

The Freedom of Slavery (I Corinthians 9:19-23) Dr. Roy E. Beacham

Introduction: salvation is liberating

From self and sin: Galatians 2:19-20
From manmade rules and regulations: Colossians 2:20-23
From societal criticism and judgment: I Corinthians 4:2-4

We revel in our freedom, but having gained it, we are to abandon it. We forsake freedom to embrace servitude: enslavement to Christ and others.

I Corinthians 9:19-23 *Our sacrifice becomes other's gain!*

Not financial gain: Matt 16:26 (world), 25:16 (capital), James 4:13, (wealth)

But figurative gain: Matt 18:15 (brother), Phil 3:8 (Christ), 1 Pet 3:1 (spouse)

Explained in vv. 19-23: to "gain" means to "save some" so as to "share blessings"

I Cor 9:19-23 is *not* a license to evangelize by any means or method.

It is a call to servitude in order to gain and to bless souls, i.e. ...

Positive: To build legitimate bridges; *Negative:* to destroy artificial barriers.

The purpose is to give the gospel a voice!

The depth of your *servitude* determines the expansiveness of your *gain*.

The Lesson: **You must become a servant to all in order to gain some.**

How do you become a servant to all?

Not by adapting the message or means, but by adapting the messenger.

You serve all in order to gain some by sacrificing . . .

I. **Your Self-identity** (v. 20a) "to the Jews ... "

YOUR CULTURAL PREFERENCES

II. **Your Self-determination** (v. 20b) "to those under Law" [*the caveat*]

YOUR RELIGIOUS CONVENTIONS

III. **Your Self-righteousness** (v. 21) "to those without Law" [*the caveat*]

YOUR SPIRITUAL SANCTIMONY (see Eccles 7:16-17)

IV. **Your Self-importance** (v. 22) "to the weak"

YOUR PERSONAL STATUS

THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE: Jesus Christ sacrificed his ...

Self-identity: took the form of a slave; "tabernacled" among us

Self-determination: kept the Law perfectly; did the will of the Father

Self-righteousness: ministered to the rejected; befriended sinners

Self-importance: knew poverty, frailty, & sorrow; of no reputation

He chose the freedom of slavery for the sake of the gospel.

Hudson Taylor adopted Chinese dress and hair style, diet, and social habits. He took a Chinese name. Taylor was ridiculed by westerners and castigated by other missionaries. But he was convinced that the gospel would only succeed if missionaries were willing to affirm the culture of the people that they were seeking to reach. Hudson Taylor's exhortation was this: ***"Let us in everything unselfish become like the Chinese, that by all means we may save some."***

Adoniram Judson attempted similar strategies in Burma (Myanmar). He used Burmese-style architecture and followed Burmese seating patterns in his meeting house, and engaged many other cultural distinctives in his ministry. "The essence of Judson's preaching was a combination of conviction of the truth with the rationality of the Christian faith, a firm belief in the authority of the Bible, and ***a determination to make Christianity relevant to the Burmese mind without violating the integrity of Christian truth, or as he put it, "to preach the gospel, not anti-Buddhism."*** (Samuel Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vol. II: 1500-1900.)