

1 Corinthians 8:1- Rules and Regulations (Coalface 7) Entry, 2/6/2013, pm

- A church at the Coalface is one where....
... we live for God and for one another

Introduction

- There are all sorts of bits of contemporary life where we wonder how we should live as Christians, where what is "Christian" behaviour and what is compromise with the world is not clear cut:
 - I remember during the year Tim was here he & Stella told me about a gift they were given by an international student as a token of friendship... a lucky charm - should they hang it up in their hall?
 - how about Halloween?
 - taking Lottery funding to fix up a hall so it can be used for some good project?
 - or even whether or how we should stay in a denomination that has compromised on biblical principles...
- At first glance idol feasts and 1st century butchery practises don't seem particularly relevant to us today!
 - but these passages give us huge help in grappling with some of these knotty issues

Idol Feasts in Corinth

- Historical background:
 - pagan temples abounded
 - animals sacrificed pretty regularly
 - what to do with the animals afterwards?
 - sell the meat!!
 - ended up in the marketplace
 - substantial proportion of the meat on sale would have come through the temples
 - though not all
- Issue the Paul is addressing is whether Christians should eat the meat:
 - would they be "worshipping" the idols to whom the meat had been sacrificed if they did eat it? Were they in some way condoning, legitimising or participating in it by eating?
 - but alongside that Paul is also addressing the attitudes the Corinthian believers should have towards one another, particularly in this sensitive area

Paul says...

- You are free to eat (v.4ff)
- **But:**
 - you mustn't just think of yourself! (qv.7ff)

Application

Lottery

- Worshipping money?!
 - yes, free to take cash - don't think the same as playing the game...
 - but we will constrain that freedom for the sake of others - believers and non believers
 - we will grapple with what message it sends out, with what temptation it leads people into
 - so we may decide that we could, but we won't!

Halloween

- Likewise, in looking for apples or giving sweets to trick or treaters or going to a party we are not per se worshipping evil
 - though we must look carefully at the context, on a case-by-case basis...
 - but we must also consider whether doing something is beneficial - for us and for others - does it point to God? Will it enable someone to see more clearly Christ

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(will it be seen as a stand, or as stuck up?!)

Lucky Charms

- Likewise with the lucky charms!
 - they have no power...
 - but will they give the appearance of split loyalties, will they fudge the gospel's exclusive call to those who come into our homes?
- Must exercise a renewed mind!!
 - *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)*

Church of Scotland?

- *Who is the weaker brother?!*

Conclusion

- The whole thrust of what Paul is trying to say in these sections is captured towards the end of chapter 10:
 - (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 everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.*
- **Priority 1:** for the glory of God
- **Priority 2:** for the sake of my brothers
- **Priority 3:** for salvation of my neighbours