

January 30, 2018

Hello from Sixth Street Christian Church! This past Sunday I preached on 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. It's part of a letter from the Apostle Paul to a church he founded shortly after Jesus' resurrection. At first glance, the passage seems irrelevant to people living in the 21st Century. Our issues aren't the same as their issues. This passage, for example, deals with whether you can be a faithful Christian if you eat meat from animal sacrifices to false gods. That's not a choice most of us have to make. Before you dismiss this scripture, I invite you to think a little deeper as Paul asks the original readers of his letter to do. Paul doesn't give a simple answer to the Corinthians; instead, he essentially says, "Yes and no." Gee thanks, Paul. He goes on to say that the real issue isn't about meat eating at all; it's about any issue that divides the church. Technically, since the "gods" aren't anything meaningful, eating sacrificial meat doesn't matter, and some of the members of the church in Corinth know that. They are quite proud of that knowledge as a matter of fact, and they have been throwing it in the face of the other, less knowledgeable, members of the church. The ones in the know have even convinced some of these other members to eat the meat even while they still believe the Roman gods are real. Paul writes that the knowledgeable ones have thrown an enormous stumbling block in the others' faith and destroyed them. Paul calls the church back to what really matters: love. Is it a loving to convince someone to do something he or she considers sinful? Nope. Instead we are to build up our brothers and sisters in love. Let us let go of the meaningless issues that divide us and concentrate on strengthening one another. Ask yourself, "Is what I'm doing or saying making someone stronger or tearing him or her apart? Does it bring us closer to one another and to God?" And then behave and speak so you can always answer, "Yes."