

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 226 – August 14th – 1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

John Drane	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Leon Morris	<i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985
Anthony C Thistleton	<i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000

1 Corinthians 9

To bring home what he has said of rights in chapter 8, Paul now speaks of the way in which his own conduct has been determined not by rights but by the demands of the Gospel. Cf. his call to the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he is of Christ, 4:16; 11:1.

Verse 1

Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ;

"Paul is keen to establish the credentials of true apostleship not because they were held in doubt as such, but because his freely chosen decision to renounce 'rights' which the 'strong' undoubtedly regarded as part of the status and signs of apostleship (forceful, stylish rhetoric and its related 'professional status,' 2:1-5, and financial support from a patron or patrons, 9:1-27) was perceived to imply thereby something deficient about his status in relation to such 'rights'. He defends his apostleship only (a) in order to establish the 'right' which he chooses to renounce, and (b) because the argument which he is about to offer may otherwise cast doubt on the initial premise which is otherwise accepted." Thistleton

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

– free with respect to the exercise of rights, cf. v.19.

οὐχὶ see 8:10

οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος "'Apostolic witness' concerns life as well as word. Hence Paul is not simply appealing to 'example' in the rhetorical sense identified by Mitchell, as an instantiation to illustrate or to support an argument. The instantiation of the cruciform, Christlike stance toward others in practical lifestyle constitutes both part of what is to be an apostle and an instantiation of the Christ-centred principle urged in 8:1-13." Thistleton

Verse 2

εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι, ἢ γὰρ σφραγίς μου τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

ἀλλὰ γε 'at any rate'

σφραγίς, ἰδος f seal, mark, proof

"A seal was important in an age when many could not read. A mark stamped on clay or wax, or some similar substance, was first of all a mark of ownership, and then a mark of authentication. All could see the mark and know what it signified. The Corinthians had been won for Christ by Paul, and they were thus the sign that attested his apostleship." Morris

ἀποστολή, ης f apostleship, mission

Wolff observes that if the Corinthians deny Paul's apostleship they deny their own existence.

Verse 3

Ἢ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν ἐστιν αὕτη.

ἐμός, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

ἀπολογία, ας f defence, answer

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ἀνακρινῶ examine, question, judge

Does αὕτη point back to the previous verses or to what follows? The paragraph division in the UBS text divides verse 3 from verse 2. However, Morris argues that this verse belongs with v.2. Robertson and Plummer also argue that the verse goes with what precedes, 'That I have seen the Risen Lord, and that you are such a Church as you are – there you have my defence when people ask me for evidence of my Apostleship.' So also Thistleton.

Verse 4

μη οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν;
ἐξουσία, ας see 8:9

The plural may include Paul's team.

φαγεῖν aor act infin ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ eat
πεῖν aor act infin πινώ drink

Most think, 'at the church's expense' is implied, though Barrett argues that there may also be a reference back to idol food – the subject of the previous chapter.

Verse 5

μη οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα
περιάγειν, ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ
ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Κηφᾶς;

ἀδελφη, ης f sister, female believer

Here, 'a believing wife.'

γυνή, αικος f woman, wife
περιαγω go around, take along
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

'Brothers of the Lord,' particularly perhaps James, cf. Gal 1:19.

Κηφας, α m Cephas (Aramaic equivalent of Πέτρος, rock).

"It is possible that Peter receives explicit mention at the end because it was widely known that he was married (Matt 8:14)." Thistleton

Verse 6

ἢ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν
ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι;

μονος, η, ον only, alone

"If Acts 13 and 14 provide earlier historical material known among the Pauline communities, the early 'missionary journey' of Paul and Barnabas may have offered a well-known model of missionary-pastors who paid their own way rather than drawing financial support from Antioch or from those to whom they ministered." Thistleton

Verse 7

τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίῳ ὀψωνίῳ ποτέ; τίς
φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ
ἐσθίει; τίς ποιμαίνει ποιμνὴν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ
γάλακτος τῆς ποιμνῆς οὐκ ἐσθίει;

στρατενομαι serve as a soldier

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

ὀψωνιον, ου n pay, wages

Can also mean, 'rations of food', 'provisions.'

φυτευω plant

ἀμπελων, ωνος m vineyard

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

ποιμινω keep sheep, tend as a
shepherd, rule

ποιμνη, ης f flock

γαλα, γαλακτος n milk

ἐσθίει here rather than 'drink' since it covers a range of milk-products, e.g. cheese.

Verse 8

Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ ὁ νόμος
ταῦτα οὐ λέγει;

κατὰ ἄνθρωπον 'on the level of purely human example'.

λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 9

ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται· Οὐ
κημώσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει
τῷ θεῷ,

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Dt 25:4.

κημωω muzzle

Many MSS have the more literary term φιμώσεις rather than κημώσεις

βους, βοος m ox

ἀλοαω thresh

μελει impersonal verb it is of concern, it matters

The implication is not that God does not care for oxen but that if he so cares for oxen is he not all the more concerned for those who labour in the Gospel – 'it is not for oxen *alone* that God is concerned'. Thistleton cites the work of Richard Hayes who points out that Deut 24 and 25 are concerned with laws which promote dignity and justice *for human beings*. "The unexpected insertion of one verse about threshing coheres most closely with the encouragement of *human sensitivity* and *humane compassion* toward the suffering or defenceless (e.g., the immediately preceding context concerns the plight of widows, orphans and victims of punishment). Paul's question, then, 'Is it perhaps about oxen that God is concerned?' (i.e., oxen *as such*) genuinely conveys the thrust of the context that constrains the force and direction of 25:4, although in this case it is more likely that μη ... θεω is the μη used to express a *hesitant* question ('is it perhaps ...?') rather than the question which invites an emphatically negative answer... To suggest that this is the 'true and primary referent' of Deut 25:4 may perhaps overpress a point which is otherwise helpful. No doubt Paul sees Deuteronomy 25 as being written *more* for humankind than for animals (but not exclusively so)."

Verse 10

ἢ δι' ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει; δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη,
ὅτι ὀφείλει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριάν,
καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν.

παντως by all means, surely, certainly

'Or is he (not) certainly speaking in our interest.'

ὀφείλω owe, ought, must
ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, what is hoped for
ἀροτριαῶν plough
ἀλοῶν see v.9

For ploughman and reaper as pictures of the Christian worker, see 3:6

μετεχω share in, eat, belong to

Verse 11

εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπείραμεν, μέγα
εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν;

πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to
the spirit

ἐσπείραμεν aor act indic, 1 pl σπειρω sow
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

Equivalent to our idiomatic 'is it any big deal'

σαρκικος, η, ον belonging to this world,
material

θεριζω reap, harvest

Verse 12

εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν, οὐ
μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς;
Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ
πάντα στέγομεν ἵνα μὴ τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ
εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right, power
μετεχω see v.10

τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν Fee suggests
'share in rights over you.'

μᾶλλον adv more; rather

χραομαι use, make use of, make the most
of

Refers to Paul's conduct during his 18 months
or so at Corinth.

στεγω endure, put up with
ἐγκοπη, ης f obstacle, hindrance

A word "used of breaking up a road to prevent the enemy's advance. Paul had avoided doing anything that might prevent a clear road for gospel advance." Morris. Cf. Is 40:3-4. "Hock and Chow accurately show that this voluntary constraint on his freedom is bound up with a potentially vulnerable indebtedness to patrons, which could compromise his position as an impartial apostle." Thistleton

δῶμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl δίδωμι give

Verse 13

οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερά ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ ἐκ
τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν, οἱ τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ
παρεδρεύοντες τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ
συμμερίζονται;

"Either Paul was so eager to make the point about voluntary restraint that v.12b interrupts the argument, or more probably he suddenly remembers a still more compelling argument which does not depend upon analogy but on established precedent familiar to the readers, whether drawn from OT or Jewish or Greco-Roman religious practice." Thistleton

ἱερος, α, ον sacred, holy, pertaining to the
temple

ἱερον, ου n temple, temple precincts

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar (of incense)

παρεδρευω serve, wait upon

συμμεριζομαι share with

'Have a share of what is sacrificed.'

See Lev 7:6, 8-10, 14, 28-36 etc.

Verse 14

οὕτως καὶ ὁ κύριος διέταξεν τοῖς τὸ
εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
ζῆν.

διατασσω command, give instructions
καταγγελλω proclaim, make known,
preach

ζωω live, be alive

Probably an allusion to Jesus' words recorded
in Luke 10:7; Matt 10:10.

Verse 15

Ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχημαι οὐδενὶ τούτων. οὐκ
ἔγραψα δὲ ταῦτα ἵνα οὕτως γένηται ἐν ἐμοί,
καλὸν γάρ μοι μᾶλλον ἀποθανεῖν ἢ τὸ
καύχημά μου οὐδεὶς κενώσει.

χραομαι use, make use of

The perfect denotes a continuing stance.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

οὐδενὶ τούτων 'none of these rights' or, in
context, 'never ... any of these rights.'

ἔγραψα an epistolary aorist

γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

ἐν ἐμοί 'in my case'

μᾶλλον adv more; rather,
ἀποθνησκω die, face death

"better for me to die than – The text here is difficult. The best interpretation is that Paul breaks off his sentence and does not complete it. What follows is an explanation. 'No man will make this boast of mine an empty one.'" Morris. Thistleton reminds us that Paul is *dictating* the letter. He breaks off speaking due to emotion.

The textual variants would appear to be attempts to alleviate the abruptness of the text.

καυχῆμα, τοῦ ἐν ground for boasting, object of boasting, boasting, pride

"It may be easy to misunderstand Paul's use of καύχημά μου if we forget that Paul's theme is his *glory in the cross* (1:18-31). His thought revolves around a core contrast between *human boasting* and *glorying in the Lord* (1:30-31). His rejection of dependency on patronage at Corinth reflects, in accordance with Matt 10:5-14 and the part parallel Luke 10:3-9, the apostolic living out of trustful dependence on God's grace alone, in which he is able *freely to give* precisely as his response to his having *freely received*." Thistleton "In offering the 'free' gospel 'free of charge' his own ministry becomes a living paradigm of the gospel itself." Fee

κενοῶ deprive of power, make of no effect, empty of meaning

Verse 16

ἐὰν γὰρ εὐαγγελίζωμαι, οὐκ ἔστιν μοι καύχημα, ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται· οὐαὶ γάρ μοι ἔστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι.

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

ἀνάγκη, ἡς f necessity, compulsion
ἐπικειται lie upon, be imposed (of regulations)

οὐαὶ interj. woe! how horrible it will be!

"It is agony if Paul tries to escape from the constraints and commission which the love and grace of 'the hound of heaven' presses upon him." Thistleton

Verse 17

εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω· εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι.

ἐκὼν, οὐσα, ον of one's own free will

Or here, 'entirely by personal choice.'

πράσσω practice, do

μισθός, ον m pay, wages, reward

ἄκων unwillingly

οἰκονομία, ας f task, responsibility

πεπίστευμαι Verb, perf pass ind, 1s πιστεῦω here = entrust

"There is more than one way of understanding this difficult verse. Paul may mean that the man who preaches with a willing spirit merits his reward, whereas if he is unwilling he is not excused. He must still discharge his stewardship. Or he may be starting from the premise of verse 16 that 'necessity presses upon me'. If he preached of his own free choice he would merit a reward. As it is, it is not his own choice. He must preach. The next verse would then be understood as, 'What reward is possible under these circumstances?' There is nothing of grace in μισθός, *reward*, which rather signifies 'wages', 'the payment of what is due'. Morris

"The whole argument hinges on sovereign grace, and that it is in *freely giving* in response to God's free gift that καυχῆμα, grounds for taking delight in what one gives, becomes possible *only within a framework where pressure and law do not apply*: free gift in response to free gift. It is in *giving* that the believer *receives*, not some 'external' reward, but through the internal grammar of the blessedness of giving which is the stamp of identification with the cross. Hence, if Paul cannot 'freely' give his apostolic work (since to this he is pressed by God without choice), what is left to give 'freely' is his toil and labour as a leather worker and salesman in the commercial agora. This he gives to relieve others of bearing his costs and more especially avoiding the obligations of patronage which might compromise his voice on behalf of less influential groups within the church." Thistleton

Verse 18

τίς οὖν μοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός; ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρησασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

"This verse explicates the point just made above. Only by *gratuitously* proclaiming the gospel *gratis* can Paul go beyond the preaching which God has pressed upon him as an inescapable, non voluntary, task, and thereby go 'the second mile.' To do this, however, he must forego a right, as he pleads with 'the strong' among his readers to do." Thistleton

ἀδαπανός, ον free of charge

θήσω Verb, aor act subj/ fut act indic, 1 s

τιθεῖμι place, set, present

καταχρησασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin

καταχρασμαι use, make full use of

ἐξουσία, ας f right, capability, power