

Sunday 17th November 2024

We are not on our own

– So think about each other

1 Corinthians 9: 19-27

Do you have a telephone voice? Let the rest of the group hear it!

Do you behave differently in different situations? How?

Read: 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23

Paul's Use of His Freedom

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

- 1. In the early days of the Salvation Army some soldiers and officers felt called to work in the poorest communities. Predominantly women, they were called 'Slum Sisters'. Read the American article on the back page. Do you think that the 'Slum Sisters' put into practice Paul's teaching in this passage? How? How can this inspire us today? Would you do it?**

2. Is there a difference between living with and becoming like? How do retain our Spirituality when living/working with those we are called to 'win'? How do avoid becoming 'pulled in' to behaviour that is not in keeping with a Christian lifestyle? - share some 'top tips.'
3. The Salvation Army ran soup kitchens, but Junior Reid and The Soup Dragons sang:

I'm free to do what I want any old time
I said I'm free to do what I want any old time

In our reading, Paul writes that he was free, free to do what he wanted, any old time, but 'made himself a slave to everyone' (vs 1). Why? How do we exercise our freedom – do we do what we want 'any old time' or become a slave to all?

4. Paul writes (vs 21) that he lives under 'Christ's Law'. This is what Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 31:33:

"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God,

Make a list of some of 'Christ's Law's' – to make a start look at Luke 10:27, Romans 12, 1 Corinthian 13 and Galatian 5: 22-26.

5. Paul writes in vs 23 – I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. What are some of the blessings that you 'share in'? Spend some time counting your blessings and thanking God – maybe sing the chorus?!

Read I Corinthians 9: 24-27

The Need for Self-Discipline

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

- 6. If you could Forget about your physical limitations, what would be your athletic discipline of choice and why?**

- 7. It has been written that, ‘winning is more than simply starting the race.’ What things does an athlete need to do to prepare for the race (see vs 25)? What parallels can be drawn to the Christian race? – what is our ‘strict training’. Are we fit or flabby?**

- 8. The athlete needs to know where they are running to, the boxer who to hit. Do we know our (or God’s) goal? What do we need to do to ensure that we remain focussed on the goal? Do we regularly check that we are heading in the right direction? What sorts of things distract us?**

- 9. Paul talks about ‘preaching to others’ (other translations: telling; proclaiming; announce; spread the Good News). What is our strategy or how do we, share the Good News with others?**

- 10. What prize awaits the Chirstian athlete? How do we avoid being disqualified? As we come to the end of todays group, spend some tome encouraging each other on their spiritual journey.**

11.



Slum Sisters

The Salvation Army is known for its ministries throughout its 154 years of ministry. In 1890, one such ministry was an early example, when Captain Emma Bown organized the first Slum Sisters brigade.

The conditions in 1890s New York were deplorable with people crowded into tenements without heat or running water. There were very few toilets and most people shared cramped spaces with other families.

“The Slum Sisters recruited volunteers, oftentimes they were people who lived or worked with them.”

The Sisters were sent into the worst of these places. Without uniform or fanfare, they sought out people who needed help. They bathed the sick, fed children, washed clothing, cleaned houses and cooked a lot of meals. They often faced opposition from proud housewives, but with their unassuming ways and hard work, they eventually gained the respect of the people.

“You can always tell that it’s a [Slum] Sister,” one observer intoned, “Their aprons and caps are always clean and white, and they are always on the move.” Often the Sisters were called out in the middle of the night to take care of children or a sick parent.

One of the benefits of a close working relationship was that the Slum Sisters recruited volunteers among the very people that they lived and worked with.

As housing conditions improved, the Slum Brigades faded into a memory. However, active slum workers refused to leave their work during World War II, including Captain Jessie North and Lieutenant Edith Stead who were killed in the bombing of London in 1940.