**1 CORINTHIANS 9**

**WHAT’S WRONG WITH RIGHTS**

Paul continues to respond to the letter sent to him by Chloe’s household (1:11) and he is answering the many issues raises by Chloe. One of those issues appears to be the authority by which the Apostle Paul is preaching and ministering.

Paul is in good company isn’t he? John the Baptists AND Jesus were asked this same thing… “Who do you think you are? Who gave you the authority to preach to and correct us?”

JTB referred to the prophets who foretold his coming hundreds of years ago…

Jesus simply said, My Father has sent Me.

Let’s see how Paul will answer the same question – **HE ALREADY DID** in the beginning of his letter: **CH1:1** “Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth…”

Paul asks some rhetorical questions now in order to drive home his point…

**1 Corinthians 9:1** Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

**YES is the answer!**

2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal **(Evidence, proof)** of my apostleship in the Lord.

* The saved souls… The changed lives… The restored marriages… The answered prayers… The love!
* Satan does not do these things. JESUS does!

**PAUL SURRENDERS HIS RIGHTS**

3 My defense to those who examine me (question my authority) is this:

4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?

* **COURSEN** - Paul says, "Because we are apostles, we have the right to be supported financially as are James, Jude, Peter, and the other apostles."

5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? (Pope Peter??)

* Because of persecution some of the Apostles had to travel with the family now… Paul did not have a family to bring along but he certainly traveled with an entourage of helpers and missionaries.
* Apparently some detractors of Paul had accused him of taking advantage of the churches.
* Here are some rhetorical questions…

6 Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? ***(IE, to work full time in the ministry?)***

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? (Soldiers are given provisions) Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

* All of these examples were common sense arguments…
* A full time worker in ministry SHOULD be taken care of, Paul argues.
* Several places in the Old and New Testaments the Bible says that a laborer is worthy of his wages…
* But is the Apostle about to negotiate for pay?

8 Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN." **DET 25:4** Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

* One of my first jobs after getting married was in a coffee shop. I would arrive after classes and empty the lunch steam table… Instead of throwing the leftovers away the boss let me scoop it onto two plates. THAT was Lyn & my dinner each night. We were so broke that we ate like Oxen off of those plates.

**WORST** **CONTRACT NEGOTIATER EVER!**

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? $upport us?

12 If others **(Who came after me)** are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? **(Paul STARTED the church there)**

**Nevertheless we have not used this right,** but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

* Paul says he would rather work two jobs than offend anyone or slow down the work…

**PAYING PRIESTS, PAYING PASTORS**

13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

* A portion of the meat BBQ’d unto the Lord in the OT was to be given to the priests to feed themselves. A portion of the bread and oil was also for the priests.
* Likewise, a portion of the offerings in Church are to be used to support the fulltime workers.
* Even though the Apostle had the right to be supported, he often raised his own support in order to remain above reproach and to be blameless.

**DON’T GET ME WRONG…**

15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

**NLT -** Yet I have never used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that I want to start now. In fact, I would rather die than lose my right to boast about preaching without charge.

* Paul says I got paid what I wanted to be paid. NOTHING.

**HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE CALLED TO PREACH**

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for **necessity** is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. **I love these verses from the NLT**

* NLT - Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News! 17 If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust.
* You are probably called to preach IF you would be miserable NOT doing it. Most good preachers I know would do it for free if they could. In fact… Many did. Many still do… Why? They are compelled to do so by the Lord.

**HOW WAS PAUL REWARDED?**

18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. **Paul was happiest when preaching for free.**

**BECAUSE PAUL WAS PAID BY NO MAN,**

**NO MAN COULD RESTRICT HIM FROM PREACHING!**

19 For though I am free from all *men,* I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law;

* Paul was qualified to teach in Synagogue, so he did and received many beatings for doing it.
  + His entourage would beg him not to and he would tell them to stop crying. ***“There’s no crying in mission’s work!”***

**HE COULD PREACH TO OUTLAWS**

21 to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; **MOSEIC LAW**

**HE COULD PREACH TO NEW BELIEVERS**

22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men,* ***(Adaptable)*** that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

**IN IT TO WIN IT**

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it.*

25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown.* 26 **Therefore I run thus**: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

One of the things I admire the most about the Apostle Paul was his discipline. He kept his flesh under control… He kept his temper under control… He kept his diet, his spending, his indulgences under control…

He kept his reputation and character untarnished by careful self-control. Thus, the Lord was pleased to use this man to take the Gospel, once reserved for the Jew first… to the world of gentiles like you and me.

Beloved, if we want to be useful for the Kingdom of God… let us keep our flesh under control… let us keep our tempers under control… let us keep our diet, our spending, our indulgences under control… for the glory of God, AMEN?