



PREACHING THE CROSS
God's Remedy for a Troubled Church

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAKE ORION

Run the Race God's Way

Sunday, October 16, 2016

Dr. Juan M. Moreno

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

This passage serves as a transition from Paul's apostolic defense to a return, in 10:1–22, to the argument begun in chapter 8 against participation in the cultic meals.

Paul uses a general observation from the Isthmian games: all run, but only one obtains the prize (v 24a). Paul urges the Corinthians "to run in such a way to win" (v 24b). Competitors in the games exercise self-control in all things so that they may obtain the prize which is a perishable wreath, "a 'crown' that will not last."

Believers, however, compete for a prize that is imperishable.

Paul is urging the Corinthians to exercise self-control in "running" the Christian life so as to obtain the eternal reward (vv 25-27).

I. PAUL DEFENDS HIS RIGHT TO GIVE UP HIS "RIGHTS" (9:15-23).

A. Paul gives up his right to support for personal reasons (9:15-18).

1. Paul does not take support so that he can serve as an example to the Corinthians.

Paul who had vigorously argued for the legitimate right to material support, did not exercise that right. Paul now calls the Corinthians, who were vigorously arguing for a "perceived right" to eat meat offered to idols at the temple, to follow his example and give up that "right." The major difference is that the Corinthians had a "perceived right" while Paul had "legitimate right."

2. Paul does not take support because of the Corinthian mind-set (9:18).

The reason the Corinthians would have loved Paul to accept support from them was so that they could control both the messenger and the message, much like the Greek Sophists.

The sophists were a class of philosophers who were paid for their oratory skills. They knew how to get a crowd and to persuade them into their way of thinking. Those that hired sophists became their patron or benefactor. The patrons would have input into and some control over the message and the messenger in such arrangements.

Since Paul was not accepting support from the Corinthians, they could not control him or his message. They insisted that the reason he was not accepting support was because he knew he was not a true apostle.

3. Paul does not accept support because of the compulsion placed on him by God (9:16).

Preaching the gospel of Christ is not something Paul *chose* to do. It is something he *must* do. This compulsion is so great that he says, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

B. Paul gives up his right to support for the sake of the gospel (9:19-23).

- 1. Paul gives up his liberty so that he can become a servant to the Jews, to those under the law, those without the law, and to the weak.**
- 2. Paul becomes "all things to all people so that by all possible means he might save some" (9:22b).**

Paul does "all this for the sake of the gospel," that he "might share in its blessings."

C. Paul gives up his right for the sake of the future reward (9:24-27).

1. The Analogies

Paul draws analogies from the Isthmian Games to describe the Christian life and the future prize that is to be obtained.

- a. A Runner in a Race
- b. A Boxer in a Fight

2. The Expectations

- a. The Need for Motivation (9:25)
 - (1) For the athlete: *a perishable wreath*
 - (2) For the believer: *an imperishable wreath*
- b. The Need for Self-Control
 - (1) Self-control is necessary to overcoming "the works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-24).
 - (2) Self-control is made possible by the indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:11-13).
- c. The Need for Exercise (9:27)
 - (1) Godly discipline offers benefits for life now (1 Tim 4:7-8).
 - (2) Godly discipline offers promise for the life to come.

II. PAUL DISCIPLINES HIMSELF TO AVOID DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE PRIZE (1 Cor 9:27)

What is Paul referring to when he makes the statement in 9:27, . . . *I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified?*

A. Option 1: Preaching or Ministering

I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified from the ministry of preaching.

B. Option 2: The Prize He Was Preaching About

*I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will **not be disqualified from the eternal prize.***