

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 77 – 1 Corinthians 8:7-9:27

Day 381: 1 Corinthians 8:7-13

Verse 7

Ἄλλ• οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνώσις· τινὲς δὲ τῆ
συνηθείᾳ ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδωλον ὡς
εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἡ συνείδησις
αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται.

γνώσις, εως f knowledge, understanding
συνηθεια, ας f custom, practice

A rare word in the NT, occurring only here,
11:16 and in Jn 18:39. Later MSS read
συνειδησει which is easily explained as an
assimilation to the subsequent use of
conscience in the last clause of the verse.

ἕως until, as far as

ἄρτι now, at the present

εἰδωλον, ου n idol

εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n meat offered to idols

"*Habituated* attitudes, stances, and patterns of
behaviour (τῆ συνηθεια [cf. συν + ἦθος] or
force of habit still persist in conditioning the
outlooks and feelings of some (τινες) even
now (ἕως ἄρτι, *right up to the present*).

Hence they act as an actual εἰδωλοθυτον, i.e.,
*as if it had been sacrificed to an idol as an
actual reality*; even if their head, but not their
heart, tells them differently." Thistleton

ἐσθιω and ἐσθω eat, consume

"If the context of the eating happens to be an
actual cultic meal to which a wealthy Christian
patron has invited his poorer 'client,' then 'the
strong' may cause actual damage which
genuinely taints, *pollutes, stains, soils* or
defiles (μολυνω) the 'weaker' brother or sister
in Christ." Thistleton

συνειδησις, εως f conscience,
awareness

ἀσθενῆς, ες sick, weak, helpless

"Yeo's observations about 'the strong' as those
with 'social power, influence, political status
and wealth' but also including 'a traditional
Roman value ... of ability or competence in a
variety of areas' seems to clinch the argument.
'The weak,' coversely, are not only 'of low
social standing' but as part of a nondescript
'mass of undifferentiated citizens' crave for
identity and for recognition and acceptance by
'the strong.' If 'the strong' set an agenda, 'the
weak' may be seduced into doing almost
anything to gain what they seek, while
compounding their own confusions and inner
tensions by feeling the 'wrongness' of it all at
the same time. Their integrity has been
compromised, polluted, or tainted." Thistleton

μολυνω defile, make unclean

Verse 8

βρῶμα δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐ παραστήσει τῷ θεῷ·
οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα, οὔτε
ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν.

βρωμα, τος n food, solid food

παραστήσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

παριστημι present, bring into the
presence of

Is the sense 'comend' or 'condemn'? Jeremias
and Murphy-O'Connor think the latter is the
meaning and Thistleton follows this
suggestion, translating the phrase 'food will
not bring us into God's judgment.' They think
it to be a catchphrase of the 'strong.' The οὔτε
introduces Paul's rejoinder. Yeo goes further
and suggests that Paul, by adding οὔτε
reverses the force of a 'gnostic' campaign
motto of the 'strong' ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν
ὑστερούμεθα, ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν:
*their principle was 'if we do not eat, we fall
prey to lack; if we do eat, we abound.'*

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ...
nor)

φάγωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl ἐσθιω
ὑστερεω lack, fall short of; pass be
lacking

περισσευω excel, have plenty (here
perhaps, 'gives us no advantage')

Verse 9

βλέπετε δὲ μή πως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτῆ
πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν.

βλεπω see, look, beware of

πως i) interrog. particle how? ii) enclitic
particle somehow, in some way

ἐξουσία, ας f right, capability, power

ἐξουσία would have been a key word in the vocabulary of the 'strong.'

"Paul reminds them that no Christian is at liberty to assert his 'rights' if that means doing harm to other people, a principle of wide application." Morris

προσκομια, ατος n that which causes stumbling or offence

"For Paul, the so-called ἐξουσία of the Corinthians is a προσκομια." Gardner
"If this passage says anything at all to the ethical debates of today's world, it addresses not the overworn issue of 'conscience' ... but the impropriety of giving absolute status to 'the right to choose,' whatever the cost for others..."

This now becomes a warning which addresses an especially sinister aspect of life within certain churches today. Some manipulate their supposed 'gifts' (whether intellectual, structural, or 'spiritual') to assume that they have the right to engage in aggressive conduct which may well cause the less secure (in terms of social class, learning, or supposed inferiority in 'spiritual gifts') to face an unnecessary cause of stumbling." Thistleton

γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
ἀσθενεω be sick, be weak

Verse 10

ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἔχοντα γινῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἢ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν;

ἴδῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ὄρω

γινῶσις, εως see v.7

εἰδωλειον, ου n idol's temple

κατακειμαι lie (in bed), recline at table

οὐχι not, no; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.

συνείδησις, εως see v.7

οἰκοδομηθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

οἰκοδομεω build, build up, encourage

An ironic use of οἰκοδομεω.

Not the kind of 'building up' which Paul speaks of in v.1 as the work of love. "Our exegesis has led us to the inescapable conclusion that some of the triumphalist, overconfident 'strong' sought to encourage the less secure to act on their spiritual gift of knowledge as a way of 'building' an emancipated, informed faith that paraded its self-awareness of the nothingness of idols and the neutrality of the meat associated with idol worship. The triumphalists wish to edify the insecure into enjoying what was a right (ἐξουσία); Paul drily observes that this approach 'edifies' them into a return to an improper participation in *cultic* aspects of eating meat sacrificed to idols." Thistleton
εἰδωλοθυτον, ου see v.7

Verse 11

ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῆ γνώσει, ὁ ἀδελφὸς δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν.

ἀπόλλυται Verb, pres midd indic, 3 s

ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill, lose; midd be lost, perish, die

Conzelmann translates γὰρ here as 'then, to be sure'. Edwards views this verse as Paul's response to the claims of the strong reflected in v.10 "Builded up, did I say? Nay, he is perishing!"

JM Gundry-Volf urges that the verb does not imply eschatological destruction but 'existential destruction with both subjective and objective dimensions.'

ἀσθενων Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s,

ἀσθενεω see v.9

σος, ση, σον possessive adj. your, yours

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

Verse 12

οὕτως δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε.

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

τυπτω beat, strike, wound, injure

Thistleton translates 'inflicting damaging blows on their self-awareness.'

"To sin *against the brethren* means nothing less than to sin *against Christ* (a lesson brought home to Paul long since on the Damascus road, Acts 9:4f)" Morris. Cf. also Gal 4:14.

Verse 13

διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίω.

διοπερ emphatic form of διο therefore indeed, for this very reason

βρωμα, τος see v.8

σκανδαλιζω cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up the faith
φαγω Verb, aor act indic, 1 s ἐσθιω
κρέα Noun, acc pl κρεας, κρεατος and κρεως n meat

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

σκανδαλίω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s

"The principle laid down in this chapter is one of great practical importance. It is always easy for the strong Christian to see no harm whatever in actions which would be sin if performed by the weak. While it would not be true to say that the robust Christianity of the New Testament envisages the strong as permanently shackled by the weak, yet the strong must always act towards the weak with consideration and Christian love. In cases like the one here dealt with the strong must adapt their behaviour to the consciences of the weak. No good purpose is served by their asserting what they call their 'rights'. Cf. Paul's general treatment of the subject in Rom 14." Morris

"Chrysostom comments, 'It is foolish in the extreme that we should esteem as so entirely beneath our notice those that Christ so greatly cared for that he should have even chosen to die for them, as not even to abstain from meat on their account.' This comment captures very well the key contrast throughout this chapter between asserting one's own 'right to choose' and reflecting with the motivation of love *for the other* what consequences might be entailed for fellow Christians if self-centred 'autonomy' rules patterns of Christian attitudes and conduct. It has little or nothing to do with whether actions 'offend' other Christians in the modern sense of causing psychological irritation, annoyance, or displeasure at a purely subjective level. It has everything to do with whether such attitudes and actions cause *damage*, or whether they genuinely *build* not just 'knowledge' but Christian character and Christian community." Thistleton

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.

οὐχι 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· ἡ 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, ιδος f seal, mark, proof

Day 382: 1 Corinthians 9:1-7

"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

ἀποστολη, ης f apostleship, mission

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

Verse 3

Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσίν ἐστιν αὕτη.

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

ἀπολογία, ας f defence, answer

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ἀνακρινώ 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

μη̄ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πίνειν;

ἐξουσια, ας see 8:9

The plural may include Paul's team.

φαγεῖν aor act infin ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ eat
πίνειν 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

μη̄ 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

περιαγώ go around, take along

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

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

Κηφᾶς, 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 ἐγώ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μη̄ 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 ἰδίους ὀψωνίοις ποτέ; τίς φυτεῖ ἀμπελῶνα καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; ἢ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποίμνης οὐκ ἐσθίει;

στρατευομαι serve as a soldier

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

ὀψωνιον, ου n pay, wages

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

φυτεῖν plant

ἀμπελων, ωνος m vineyard

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome

ποιμαίνω keep sheep, tend as a shepherd, rule

ποίμνη, ης f flock

γάλα, γαλακτος n milk

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

Day 383: 1 Corinthians 9:8-14

Verse 8

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

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

λαλεῶ speak, talk

Verse 9

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

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Dt 25:4.

κημῶω muzzle

Many MSS have the more literary term φριμῶσεις rather than κημῶσεις

βους, βοος m ox

ἀλοῶω thresh

μελεῖ 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 ... θεῷ 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 ἀροτριᾶν, 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

ἐλπῖς, ἰδος f hope, what is hoped for

ἀροτριαῶ plough

ἀλοῶω 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 δώμεν 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.'

μαλλον 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

δώμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl διδομι
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 Graeco-Roman religious practice." Thistleton

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

ἱερον, ου n temple, temple precincts
θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar (of incense)
παρεδρευω serve, wait upon
συμεριζομαι 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.

Day 384: 1 Corinthians 9:15-21**Verse 15**

ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ κέχρημαι 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, οὐδεμια, 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'

μαλλον 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.

καυχημα, τος n 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

κενωω 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.

εὐαγγελιζω act. and middl proclaim the good news

ἀναγκη, ης f necessity, compulsion
ἐπικειμαι lie upon, be imposed (of regulations)

οὐαι 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 ἔκων τοῦτο πράσσω, μισθὸν ἔχω·
εἰ δὲ ἄκων, οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι.

ἔκων, ουσα, ον of one's own free will

Or here, 'entirely by personal choice.'

πρασσω practice, do

μισθος, ου m pay, wages, reward

ἀκων unwillingly

οικονομια, ας f task, responsibility

πεπίστευμαι Verb, perf pass ind, 1s

πιστευω 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 μισθος, *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 *καυχημα*, 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 μου ἔστιν 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

ἀδαπανος, ον free of charge
 θήσω Verb, aor act subj/ fut act indic, 1 s
 τιθημι place, set, present
 καταχρησασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
 καταχραομαι use, make full use of
 ἐξουσια, ας f right, capability, power

Verses 19-23

"These verses form a rhetorical climax to the argument in 9:1-18, and confirm that ch. 9 is no mere digression on the subject of apostleship as such. Whereas vv. 1-18 focus largely on the strategy and personal example of foregoing the 'right' to substance, however, these verses show that standing in solidarity with 'the other,' as against autonomy or self-affirmation, lies at the heart of the gospel. In particular, concern for the diversity of those who are 'the weak' constitutes a profound pastoral and missionary strategy which is not built on pragmatic 'success' but on the nature of the gospel (v. 23) in which Paul has a part." Thistleton

Verse 19

Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω·

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

Thistleton says, "Any translation needs to signal the emphatic place of the first word in the Greek, the adjective ἐλευθερος, 'free', not least since this is a catchword in sociopolitical and religious aspirations and concerns about status at Corinth." He offers the translation, 'Free is what I am – no slave to any human person – yet I put myself into slavery to every human person.'

ἑμαυτὸν Pronoun, acc s ἑμαυτου, ης
 reflexive pronoun myself, my own
 δουλωω enslave, make (someone) a slave
 πλειων, πλειον ορ πλεον more, most, the many

'as many as possible', 'all the more'

κερδαινω gain, win

Verse 20

καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω·

ἐγενόμην has the force of 'I make myself'

τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον may widen the scope to include circumcised proselytes. Thistleton, quoting Hayes, says, The phrases ὡς Ἰουδαῖος and ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον are especially revealing of Paul's theology of the new creation: 'Since Paul was in fact a Jew, this formulation shows how radically he conceives the claim that in Christ he is ... in a position transcending all cultural allegiances.' (cf. Gal 2:15; 3:28; and 1 Cor 12:13)."

Ἰουδαιος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

The phrase μή ὦν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον is omitted from a number of MSS and VSS – probably an accident in transmission.

"Paul conformed to practices which would enable him to approach *them that are under the law* with greater acceptability." Morris. But this is more than an explication of missionary strategy, it is given as an example to the Corinthians of how they should live out the gospel in their relationships with one another. Martin Luther sums it up in his work *Concerning Christian Liberty*: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."

Verse 21

τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μή ὦν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδαίνω τοὺς ἀνόμους·

ἄνομος, ον outside the law, Gentile
ἐννομος, ον subject to law, legal

Paul views himself as 'not under law' – no longer under the constraints of Torah. But he is not free from obligation to God for he is bound to Christ as Lord. Hayes writes, "Being free from the Law does not mean that Paul runs wild with self-indulgence – a word pointedly spoken to the Corinthians who are proclaiming 'I am free to do anything.' Instead, he lives with a powerful sense of obligation to God, defined now by his relationship to Christ." And Bruce relates this to 11:1 where the example of Christ is seen as paradigmatic for Christian conduct.

Day 385: 1 Corinthians 9:22-27

Verse 22

ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σωσω.

ἀσθενεσιν Adjective, m dat pl ἀσθενής, ες
sick, weak, helpless

"These are people who are most probably the vulnerable in sociopolitical terms, forced into dependency on patrons, owners, or employers, which make decisive initiative or boldness a foreign habit of mind. *Paul behaves, and observes a strategy, which takes account of the inhibited, vulnerable, and dependent. In today's terms, he does not proclaim merely a 'success' gospel for extrovert 'winners.'* If these people are too scrupulous in their eagerness 'to do the right thing,' Paul stands with them." Thistleton

ἀσθενεῖς Adjective, m nom pl ἀσθενής
κερδαίνω see v.19

γέγονα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γινομαι
παντως by all means, surely, certainly

Here, 'by every possible means.'

σωζω save, rescue, heal

Verse 23

πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι.

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel

This is "the singular passion of his life." Fee
συγκοινωνος, ου m sharer, participant

Thistleton, quoting Collins, says, "To stand alongside the Jew, the Gentile, the socially dependent and vulnerable, or to live and act in solidarity with every kind of person in every situation is to have a 'share' in 'the nature of the gospel', i.e. *to instantiate what the gospel is and how it operates*. The use of compounds here (συν-) 'express[es] various forms of solidarity in Christian existence.'"

Verses 24-27

The Isthmian games took place every second year just outside of Corinth and may well have occurred during Paul's ministry there. Paul therefore draws upon illustrations with which the Corinthians are familiar. His warning is against self-indulgence.

Verse 24

Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες πάντες μὲν τρέχουσιν, εἷς δὲ λαμβάνει τὸ βραβεῖον; οὕτως τρέχετε ἵνα καταλάβητε.

σταδιον, ου n arena, stadium

τρέχω run, exert oneself

βραβειον, ου n prize

καταλαμβανω obtain, attain, seize

"An athlete goes through anything, both effort and abstinence, to win, because he or she has an eye on the ultimate goal. Can the Corinthians, then, not exercise due ἐγκρατεία, self-control or *abstinence*, when what is at stake is not a garland made from vegetation, or even the acclaim of the crowd, but 'the brother or sister for whom Christ died' (8:11)?"
Thistleton

Verse 25

πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκείνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον.

ἀγωνίζομαι **struggle, fight, compete**
ἐγκρατενομαι **exercise self-control**

'everyone who enters as a combatant exercises self-control in everything.'

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. **that, he, she, it**

φθαρτος, η, ον **subject to corruption**
στεφανος, ου m **wreath, crown, prize**

"The tradition of a crown of victory stemming from the Greek city-states should be distinguished from a crown of royalty in the tradition of the monarchies and the kingship of Israel and the kingdom of God or Christ. The widespread NT use of the crown for believers (e.g., 1 Pet 5:4; Jas 1:12; 2 Tim 4:8; Rev 2:10) is more likely to signify the crown of victory than of that of royalty, although sometimes sharing in the reign of Christ is in view."
Thistleton

λάβωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl λαμβανω
ἀφθαρτος, ον **imperishable, immortal**

"The strenuous self denial of the athlete in training for his fleeting reward is a rebuke to all half-hearted Christian service. Notice that the athlete denies himself many lawful pleasures. The Christian must avoid not only definite sins, but anything that hinders his complete effectiveness." Morris

Verse 26

ἐγὼ τοίνυν οὕτως τρέχω ὡς οὐκ ἀδήλως, οὕτως πυκτεύω ὡς οὐκ ἀέρα δέρω·

τοίνυν **therefore, for that very reason**
ἀδήλως **aimlessly, without a goal in mind**

"Today we might say: I play with my eye on the ball." Thistleton

πυκτεύω **box, fight**
ἀηρ, ερος m **air, space**
δέρω **beat, strike, hit**

"It is difficult to know whether ἀερα δέρων means *shadow boxing* or flinging punches in a genuine fight which find no target... Although the second meaning underlines the fruitlessness of the exercise, it is more likely that Paul wants to expose 'the strong' at Corinth who parade γνωσις rather than ἀγαπη as all to ready 'to go through the motions' of religious profession and routine without real engagement with the daily life-or-death issues arising from love for the other and the need to discipline and constrain their own indulgences and freedoms. To lay primary stress on the first with a nuance suggesting the second is perhaps best achieved by 'one who shadowboxes into empty air.'" Thistleton
"Paul's Christianity is purposeful. He puts everything into direct and forceful Christian endeavour." Morris

Verse 27

ἀλλὰ ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ, μή πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι.

ὑπωπιάζω **wear out (somebody), treat with severity, keep under control**
σωμα, τος n **body**

Thistleton thinks that the reference is not so much to his physical body as to his life and offers the translation, 'My day-to-day life as a whole I treat roughly, and make it strictly serve my purposes.' "The whole of everyday life must be held captive to the purpose of the gospel."

δουλαγωγέω **bring under control**
πως i) interrog. particle **how? in what way?**
ii) enclitic particle **somehow, in some way**

ἄλλος, η, ο **another, other**
κηρύξας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
κηρυσσω **preach, proclaim**
ἀδοκιμος, ον **failing to meet the test, disqualified**

"Paul's fear was not that he might lose his salvation but that he might lose his crown through failing to satisfy his Lord (cf 3:15)."
Morris

Thistleton says, "The notion of *that which does not prove itself to be such as it ought* well captures the notion of purpose in relation to calling and verdict. The 'test' reveals failures of an unspecified nature, not utter rejection."