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Sermon Notes

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Do Everything for the Glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

I. God's Top Priority... and Ours: His Own Glory

A. Key Questions Everyone Must Answer

1. Origins: Why is there something rather than nothing? How did I come to exist in a world like this?
2. Purpose: Why do I exist? What is my purpose in life?
3. Destination: Where is all this headed? Where am I headed?

B. Everyone must face these questions...

1. In 399 B.C., the Greek philosopher Socrates, on trial for his life, said "The unexamined life is not worth living"
2. What he meant is, to just simply exist and never face those deeper questions is worthless
3. However, I fear many live exactly that way... unexamined
4. They don't really address the three central questions I just posed
 - a. Origins: They look around at the universe as they experience it, and accept it as what is... and they don't ask where it all came from
 - b. Purpose: They live for one purpose... to feed their own desires and pleasures while they have time

Philippians 3:19 "Their god is their stomach"

- c. Destiny: They don't really think about tomorrow... they make plans as far as it suits them to get ahead in life, to achieve

temporal success—money, power, prestige, pleasures... but they don't ask where all this is headed

For such people, feeding their lusts and desires and appetites is their central purpose in life

1 Corinthians 15:32 "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Peter called false teachers who urged everyone to live for their sensual pleasures in harsh terms:

2 Peter 2:12 They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

As "creatures of instinct," they live the "unexamined life" ... they don't seek the ultimate answers to these three questions

The Question of Origin: How did all this come to be?

The Question of Purpose: Why did all this come to be?

The Question of Destination: Where is all this going?

C. But Christians are Uniquely Blessed by God to Have Answers to All These Questions

1. We would be no different than them if the grace of God had not shone light into our darkness
2. The Bible speaks the truth into our foolishness, light into darkness

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

3. Questions of Origin:

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The Bible teaches that the universe is the special creation of Almighty God... crafted intentionally by his hands

Psalm 8:3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place...

Not only that, the Bible makes it plain that we ourselves are specially crafted by God, knit together in our mother's wombs... not one of us is an accident

Psalm 139:13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made

4. Questions of Purpose: WHY did God make all things?

In many places, the answer to that is given... FOR HIS OWN GLORY!

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

God did not create the universe out of need, but out of generosity; not out of emptiness but out of fullness

God, the Triune God, Father – Son – Spirit, enjoyed perfect fellowship and harmony between themselves; they created a universe filled with his wisdom, power, love and creature to enjoy it

So human beings were created as a DISPLAY of God's glory, and also as STUDENTS of God's glory

First, as DISPLAYS of God's glory:

Genesis 1:27 God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Isaiah 43:6-7 Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Second... as STUDENTS of God's glory... able to see God's glory in creation, to understand it, and to be amazed by it:

Isaiah 6:3 "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

So, we human beings were created to DISPLAY the glory of God and to DELIGHT IN the glory of God

BUT we didn't!! We fell into sin... we exchanged the glory of God for darkness

Romans 3:23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Instead of displaying the glory of God, we have sinned and become corrupt; instead of delighting in the glory of God, we have become idolaters, living for created things rather than the Creator

For this reason, God sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world; he lived openly for the glory of God... never disobeying his heavenly Father at any moment... SINLESS

He displayed the glory of God in all his works... loving miracles that put God's glory on display: he healed the sick, fed the hungry, stilled the storm, raised the dead, spoke the truth. He put God's attributes on display radiantly

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being

And especially, he died on the cross to atone for all the ways we sinners have fallen short of the glory of God; and God raised him gloriously from the dead on the third day

Now the gospel of Jesus Christ stands ready to transform our darkened hearts by the glory of God

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

This is a NEW CREATION WORK for his own glory!!

By faith in Christ, all our unglorious sins have been atoned for

By faith in Christ, we are transformed from darkness to light

Now we are called on to live for his glory every single moment

To SEE the glory of God in the world, and in life's moments... and to delight in it... even the tiniest moments, like eating and drinking

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

And to DISPLAY the glory of God... as Jesus did, to put God on display by HOW you eat and drink... by HOW you speak words and walk paths

To put his glory on display... by how you live and what you are doing; this is now our PURPOSE moment by moment

Fine... what about the final question...

5. Questions of Destination: Where is all this headed?

- a. There is a direction, a purpose for all of this
- b. We are headed to a world perfectly radiant with the glory of God, and a city, called the New Jerusalem, as the crown jewel of that new universe:

Revelation 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

- c. And the most glorious thing there will be the Bride of Christ, the Church, the assembly of redeemed sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation on earth

Revelation 21:9-11 "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

- d. Whatever we can do NOW to work together with God for the assembly of that radiantly beautiful church should be our top priority... the eternal display of the glory of God in the salvation of human beings

D. Context:

1. Meat sacrificed to idols... the end of three chapters in which Paul has been dealing with this issue
2. Pagan religion: animal sacrifice; sexual immorality; all in the service of false gods and goddesses represented by idols
3. Question came up: can we eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?
4. Chapter 8: LOVE LIMITS LIBERTY
5. Chapter 9: Paul uses himself as an example of self-denial for the sake of the gospel...

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

6. BUT Paul also spoke of the dangers of sin... he denied his bodily drives and desires and beat his body and made it his slave so as not to be disqualified from the prize... not just of fruitful service to Christ, but of heaven itself
7. Chapter 10: Paul lays heavy warnings on the Corinthians based on Israel's history of idolatry... warnings to all of us of the dangers of LUSTS and IDOLS... if you think you've escaped all dangers, you are in GREAT DANGER

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

8. Paul warned them to flee idolatry... for them, it meant open participation in the idols feasts that happened regularly; to go down

to the temple during one of those feasts and to partake was to be a partaker with DEMONS... they would be drawn back into the pagan mindset, the pagan lifestyle that they had been rescued from

9. Now, in this final section, he gives some very practical instructions about OTHER SETTINGS... the MEAT MARKET and EATING AT A GENTILE'S HOME
10. The practical guidelines are helpful... but of vastly more importance is the one supreme purpose to our lives

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Now... Let's walk thru Paul's practical instructions...

II. Guiding Principles on Christian Liberty [John MacArthur]

A. Edification Above Gratification

1. Building up the Church of Jesus Christ is far more important than eating food you like... gratifying your taste buds
2. Paul returns to that slogan that they probably got from him first but were misusing

"All things are lawful for me."

3. Now, he answers... "Yes... true, to some degree. But...
 - a. ***Not everything is beneficial or helpful...***
 - b. Yes... all things are lawful for you... but not everything EDIFIES or BUILDS UP or is CONSTRUCTIVE
4. This returns to what should be the great work of our lives, because it is God's great work... the construction of the Church of Jesus Christ... depicted in Ephesians 2 and 1 Peter 3 as a spiritual structure that is built out of living stones (people saved by grace in Christ)... this spiritual temple RISES MORE AND MORE GLORIOUS as more and more people are saved in Christ

5. Edification = BUILDING OTHER UP in Christ... building up the church of Jesus Christ through evangelism and discipleship
6. Gratification = doing what you want to do, what your desires and tastes and preferences are
7. So... your liberty is restrained by your higher commitment to build others up in Christ

B. Others Above Self

1 Corinthians 10:24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

1. This is the basic call of the Christian life... following Christ's pattern of denying himself for our sake...

Matthew 16:24-25 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

Romans 15:2-3 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself

2. We are so selfish! Our flesh demands its own way, what WE WANT when we want it
3. The question you have to ask yourself is, "What have I given up that I have the right to do so that I can bless someone else?"
4. A consistent life of learning not to ask, "What's in it for me??"
5. The world is so selfish; each individual is so focused on self-interests

Philippians 2:21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

6. God calls us to imitate Christ in putting others' needs and benefit above our own

Philippians 2:4-5 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus

C. Liberty Instead of Legalism

1. The principle of freedom still does exist; Jesus DID declare all foods clean... so... as long as no one else is hurt, EAT!!!
2. Case Study #1: The Meat Market

1 Corinthians 10:25-26 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

- a. After the animals were sacrificed at the temple, the extra that the priests didn't need would end up in the market to be sold
- b. Other meat was also sold at the meat market... meat never offered to any idol... the whole thing was just mixed together
- c. The meat vendors would not usually keep track of where the meat came from
- d. So, a Christian could just simply go there, buy meat, bring it home, cook it and eat it without any fear of spiritual pollution
- e. For THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S and EVERYTHING IN IT (Psalm 24:1)... God made it to be enjoyed

1 Timothy 6:17 God... richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

- f. BUT don't ask the meat vendor where it came from!! Once he tells you "Oh, this just came from the temple of Apollo"... it has been connected directly with an idol and you must not eat it
3. Case Study #2: Eating at an Unbeliever's Home
 - a. This was a key issue... the Corinthians were supposed to be leading lost people to Christ; making friends for the gospel

- b. At some point, they might invite you over for a meal... you should definitely GO!!

1 Corinthians 10:27-29 If some 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 anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake-- ²⁹ the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours.

- c. So, just like the meat market, if no story is told about the origin of the meat, just enjoy it and remember to thank your host and hostess for a delicious meal!
- d. But if anyone (whether the unbeliever or perhaps a Christian who is also there) has INSIDE INFORMATION about the origin of the meat and tells you, you must NOT EAT
- e. Why? Because you will be harming that person's conscience
 - i) Either the unbeliever's conscience, which should be telling him that idolatry is false and that God wants all people to forsake such empty religion and come to him through Christ
 - ii) Or perhaps Paul means a Christian's conscience who is there; maybe the unbeliever has invited a bunch of Christians over; you are going to have to offend someone; it is actually better to offend the unbeliever than your Christian brother or sister that told you about the meat
 - iii) You are still trying to win the lost man and his family to Christ; but not at the cost of the conscience of your believing brother or sister! UNITY IS VITAL!

1 Corinthians 10:32-33 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

- 4. Final statement on liberty over legalism
 - a. We can't be ruled by other people's consciences

- b. That would be a new form of slavery... like Paul's battle with the Judaizers, who were upholding the KOSHER laws

1 Corinthians 10:29-30 For why should my freedom be 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?

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Paul would say, If you have a weaker brother whose conscience is constantly pressing him to judge other people, he needs to stop doing that! He needs to grow up into Paul's full maturity and understand all foods are now clean and that we can eat whatever we want, and to stop raising questions of conscience that torment everyone in the church

D. God's Glory Above All

1. This is the final principle, just as for us today it was the first

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

2. The smallest details of life can be elevated to the level of the eternal glory of God
3. How I eat and drink, how I do laundry, how I care for my car or study for my mid-term, or interact with servers at a restaurant... at every single moment of my life, I want to PUT GOD ON DISPLAY... I want to LET MY LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS so they can SEE MY GOOD DEEDS and glorify God in eternity
4. The greatest glory God can receive in this world is the salvation of lost people... so I want to eat and drink and do all things in such a way that a watching world can find salvation in Christ

III. The Power of Example

1 Corinthians 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

- A. These issues have been intensely PRACTICAL... but behind the practical daily life counsel Paul has given is an eternal principle: God's glory
- B. How to live daily life for the glory of God is taught in scripture, but also lived out BY EXAMPLE
- C. Paul sent himself forward as a role model, an example... but ultimately only to point to Christ

Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

- D. Jesus as Ultimate Role Model: "follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ!!"

Jesus taught us what it meant to eat and drink and live all for the glory of God

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

He especially ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners to win them to the Kingdom

How can we follow that example??

IV. Applications

- A. Come to Christ!
 1. Are you living what Socrates called "the unexamined life?"
 2. How do you answer the question of ORIGINS... where did all this come from?
 3. How do you answer the question of PURPOSE... Why do I exist?

4. How do you answer the question DESTINATION... where is all this heading? Where am I heading?
 5. Don't live for your stomach... for your daily tastes and drives and desires. Live for the glory of God! For something infinitely greater than yourself!
 6. Find in Christ your answer to all these deep questions! Especially, "How can a sinner like me find forgiveness and a love relationship with God?"
- B. Christians: Are you willing to give up some of your freedoms to win others for Christ?
1. Are you willing to make sacrifices in your schedule? To be with people you ordinarily wouldn't choose to be with?
 2. To offer or receive hospitality from unbelievers so you can win them to Christ?
 3. Are you willing to change your patterns? Get out of your bubble of self-chosen lifestyle to meet lost people and win them to Christ?

1 Corinthians 10:33 For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

C. The Ennobling of Commonplace Things

1. Beyond evangelism, 1 Corinthians 10:31 gives you a purpose to even the most mundane tasks... just eating and drinking can be done for the glory of God!
2. So you can store up treasure in heaven every single moment!!

A certain miller from a nondescript village wanted to make himself appear important. So he boasted to the King that his beautiful daughter could spin straw into gold. The King called his bluff and locked his daughter in the tower with a room full of straw, ordering her to spin the straw into gold by morning, or face a horrible death. As the hapless girl sat there and mourned, suddenly a strange dwarf appeared and offered to do the magical deed. He had the power to spin the straw into gold. But in order for him to do this, she had to agree to give him her firstborn child.

This is how the strange and somewhat eerie children's story "Rumpelstiltskin" goes. For me, it is a striking illustration of the incredible power of faith to transform even the most menial tasks and the most ordinary days into gold for all eternity. Apart from faith in Christ, our deeds are said to be no more than *wood, hay, and straw*. (1 Corinthians 3:12) When they are tested on Judgment Day for their quality, they will burn up and we will suffer loss. (vs. 15) However, anything done by faith in Christ, for the glory of God, will survive the fire of Judgment Day and will last for all eternity. In this way faith transforms straw and makes it gold.