

## Sunday School Time in the Word - Sunday, April 19

### Welcome - Remarks

Since we have committed ourselves to be **Berean-like**, Searching the Scriptures, Discerning, **I think**:

*What Scriptures apply to the something the Bible says nothing about, like Covid-19 and the resulting challenges and changes?*

Going through the times we are in, victoriously/righteously, as a Christian (salt, light) **requires wisdom** – a skill in living in accordance with the Scripture.

*What in the Word is going to give me wisdom on what to do? What does the Word teach me, that I can apply to Covid-19, so I can live wisely?*

This morning: a glimpse into what was happening in NT times and God's instructions, through the example of the apostle Paul, on what to do. That instruction gives wisdom to guide/direct my decisions/choices on what to do today (Covid-19).

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### First I want to show you the connection to the NT times.

- Covid-19 has led to restrictions – no assembling, stay at home, no visiting, travel, social distancing, 6 ft., face masks, hand washing..., restaurants closed to dine-in, some restrictions on purchases...
- These restrict what I am used to doing, **freely** – without restriction.
- Our sin nature rebels against restrictions on our self-will. Example: the Law excited the sin nature. As soon as one was told to not do something, they wanted to do it more.
- We do not like restrictions, especially on things we could freely do (our freedoms). We do not like to be told what we can and cannot do.

Some Christians, chaffing against the restrictions argue:

- Who has authority? How much authority?
- Attention and Discussion turns to origin of the virus, where and how it spread, numbers impacted, how impacted, comparison with other statistics. Thinking turns political and partisan – who said what, did what, when. At the core of this is: We do not want someone telling us what to do or to what extent to do it... we reserve those decisions for my **self**.

The NT has nothing like Covid-19. Times are different. Culture different. Circumstances different. Issues different. **What it does have are other issues where Christians were faced with what to do with their freedoms/rights – voluntarily restrict them or demand their use.**

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## Three thoughts from the Apostle Paul on the use of his freedoms/rights.

Only a survey – but enough to set us thinking and to give us direction as we make choices in the midst of responding to the Covid-19 restrictions.

### 1. Christ First – Not Me

Christ on the throne, Christ pleased – not me.

Colossians 1:18; 3:23; Ephesians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

### 2. The Gospel – Not Me

1 Corinthians 9 - Paul had the right/freedom to receive support for his ministry.

- 9:12b – he voluntarily did not receive support (but made tents)

**Lest he hinder the gospel of Christ.**

In NT times itinerant teachers not only were false theologically but made merchandise of the people and were “getting rich” off the support demanded and received.

- Note Paul’s mind - 9:15-16, 18 – not abuse his power (right) in **the gospel**
- Context of v. 19-23; restricting his freedoms (not demanding their use) for the **sake of the gospel!**
- Context of v. 24-27; brought his flesh/desires into subjection ... **for the sake of the gospel.**
- Cp. 1 Corinthians 10:33

*How will my choices – words, actions, discussions, posts... impact the gospel?*

*Will there be those who will not listen to the gospel because I am demanding my freedoms and rights? Will my actions hinder the gospel?*

*Will the demand for my freedoms and rights consume me so that don’t even think about the spread of the gospel?*

### 3. Others – Not Me. Primary issue – meat sacrificed to idols.

1 Corinthians 10: 22-24, 23-33

1 Corinthians 8:13;

Romans 14:15, 19; 15:1-7

Romans 14:1;