

Prayer (Part 2) – Racial Reconciliation

Anthony Moore – January 10, 2016

Well, hello to you all. My name is Anthony Moore, and I bring you greetings from Funky Town. I am the campus pastor from Fort Worth, so it's good to be with you guys. Turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 8. I invite you, in honor of hearing from God, to stand with me as we read through his Word. We'll begin reading in verse 1 and continue to verse 13.

"Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that 'all of us possess knowledge.' This 'knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up. 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. 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.'

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. 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. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in 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, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."

As you are going to your seat, let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you in the name of Christ and by the power of your Spirit. Our prayer is so simple and yet also complicated, Lord. We pray that you would make us one as you are one. We love you, and it's in Christ's name we pray, amen.

In 1956, Dr. King wrote a letter with suggestions on how to have unity on an integrated bus. He had these suggestions. Beginning with point six of his suggestions, he said, "Remember that this is not a victory for Negroes alone, but for all Montgomery and the South. Do not boast! Do not brag! Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous, but not boisterous. Be loving enough to absorb evil and understanding enough to turn an enemy into a friend.

The bus driver is in charge of the bus and has been instructed to obey the law. Assume he will cooperate in helping you occupy any vacant seat. Do not deliberately sit by a white person, unless there is no other seat. In sitting down by a person, white or colored, say, 'May I?' or 'Pardon me,' as you sit. This is a common courtesy. If cursed, do not curse back. If pushed, do not push back. If struck, do not strike back.

Evidence love and good will at all times. In the case of an incident, talk as little as possible and always in a quiet tone. Do not get up from your seat. Report all serious incidents to the bus driver. For the first few days, try to get on the bus with a friend in whose nonviolence you have confidence. You can uphold one another by a glance or a prayer.

If another person is being molested, do not arise and go to his defense but pray for the oppressor and use moral and spiritual force to carry on the struggle for justice. According to your own ability and personality, do not be afraid to experiment with new and creative techniques for achieving reconciliation and social change. If you feel you cannot take it, walk for another week or two. We have confidence in our people. God bless you all."

What's incredible and so radical about this letter, as I consider it, is this letter comes not at the beginning of the struggle for equality and peace. This letter comes not in the middle of the struggle for equality and peace. No, no. The boycotters there who refused to be on the bus broke the system down financially so much so that they had to let all blacks ride on the bus and sit wherever they wanted to.

No, this letter comes after victory had already been won. All I can think about is the type of letter that would have come from my heart had I experienced these types of injustices. The letter that would have come from my heart would have said something like, "We won. We won. When you get on the bus... As a matter of fact, just turn around a few times. Don't let another person tell you where to sit on a bus ever again in your life," would have been the type of letter coming from my heart.

But the letter coming from Dr. King was precisely the opposite of that. He said, "Yes, we have won. There is victory, only do not let this victory, do not let this freedom be an opportunity to serve yourself, but see this victory, see this freedom as an opportunity to love. See it as a burden of love, a labor of love." What I want to say to you tonight is that in our past is a way forward. Right here in our past is a way forward because it feels like, at times, in the church, with regard to conversation on so-called race...

I'm just going to assume at times because of all that is happening and going on specifically in America between blacks and whites, I'm going to assume it at times. Although I realize there are a lot of other types of reconciliation that need to occur, but it feels like in the conversation around race, oftentimes the conversations have just stalled. We know we're supposed to see one another as equals in the church. We're not supposed to be racist. We get that.

We'll allow a little black church to exist over here, a Hispanic church over here, an Asian church over here, and we're quite content with this façade of unity. I think the watching world looks at us and goes, "We see your unity in Christ. We can see your unity in Christ, all right. There it is." What I think we want to see tonight is this text is a way forward.

Here's what I want to persuade you of. This is what I want you to go away with more filled out by the end. By means of our union with Christ, when we unite with him by faith, we become God's instruments to make the church reflect God's glory and God's mission because this world belongs totally and exclusively to him.

When we unite with Christ, we become God's instruments to display his glory. I could say it more simply than that. Through Christ, we're God's visible glory in the world right now. We are to be a picture of that right here on this earth. We are to image that. Here at The Village, you're going to have texts on eternity oftentimes just lifted up before your eyes, so let me do the same thing here. Let me follow suit.

Revelation 7:9-10. This is where we are headed. This is where 1 Corinthians is pointing. **"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb..."**

What I'm saying is right now, we are to be a picture of what Revelation 7 will be like. Right now, we're to image that.

We the church are those who are dancing in chains before the Lord and the world as a rehearsal for Revelation 7. We've been set free to dance, amen? We're just not quite free as we will be when Christ comes back. The dance is to be a rehearsal for what Revelation 7 is going to be like, so much so that when Paul is talking to the Corinthians believers, and they're dividing over small things, he looks at them and says, "Is Christ's body divided?"

The powerful, powerful implication is that right now, we're a representation of Christ's body. This is where we're headed, and 1 Corinthians 8 is methodology for how to get to Revelation 7. The conversation is going to begin with this notion of Christian freedom. Specifically, in this passage, it's consuming food that has been offered to idols. What freedom, if any, does the Christian have to eat food that has been sacrificed and now is being sold? Does the Christian have any freedom?

Like any church, you can see the two groups, both very passionate, one group saying, "No way. Impossible. You can't eat." The other group is saying, "Yeah, of course you have freedom to eat." Here we're talking about Christian freedoms. I mean to take aim at your concepts of Christian freedoms. Your view of politics, how you vote. Your views of owning a gun. Things like your use of money. Things like your choice of living arrangements. Your views on alcohol.

Everybody in here is just a little bit uneasy right now because I'm going to take aim at all of those things. Then I'm going to go right back out this door and then back and then to Fort Worth home. Don't follow me home, now. Where Paul is going to begin is to first point out that there is a sense of knowing but not loving. His point is... As he makes his point, he's saying to have knowledge of God is useless in one sense. The reason why it's useless is who cares if you know God if doesn't know you?

One of the biggest claims, most incredible boasts of Christian is that we claim, up next and in opposition to all of these false religions, to actually love the true and one God of the universe. The second biggest claim is that this God of the universe actually knows us. I don't know about you, but

this thought should humble you, the thought that the God of the universe who creates out of nothing actually knows my name. The one who has created the universe and the stars and the galaxies, this God knows my name and knows me intimately. That should humble you.

If it doesn't, you're not ready to be a theologian. You're not ready to think deeply about the things of God. More so, I would say you're extremely dangerous. What an incredible gift. Think about this. How do we get this God's attention? Do we jump up and down and say, "Look, Lord. Look at my dress. Look at the way I'm dressed, Lord. Don't you think I'm dressed nice?" He's going to look back at you and say, "I created out of nothing the gators your shoes are made out of."

Maybe you're just going to hold out all of the stuff you have. You know how we like to do this. "Look at my house. Look at my car. Look at my stuff." Maybe we put all of our riches before the Lord and say, "Lord, I'm something special. Look at all of my riches." The Lord will say to you, "I walk on streets of gold," as a means of making a financial statement. That is to say, "This is just a small picture of my net worth."

Even our character. "Lord, I'm a pretty good person. I'm pretty upstanding. I do right. I do things right for the most part." I think the Lord would say back to us, "Listen, I would swear by my mother as a means of validating my character that it is true and trustworthy. It's just this problem that I have no beginning, and I have no end. When I'm trying to find somebody better than myself to swear by so I can swear by my character, I can't find anyone, so I just swear by my name."

This is this God. How do you get his attention? How can you possibly get to the place you're actually known by him? The point is it's all of grace. It's grace because God did not count his Son. He did not count his Son too high a price to pay for our lives, but delivered him up for us that we might know him and love him. How do we get to a spot where we can love God? It is a gift of grace. How do we get to a spot where we are known by God? It is a gift of grace. That should humble us.

How does this thing connect to Paul's point? It's grace in, grace out. Being known by God is a gift from God by grace. Receiving this gift rightly should humble you and put you into a place where you would offer deep and sacrificial love to your brother, right? Truly understanding what a gift it is means grace in and grace out.

As I think about the letter Dr. King wrote to these people, I'm like, "Man, how in the world could you call them into that type of hardness, that type of difficulty where if you get on the bus, somebody is

probably going to spit on you. Someone is going to call you a name. Potentially, you get on a bus and do something wrong, you perhaps get lynched later on. How, Dr. King, do you call them into that type of hardness?"

If you listen to the actual letter and read the letter, and if you read your Bible at all, you know what he did was to connect the themes of the gospel to the movement. He had them see it as a burden of love, as a labor of love. That's what Paul is compelling us with here. The way we see our Christians freedoms is through a burden of love, a labor of love.

Ephesians comes in and says that when we show this type of labor of love or sacrificial love to different ethnicities out of a result of the love we have for God or that God has for us, it demonstrates the manifold wisdom of God. At first, I'm reconciled to God, and in being reconciled to God, when I'm reconciled to my brother, it demonstrates to a watching universe, to a watching world the manifold wisdom of God, or it does not.

What will the watching universe conclude if all whites are meeting in one building? What in the world will the universe conclude if all blacks are meeting in another and all Asians in another and all Hispanics in another and so on? Will they perceive this wisdom from us, the church? The answer is no, but we don't even get a chance to make the choice as to whether or not we're going to image this manifold wisdom of God because we've already made the choice in our living arrangements when we affirm passively a type of segregation.

When you have methodology, even if it's never stated, that says that if you have too many blacks that live in an area, it hurts the property value, if that's a governing principle behind things, we don't get a choice. Just know that in our living arrangements, we've already made the choice to forego the need for this type of sacrificial love. You just get together with everybody who is just like me. We've already made the choice to forego this demand that we would show the manifold wisdom of God with this sort of passive agreement to segregation.

We have every reason not to be thinking like this or not to deal with the difficulty of this conversation. It is much easier to go to a place where everybody sings songs the way you would want. It's much easier to go to a place where the sermon comes out in just the way you would like it. Whatever preference it is, there are a thousand reasons we could line up, but to it all, I would say I only have one compelling reason as to why we don't want to do this anymore.

That is, it does not show the manifold wisdom of God. It doesn't give us an opportunity to show the magnitude of the gift we have received, and it doesn't take us to Revelation 7. I know what you're saying. Some of you are thinking, "Yeah, but I have a job here. Just my job brought me here." You're thinking, "My property value." You're thinking, "Man, this is where it's safe." You're an instrument to make the church of God reflect God's glory, and it won't be the first time or the last time the gospel compels you to do something hard. Live for the coming glory of Christ alone.

What if the job you pursued is not about fulfilling personal ambitions but about demonstrating the manifold wisdom of God? What if your decision in buying a house is based on demonstrating the unity of the bride of Christ and not based on comfort or investments in temporal property values but on an eternal investment in displaying the glory of God?

When we live in a fashion that we have to demonstrate the love of God, it's harder, but in that way, we are instruments that reflect God's mission and his glory here on earth. With that, I will say I realize that at this moment, I don't have everybody with me. I still have to prove some of this point here. Let me move forward in the text. In verses 4 through 6 here, Paul is going to continue with his argument.

Like a person who does a good job arguing, he's going to actually restate their argument. We wouldn't know what their arguments were unless Paul did this here. He restates their argument. One of the things he's going to do is to actually affirm and agree with them. Their doctrine of God or their theology leads them to dismiss idols for what they really are. They're man's creation. Paul agrees with them.

They get to a place of being able to refute idol worship by revisiting their theology. Paul agrees. Here are the two points he's going to agree with. First, his point is that there is only one God. God the Father (check out the preposition) *for* whom all things exist. Then his second point, there is only one Lord. God the Son, Jesus Christ (check out the proposition), *through* whom all things exist.

Now, we could stop here and say, "There is something philosophically that just seems convoluted about it all. How can you have one God for whom all things exist and then one Lord through whom all things exist? There is something that just seems to be off there. Is there something here that is contradictory? We know the answer is no. This is the beginning constructs of what we would know as the Trinitarian God or Trinitarian theology, whereby God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of the same essence. Thank goodness.

Yet, they are all three separate, distinct persons. How does that connect to Paul's argument? When the Lord looks out and tries to figure out what the best thing is that he can give to his people, he looks around and can't find anything better to give than himself because if he could, that thing would be God, so he gives himself. How does he give himself? He gives himself in the person of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, and we possess him by means of the Holy Spirit that comes to live inside of us and dwell among us.

Here's the point Paul is making. If any of that gives you an opportunity to boast, you've completely missed it. How delusional are you? This Trinitarian God is working on your behalf. If that causes you to boast, you don't understand what is being done for you. Paul is going to respond to their way of doing theology. A way of viewing God or thinking about God that lets you off the hook, a way of doing theology that allows you to avoid the difficult call of the gospel, a way of doing theology that lets you avoid sacrificial love. Paul is taking aim at that.

He's going to one more time agree with their statement. Verse 8. "You're right. You will not lose anything before God by giving up your right to eat, and you're not gaining anything before God by exercising your right to eat," Paul says. He says essentially, "Yeah, do what you want with your freedom, with where you live, with politics, with guns. On the one hand, do whatever you want."

Paul is going to step back and say, "This is not legalism. You don't earn anything before God from getting to do this." He just simply has two rebuttals. The first rebuttal: "Be careful that this freedom of yours doesn't become a stumbling block to the weak and so destroy this person Christ died for." He's saying, "Consider the cost." Weigh it up. Measure it out. Count it out. What is the price of giving up whatever that liberty is that you're thinking of right now? What is the cost of it? How much is it going to hurt? What is it going to cost you?

Then just look and see what the cost was of Christ dying on the cross, the Trinitarian God moving and acting on our behalf, and see if this is not more weighty. I love Richard Sibbes, what he has to say here about the cost of redemption. Sibbes says, "See here for our comfort a sweet agreement of all three persons. The Father gives a commission to Christ. The Spirit furnishes and sanctifies it. Christ himself executes the office of a mediator. Our redemption is founded upon all three persons of the Trinity joining together in agreement."

They're doing all of that just to save little old you. That's what's happening. Is that not more weighty than whatever you can list out? If you think about what is going on in Corinthians, there is so much division in the church. If we read through just right here and looked, there is division over... Some follow Cephas. Some follow Apollos. Many think that in those names is ethnicity even there. They're dividing over ethnicities. They're dividing over who baptized them. They're dividing over how to handle sin in the church. They're taking each other to court, so there is division there.

Paul, how in the world are you going to try to see unity from all that type of division? It's by getting them to be so overwhelmed by the price and nature and quality of their salvation. It caused them to unify. Yes, it's free, and it does not cost us anything, but it has cost Christ a mighty price. Salvation is free to you and me, but that's because it has cost Christ everything.

Then his second rebuttal: "Sure, you can do whatever you want, guys. Eat. Don't eat. Whatever you want. But just make sure that you don't cause your brother to stumble. If you do, if you cause your brother to stumble, you sinned against Christ." It's like, "Paul, how could you go that radical? Nobody here is meaning to sin against Christ, Paul? Why go to that extreme?"

Even think about it in this way. I'm sure you've heard this argument. "Listen, my Christian freedom. I don't really mean to hurt anybody. I'm just kind of over here doing my own thing, living life. I didn't mean to stumble. How could I possibly sin against Christ?" It's Paul's sister statement in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 that helps us make sense of this.

"For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.

To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

Up until this point, you might be thinking, "How in the world are you applying race to this passage?" This is how. What Paul is saying is that his ethnicity, the fact that he is the Hebrew of Hebrews, that

his ethnicity to him is like clothing. It's something he can put on and take off. The more fundamental thing to who he is is his union with Christ. Can you say that? More than your liberties, more than your ethnicity, can you say, "My union with Christ is more fundamental to who I am"?

How can it that I, being a black man, be in a room that is predominantly filled with white... Well, with people who have a pigment deficiency. You see the world the way you want to. I see it the way I want to. How is it that I can be so at home and so comfortable? It's because I have to fight to see my union with Christ as more fundamental to who I am than anything else. How about it? Would you, a white person, be willing to go to an all black church? Would you be willing to do that?

Would you be willing to do that because your union with Christ is more fundamental to who you are? How about you, whatever ethnicity that is in here, by way of black, Hispanic? How are you doing? Is your union with Christ more important than your blackness? Is your union with Christ the most fundamental thing to who you are, such that you can put it on and take off ethnicity or liberty or whatever else, that Christ is central?

Oh, yeah. By the way, our world does not believe this. What is suggestive of this passage is that there are only two races, only two races. That is being in Christ or not, and that fundamentally, having everything to do with our faith in Christ and having nothing to do with the color of our skin, but our world does not believe this. I'm thankful for a close mentor and friend who helped me see the history of this.

I want you to see the history of this. In 1859, with the book *The Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin, the longer title, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. At the root of evolutionary type thinking is racism. From that, you get this drawing that you've all probably seen where you have a picture of apes, and the ape starts out. The first two are really, really small. Then, all of a sudden, they're standing up. Then they're standing up a little more. You know that drawing.

There are six apes in that picture. The first two apes represent just regular apes. The third picture, this third drawing represents maybe like a transitional between apes and humans, like Lucy or something like that. The fourth one represents a black one. The fifth one represents an Asian man. And the sixth one represents an Anglo-Saxon man. What's the point? They may not be going all the way to say there are different races, but what they're saying is it's just sub-level of human.

This is exactly the point that the Klu Klux Klan has in their doctrine statements and people like Hitler. But that's the past, right? What about the twentieth century, when an African pygmy was captured and brought to the U.S. and placed in a zoo in New York, not the South, but in New York. Listen to the comments that were made. "There was always a crowd before the cage, most of the time roaring with laughter. From almost every corner of the garden could be heard the question, 'Where is the pygmy?' The answer was, 'In the monkey house.'"

What are they saying? Sub-level human, multiple race, a different race. Both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses make similar statements. They'll make a statement like, "We know the circumstances underneath which the prosperity of Cain and later Ham were cursed with what we call the Negroid racial characteristics."

In 1974... We'll keep getting closer and closer to ourselves here. In 1974, a denomination was born, the African Methodist Episcopal Denomination. Why was it formed, you ask? It's because of racism within Methodism that did not allow certain races entry into the churches, so they formed African Methodist Episcopal Church.

How about fundamentals? What about them? Listen to this from John Rice, who is the founder of the magazine *Sword of the Lord*. "Socially, it is better for both Negroes and whites to run with their own kind and intermarry with their own kind. The mixing of races widely differing is almost never wise. Thus, if a girl who would do wrong to marry a Negro boy, she would be wrong to keep company with him, mixing regularly with him in social life."

It wasn't until 2000 that that denomination as a whole began to repent of that, and it's because George Bush was visiting the campus. How about Southern Baptists? I'm hitting a little closer to home because this is a denomination that we as a church are affiliated with. Not us, right? Well, the Southern Baptist Convention was established in 1845. Why? Because of a dispute. The dispute was what? "Can missionaries own slaves?" Southern Baptists answered, "Yes," so there was a divide.

A public repentance wasn't issued until the 150th anniversary of the SBC in 1995. According to one survey as late as 1968, only 11 percent of Southern Baptist churches allowed non-whites to be members. Only 11 percent. What about myself, my experiences? Maybe even some of you. I was looking for a job only about a year and a half ago, and I took my resume and sent it out, and I got hooked up with a guy who is over a region of churches.

He looked at my resume and said, "This is incredible. This is great. You're going to have no problems finding a pastorate position. I'm going to send this to all of the black churches." What was he saying? He fundamentally sees separation between us. It's not just light-skinned people who think this.

Elijah Muhammed, one of the founders of the nation of Islam, in his book *Message to the Blackman in America*, he has this to say. "The origin of all sin, the origin of murder, the origin of lying and deception, originating with the creators of evil and injustice, the white race. Even today, they like climbing and jumping. The monkeys are from them. Before their time there was no such thing as monkeys, apes, and swine."

What is he saying? "No, no, no. We're not the monkeys. You are." You can't believe in this stuff and actually believe in the Bible and what the Bible has to say because the Bible says we were all created. We all come from Adam and Eve. All of the human race comes from Adam and Eve. We don't even get the concept of multiple ethnicities until Genesis 10. There, what is the significance of Genesis 10? It's the table of nations.

There with the table of nations, we actually have this account of Noah by which all of the ethnicities of the earth come. What happened? Well, God sends out a flood, and he destroys the earth because of their rebellion against him. After that, we have this response in Genesis 10:32. **"These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood."**

What's the significance of that? The significance of that is we were one in Adam, and now we're one in Noah. We don't even get the dispersing of multiple ethnicities being sent out until Genesis 11. What happens in Genesis 11? Mankind decides, "God is not doing a very good job of being God, so we're going to try to overthrow him." You have the Tower of Babel. What is the curse God does? He disperses ethnicities all over the earth.

What's the second thing he does? He confuses their language. You might be thinking, "Man, how in the world are we going to find unity again back to where we are one people, one nation? How is that going to happen?" Genesis 12 comes. There in Genesis 12, we hear about the blessing given to Abraham where God promises to Abraham to make him the father of many nations.

The emphasis is he's giving you a hint. The way God is going to restore what was undone in Genesis 11 is through Abraham in Genesis 12, making his lineage, making Abraham the father of many nations. Before the Lord blesses Abraham as the father of many nations, he wants to teach him a lesson. God tells Abraham to take his son, the one and only son, the promised one, the one through whom God has made the promise to bless all the nations of the earth, through Isaac, he says, "Take and sacrifice him. Kill him."

The point God is trying to make is, "I will keep my promises to you, Abraham, even through death." We know Isaac doesn't die, but that's still a foreshadowing of Christ. Through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, we know God keeps his promises to Abraham to make him the father of many nations. How do we know that? Because of the book of Acts. In the book of Acts, the Spirit pours out on all people, all different types of ethnicities.

By the way, they're all speaking one language, one language. The book of Acts is not primarily about the sign gifts. It's primarily about the confirmation of the gospel and what Christ has done and God's promise to Abraham to make him the father of many nations. Where we're headed then is Revelation 7:9-10.

" After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with..."

Notice. "...a..." Not multiple. "...loud voice..." This one statement. **"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

All one. One in Adam. One in Noah. For those of us who, by faith, have been united with Christ, we are also one in Christ. It's going to take us something to really believe that. It's going to cost us something to really be an image of that reality right here and now. It's going to cost something. With that, we go back to the text and verse 13. What does it cost Paul to see that unity?

Paul says, "If food makes my brother who is in Christ stumble, I will never eat meat again." Now, hold on, Paul. I might give up some sugar, but give up meat? Come on, man. That's like every day. Maybe like on Monday or Thursday or something like that. Every day, Paul? Paul is like, "I'll never eat meat again." Why do that? He has already told us. **"I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."**

He does it all for eternity. What's going to call you into the hardness of what we're talking about here? It's eternity. It's his view on eternity. Our worldview, our biblical worldview tells us that when people die, they don't get a redo. When people die, they slip into what is their forever eternal resting place, and if they are not in Christ, if they are they are beginning to suffer underneath God's right and just punishment of sin for eternity right now punishing.

It's the weight of that. What was your liberty again? What was the thing you wanted to lift up again? What is it? Paul sees himself as an instrument right now to reflect God's glory on the earth. Do you? Do you see yourself as imaging this reality? You're free to ignore me. You're free to keep up or maybe take all of this and put it maybe in the ethereal world, philosophical world, and do what you want with it. You really are free to do that.

You're free not to think about your job in that way, not to think about housing arrangements in that way. You really are free to do that. You're free. We're all free to keep up this kind of passive segregation, this veneer of unity. It's true. We're all free to do all of that, but the gospel compels us. Our unity in Christ compels us. Eternity compels us, and Revelation 7 calls to us. It beckons to us. If we're not willing to take on this labor of love now, our generation will have to wait until Revelation 7 to actually see this, and the world will miss out on seeing the manifold wisdom of God.

You, right now, by means of your union with Christ, by faith, when you enter into Christ, you're an instrument to reveal the manifold wisdom of God now. I pray that every decision you make henceforth, all of your Christian liberty, that you would be found faithful, imaging, being instruments that demonstrate God's glory right now. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we pray that our unity here on earth would actually reflect who you are. We pray that right now, in the name of Christ, we would be instruments to reveal your glory. It's by your Spirit, by the power of your Spirit that we pray the watching world would actually see and believe in the authority and sufficiency of Christ because of the way we live our lives. It's in your mighty name we pray, amen.