



A Thoroughly Modern Congregation: 1st Corinthians

Answers from the 1st Century Church to 21st Century Christians, Lesson 5

Give us this day, our daily bread.

Meat was not a daily item in the diet of ancient Greece and Rome. Greece was a mountainous land with poor soil. Conditions were little better in Rome. Greek and Roman epic poems filled with feasting were something of food porn for the commoners. Only wealthy could afford to eat like that! It is interesting that the only time the troops almost mutinied against Julius Caesar was when they were so short of rations he was feeding them meat! They marched on Roman bread!



Pork for high occasions, chicken more often. Beef rarely. When beef was available, it was because of some special occasion—usually a sacrifice to the gods. The donor would offer part of the animal in the temple and the rest of it would go to the alleyway butcher shop behind the temple. It was almost impossible to get meat in the ancient world that had not been offered to a god.

Procedure

It would be good for the participants to read the verses in 1st Corinthians ahead of time. Selected verses will be read during the course of the class, but not the entire section.

Be prepared to answer the discussion questions. Give them some thought.

Answers so far!

Divisions based on Leaders?

- **We follow Christ!**

Access to God through Wisdom or Power?

- **The Cross is God's wisdom and power!**

Role of the Holy Spirit?

- **Reveals the Gospel.**

Nature of Leadership in the Church?

- **Leaders serve the believers.**

The special role of the pastor.

- **He brings us God's Word**

The purpose of discipline

- **Turn souls from sin.**

I demand my rights.

- Better to be wronged

The sexual revolution

- Your body belongs to Christ

Should I get married?

- If you need to

Can I Eat Meat? 8

In the initial verses Paul lays down a principle for all questions in the Christian church. What is it?

How could this apply to those who object to the word “catholic” in the old version of the Nicene Creed (and in one holy catholic and apostolic church)? Or one who objects to the word “Christian” in our version of the Nicene Creed (and in one holy Christian and apostolic church)? Grape juice as well as wine in the Lord’s Supper? Wearing masks in worship during COVID?

Where do you get your meat? Where do they get the meat they sell you? What if the slaughterhouses were the back end of pagan temples? Would that matter to you?

Why should the Corinthian Christians not be concerned about the Greek and Roman false gods?

Let’s not get so hypothetical. Do you know what this symbol means on cans or packages of food?



Does that mean you support that cause? Why or why not?

Let’s not leave this topic quite yet. What light might this shed on the attitude in the world that every religion has something to contribute and all roads lead to heaven, however you define heaven?

But what if your Christian brother is a recent convert from Islam. Should you serve him chicken noodle soup with Matzo balls when he comes over for dinner?

What will love move a Christian menu to look like? What guidance might this also give if your spouse is on a diet for medical reasons?

Picky, Picky, Picky 9

When you don't like the message—shoot the messenger! The Corinthians were adept and vicious at tearing down Paul's reputation. What two weighty proofs does he offer for his apostleship in the opening verses of this chapter?

Evidently the Corinthians were despising Paul because he wasn't taking a salary! And, well, you know—you are only worth what you are paid. How might the devil try to give a hard time to our pastor working on mission code (\$36,000 salary, plus parsonage, plus insurance and pension) who serves all of our six figure engineers in Los Alamos? Or the guy in Northern California with the handful of millionaire members? What might be a good guide for the level of compensation for a pastor?

Why doesn't Paul make use of this right and how is his reasoning very much like what he wrote concerning eating meat sacrificed to idols?

A seminary professor met an old friend at a national convention. They had lunch. The professor asked the pastor what his career goals were. "Get to heaven," the country pastor replied. The professor laughed, "No, really, what are your career goals?" What are Paul's career goals? Isn't that setting the bar rather low?

Did Jesus Talk About This?

Jesus never took up the issue of idols. Jewish society was free from the outward idol worship of the pagan world. But he did address the issue of not causing offense by how you lived. Look up Matthew 17.24-27 and explain how this applies to 1 Corinthians 8.

Jesus did take up the issue of paying your ministers, in a way. Do you remember the directions he gives when he sends out the Seventy-two? (Luke 10.1-7)