances to Christ’s gospel.

There were temples to idols in Corinth and the meat offered to those idols were sold in the markets. Paul knew there were no such things as idols but not everyone had that knowledge in the church. (I Corinthians 8:7) Paul had a right to eat anything as he instructed Timothy (I Timothy 4:4-5). We can eat what we want and we are given that freedom, that right in Christ Jesus. But listen careful: “*Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.*” (I Corinthians 8:13) Paul practiced love as his rights were given up to the Lord and allowing the Lord’s love to direct his life. If a brother or sister believes something is sinful, even though they may not have the knowledge of understanding, Paul would go as far as giving up his right to eat meats for the sake of his brother. “*I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who*

thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.” (Romans 14:14-15) Because the rights of many have become their ‘lord’ one cannot ignore and run over the top of brethren (or others) just to exercise your rights. **“And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.”** (I Corinthians 8:12) How serious do we take it knowing that by sinning against the brethren we sin against the Lord?

Holding to your personal rights could possibly lead others to sin or destroy them. The world doesn’t care. The Lord does. **“Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”** (I Corinthians 8:1) To love Christ is to give Him your all and that means your rights. The love of Christ is always the determining factor and not one’s rights. Sounds like something that needs to be read over and over, wouldn’t you say? Think about it!!!

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