

Study 14. 1 Cor 9:1-23

Big idea: the gospel calls us to give up our rights for the good of others

Introduction

Many countries have a statement of fundamental rights, for example the USA's "bill of rights". Imagine Australia was adopting a bill of rights - what would you campaign to put on it?

Observation and interpretation

Read 1 Cor 9:1-12a

The Old Testament law being referred to in verse 9 is from Deuteronomy 25:4 and concerns farm animal welfare. An animal being used to tread out grain would often be muzzled so that it could not eat the grain as it goes. The Old Testament law says, in essence, "no, let the poor animal have its share of the food too!"

- What rights does Paul insist he and the other apostles have?
- What is the link between an Ox and an apostle in verse 9?

Read 1 Cor 12b - 18

- If Paul and the other apostles have these rights then why didn't he exercise them?
- Paul is committed to his work whether he is recognised for it or not. What is his motivation for preaching the gospel?

Read 1 Cor 19-23

- "I have become all things to all people". What does Paul mean?
- What does it mean to "share in the blessings" of the gospel?

Application / Implications

- Paul talks here about the rights that he has but chooses not to use. What do you think he wants the Corinthians to learn from him in this?
- It seems in many situations that "if you don't stand up for your rights, who will?" What is it about the gospel which makes giving up rights voluntarily a good idea?
- What rights do we find particularly hard to give up for the sake of the gospel?

- Paul talks about winning people to Christ “by all possible means”. Is there a limit to what we can or should do to win people for Christ?

Prayer ideas

- Pray for the gospel perspective which enables us to give up our rights voluntarily for Christ.
- Pray for opportunities to share Christ with friends, family or work colleagues this week.