



 What do I need to know in order to understand what this part of the Bible is about?

// Do you see any parallels with the Gospel lesson for today, Mark 1:21-28?

 How does the message of today's text influence my living?

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 **Concerning Food Sacrificed to Idols**

⁸ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. ² Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. ³ But whoever loves God is known by God.[a]

⁴ So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), ⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

⁷ But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. ⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Footnotes:

A. An early manuscript and another ancient witness *think they have knowledge do not yet know as they ought to know.* ³ But whoever loves truly knows.

New International Version®, NIV ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.®](#). All rights reserved.

NEXT WEEK:

Paul's Motivations

1 Cor 9:16-23; cf. Mk 1:29-38

1 Corinthians 10

¹⁴Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? ¹⁹Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. ²²Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Acts 15

¹⁰So why do you test God by putting on the disciples' neck a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we could carry? ¹¹We certainly believe that it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, that we are saved, just as they are."

¹²The whole crowd was silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul tell about all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the gentiles. ¹³After Paul and Barnabas had finished speaking, James responded, "Brothers, listen to me: ¹⁴Simeon has explained how God first showed his concern for the gentiles by taking from among them a people for his name. ¹⁵This agrees with the words of the prophets. As it is written,

¹⁶"'After this, I will come back and set up David's fallen tent again. I will restore its ruined places and set it up again ¹⁷so that the rest of the people may search for the Lord, including all the gentiles who are called by my name,' declares the Lord. "He is the one who has been doing these things ¹⁸that have been known from long ago.'

¹⁹"Therefore, I have decided that we should not trouble these gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write to them to keep away from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from anything strangled, and from blood. ²¹After all, Moses has had people to proclaim him in every city for generations, and on every Sabbath his books are read aloud in the synagogues."

²²Then the apostles, the elders, and the whole church decided to choose some of their men to send with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. These were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas, who were leaders among the brothers. ²³They wrote this letter for them to deliver: "From: The apostles and the elders, your brothers To: Their gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

²⁴Greetings. We have heard that some men, coming from us without instructions from us, have said things to trouble you and have unsettled you. ²⁵So we have unanimously decided to choose men and send them to you with our dear Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. ²⁷We have therefore sent Judas and Silas to tell you the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place on you any burden but these essential requirements: ²⁹to keep away from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from anything strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you avoid these things, you will do well. Goodbye."

³⁰So the men were sent on their way and arrived in Antioch. They gathered the congregation together and

delivered the letter. ³¹When the people read it, they were pleased with how the letter encouraged them. [See also Acts 21:25]

Cf. to Galatians 2 — Does Paul's memory reported in Galatians 2 the same as the one reported above in the Book of Acts?

¹Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ²I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. ³Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

⁶As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. ⁷On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, a just as Peter had been to the circumcised. ⁸For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along. [In the next chapter (3), is Paul's rebuke of Peter because 1) Peter was hypocritical to associate with Gentile Christians only as long as Jewish Christians weren't present; 2) Peter ignored kosher laws before Gentile Christians but kept kosher before Jewish Christians; or c) Peter would eat like Gentiles (who ate "meat sacrificed to idols) but not before the more legalistic believers?]

Revelation 2

¹²"To the messenger of the church in Pergamum, write: "The one who holds the sharp, two-edged sword, says this: ¹³"I know where you live. Satan's throne is there. Yet you hold on to my name and have not denied your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your presence, where Satan lives. ¹⁴But I have a few things against you: You have there some who hold to the teaching of Balaam, the one who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality. ¹⁵You also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

* * *

¹⁸"To the messenger of the church in Thyatira, write: "The Son of God, whose eyes are like flaming fire and whose feet are like glowing bronze, says this: ¹⁹"I know what you've been doing your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance and that your last actions are greater than the first. ²⁰But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and who teaches and leads my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

Matthew 15

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.” ¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

Google the phrase “others may, you cannot” and read the thoughts of the 19th century Methodist evangelist J.D. Watson. How do his thoughts and the controversy about ‘meat sacrificed to idols’ intersect?

1 Corinthians 6:12

¹² “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 10

The Believer’s Freedom

²³ “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. ²⁴No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”

²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. ²⁹ I am referring to the other person’s conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience? ³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God — ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

Romans 14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be

the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹It is written:

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’”

¹²So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

¹³Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²²So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Finally, 2 More Passages that May Have Relevance to This Topic:

Galatians 2

¹⁵“We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷“But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

¹⁹“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

AND

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)

¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have

become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

A Scholarly Article on the Issue of Idol Food:

https://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/religious_studies/SNTS2002/garland.htm