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SOUTH WEST BIBLE SCHOOL - July 1998

LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #4 -

All things unto all men

Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:15-27

Bro. David, good morning brethren and sisters, I've an extra five minutes; I'd like to remind you that Australia is 14-1/2 hours ahead of America, that gives me 14 hours and 35 minutes extra, right!

We've been talking about the things offered unto idols, the meat which has been offered unto idols, and we're well up on that situation, that here is something that is non-fundamental; it is not critical, it is not vital, it doesn't affect the fortunes of the truth. There is room here, b&s, for a tolerance of one another and not to cause disruption. And of course, this matter's is innocuous as far as we're concerned, because it doesn't affect us; what we are interested in, b&s, is the human inter-relationships that arise out of this subject and the masterly dealing with it by the apostle Paul. And not only that, but by the superb example that he set in setting forth his own life, for all those to emulate, that a man who would not be enslaved by petty issues, and therefore, a man, b&s, who was in a position where he could manoeuvre to help everybody. There are not very, very few brethren in that situation, who have such an appreciation, a wide appreciation of what really is the truth, and the big issues, to be able not to become enslaved to the small ones. And so we set out before you in our last talk, the marvellous example of the apostle himself, and we intend, b&s, this morning to take it up from verse 15 of chapter 9 to the end of chapter 9, where Paul continues as to why he did the things that he did, and how he was able to use the freedom that he had, that he was not entangled with those small things or self-engrandisement; and of course, self-engrandisement loams very large in petty issues, doesn't it? Self-engrandisement is sometimes the goal when petty issues becomes the matters in the ecclesia. And we've got to avoid that at all costs, b&s, and here again this morning, we have the wonderful example of this man!

So now we're going to find here this example continued. Now in verse 15 we take it up there and he says, 'I haven't pressed my claims. You say that your intellectualism, your understanding of the bible allows you to eat a meal; I'm telling you, he said, that I have not only my intellectual understanding in that Way, but I have a divine commandment to take my expenses from you, and I've proven that in every conceivable way, from secular

practice, from the Law of Moses, from the livelihood of the priests, from the commandment of Jesus Christ. From the bible, from secular practice and Christ Himself, from God in heaven above, I have divine approval to take my expenses but I've used none of those things!' And furthermore he said, I'm not writing this as a broad hint that you ought to do it, neither have I written these things that it should so be done unto me', I'm not giving you a broad hint, I haven't done it, he said, for that reason.

And he says, the reason I haven't done it also, as he said, 'it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void', now the word 'glorying' there is in the sense of boasting, and just to give you a little idea of how this word is used, you'll notice that in verse 15, he's got something to boast about and in verse 16, there's something he can't boast about, because the word is used there too! when he speaks at the end of it, and says, 'I have nothing to glory about or to boast about', so he says I've got something to boast about, and I've got something I can't boast about. And it has to do with the relinquishing of his divine rights, and that which he wanted to boast about, b&s, was that he was free from all men. That they couldn't say to him that he had an ulterior motive; that he had given away this right and that giving away had made him free from any ulterior motive that they could suggest. And he gloried or he boasted about that, he said I'd rather die than lose that! I'd rather die than lose that position.

But he went on to say, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of', now you see, b&s, as I pointed out to you before, when you look behind the scenes in Corinth and between the lines of these epistles, you work out the characteristics of these people and you see what had happened to them. Had they come up through the lower dregs of society, among the non-educated, had come into the truth and into an education system which is way above the wisdom of this world, and in the end, of course, they got to a point where they gloried in the very intellectualism into which they'd come, and when they saw these people coming to them with the expertise of understanding of the Word and the eloquence that went with it, they adored them, and they elevated the messenger above the message! I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, and in 2 Corinthians 11, when these people came and put on their aires and graces and spoke eloquently, they thought they were absolutely marvellous. And we quoted this chapter before, these Judaizers came along with their brilliance of the jots and tittles of the Law and Paul says in verse 5 having to rebuke them, and he says, 'I speak as a fool in this chapter and in verse 5, he says 'I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles', and you read that, b&s, and if you're not careful you'll think he talking about the apostles; he's not! actually in the Greek this is a colloquial term, almost like a slang word, and what he's saying here is this, 'I don't think I'm inferior to the very (and put it in the vernacular, if we would express this as near as I understand at any rate) he said, 'I don't think I'm inferior to these super-duper apostles; and they came along and said, 'we're something again; listen to how we can speak!' and they projected themselves through the bible, projected themselves into the audience at Corinth and set themselves up as super-duper apostles. And the Corinthians cowered before them because they felt that they were so marvellous and took insults from them! and gloried in the insults, because they felt the man was in such a dignified position that he, therefore, had a divine right to speak down to them! Unbelievable attitudes were

developed by this worshipping of intellect that the apostle could see, b&s, had robbed the Word of its real power.

Well, they were never going to get that from him. Never would he give that away, never would he give his humility away; he gloried in it that he was able to be free from that attitude. And we can be extremely thankful for a very honest, and very humble man; I don't know anybody quite like him, we leave the Lord, of course, as the exception to all our statements, but as far as other men were concerned, there isn't anyone I know in the bible, quite like him! who poured his heart out and laid it on his sleeve for everybody to see what his motive was, and lived that as an example that he was genuine about it!

Now listen to this in verse 16 of 1 Corinthians 9, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about' (I couldn't boast about it, he said, I couldn't possibly, why?) 'necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel'. What an incredible admission! Now if you were a person who wanted to come to a bible school and you think, 'I've got a reputation, you know, I'm John Martin, people know me, and therefore, I've got to defend that reputation' so I've got to make certain when I leave here it's enhanced. So I would exude the attitude of mind to you, that this is a sheer delight for me and I couldn't wait to get on the plane to tell you all I know (which wouldn't take me too long) and to impress you with what I know, and you see me get on the plane, and you think 'ah, what a marvellous fellow, he's left his family, he's made all these sacrifices, and he's willingly done this!' Well, it isn't true! because I want to tell you what he said because this is exactly how I feel; that I've come here under compulsion and if it was left up to me, b&s, as much as I love you and I do, I wouldn't have come. I wouldn't have, and I sometimes worry about that; and my motive is not always right! It's certainly not for the question of pride, it would never have gotten me on an airplane, pride would never get me on an airplane. I'm proud, we're all proud, that's part of our flesh; I'm very proud but I'm not that proud that that would have got me here! I've got nothing to boast of, like the apostle has nothing to boast of, because just like him, I've got the attitude, 'woe is me if I don't do it'. Now fancy telling the people that! look what that would have done to his personal reputation, and he couldn't care a rush about that! It didn't worry him at all, as a matter of fact, he wanted them to know that.

You know, b&s, if you met a brother like that, where would you be today, if you didn't have Romans 7? When you read Romans 7 just remember who wrote it; one Christadelphian writer said of the apostle Paul, and I wouldn't dispute this, he said, 'he was the greatest human being ever to follow Christ'. Would you doubt that? I would think that that would probably be correct, and yet that man who was the greatest human being that ever followed Christ, said this, 'the things that I know that God would have me to do, I don't do them. And the things which I hate as being perverse, I habitually do them. Oh, wretched man that I am', and he described himself at times, as being filled with all manner of evil concupiscence. That's the apostle Paul saying that, a Judaizer would never say that! he wouldn't say that ever and he would never admit that he'd done anything under compulsion; he would project the image of a lovely, powerful, willing servant of God, whom God was very glad to have in His service, because he was doing so much good work for God. A brother who would be above evil thinking, and who would be a model of discipline and self-control; well, that wasn't Paul! Unbelievable, and

he bared his soul before the Corinthians, so he said, 'I boast about the fact that I've been able to give away a divine right; that's been my choice. I chose to do that and therefore, I boast about that! I cannot boast about the fact that I'm here at Corinth preaching the truth, because I have not done that willingly, I've done it by compulsion and as a matter of necessity.' What an admission that is, and how that would have shamed and humbled them, b&s, to hear him say that.

And he went on to say, 'Look, if I do this thing willingly, in verse 17, if I do this willingly, I've got a reward'. I've got my reward, of course, he would, because you see, the praise for his willingness would have been in itself, payment enough for it. He's got it, he's got his reward, but he says, 'I don't do it willingly', I do it unwillingly. And he told the Corinthians that in the second epistle, he said, I couldn't take expenses for my lectures because I'm doing them against my will. Fancy that! telling people that, he didn't care you see, b&s, what people thought of him as a personality; he just bared his soul. A marvellous man, and he says, 'because the dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me'. A dispensation, a stewardship, that's the word in the Greek, the one that's used about stewardship; and in those days, the steward was the head of the house when the lord and lady of the manor went away and left their children, their home and their grounds in charge of the steward, he was fully responsible for the upkeep of the house, the upkeep of the garden and the feeding and the education and the clothing of the children, he was held totally responsible for that. And woe unto him if when the master came back, the house wasn't running smoothly! 'A stewardship is laid upon me', he said, that's what I'm doing'. Now he says, 'if that's my attitude, if that's the driving force, he said, I can't boast about that, I honestly can't! He said, 'I don't feel that that's a question I can boast about because it's not really doing a thing, it's not willing'. What's my reward then? Where is it ? Haven't I got one? My word, he had one! And his reward, b&s, was this, 'that when I preach the gospel, I can do it without charge, and abuse not my power in the gospel'.

Now look at the reward he's got! Now if you put it in a simple little parable sort of put it on a mercenary level just to get the idea, say someone says to me, John, for these 5 or 6 talks you're giving, we'll give you \$500. Oh, that's good! but I realize I'm doing it unwillingly and my motive is not very good, so I feel conscious about that, so I give it back! I've lost \$500 dollars, that's \$800 Australian, (and after what I've lost here, that will be very handy); but the thing is this, it's gone, I've given it back, but b&s, look what I've bought, I bought my freedom! I'm not under your control anymore; I don't have to agree with everything you do. I don't have to conform to things I see that are wrong just because I feel obliged because I've got the money in my pocket. I HAVEN'T GOT IT! But I've got my freedom, I bought my freedom that we can make the things of Christ of no charge, when I had a perfect right to take whatever was coming to me. Unfortunately, you did pay my fare, so I'm not in that situation, and that's the truth of the matter. I'd love to be free of that, I can't do that, but I'd love to do that! To be free, but I'm not like him, but he was free, b&s, free to do what he wanted to do. And this is the point that I want to make in verse 19, 'I be free from all men'; this is my reward, he says, my reward is I've been given my freedom! And freedom, b&s, to do as one would wish, is a wonderful freedom, instead of being under duress to do something that one does

not wish to do. And Paul had a freedom to make a choice and the choice he made, 'yet I have made myself a slave to everybody'. Not everyone has got the freedom to choose to be a slave, that is a precious freedom.

Let me talk about that principle, b&s, because this is Jesus Christ. 'Though He were in the form of God, though He were the manifestation of His Father, He became a slave', freedom to become a slave, what a wonderful, wonderful principle, what a precious heritage. Okay, what does it mean? Let's put it so we all understand this, because here is an example that we want everybody to know about, because b&s, this is the road to success. When a person follows the dictates of their own instincts, be that in what may be called 'legitimate pleasure' if there can be such a term, or what even may be called, an noble ambition, that when that becomes the ruling passion of our lives, even though it may be that we can somehow justify those courses of action, they have become the ruling passion of one's life, we have a ball and chain around our feet, we are shackled and chained because the whole concentration is upon service to self. And we're slaves to that, we cannot escape that and so our whole life is dictated to. So we say, 'Ah, we really need a break and we need a holiday, and the b&s are working too hard in the truth, and you know, you can overdo it, and you believe it! because you want to believe that, and you have a passionate desire to take a holiday and lay back and forget ecclesial work, and put the truth behind you for a moment (perhaps do your daily readings but you know, you need a break!) And you're convinced of that, and you chain yourself with it. You know how it is, and other things come into our lives, b&s, you know, all sorts of schemes and things are suggested that seem in themselves, quite legitimate, that we feel it would be better in the end if we do that! And we're making those decisions because we're slaves to ourselves. We've got ourselves high bond with that, and we can't get that out of our head, and we're passionately desiring that; we're not free to do anything for anybody else. Because what I want to do, just listen, this is not just a truism, this is just not a true principle. This we all know by bitter experience, there is no more painful and agonizing slavery than service to self! and when we can break those shackles, and to be free, not only from other men, but from self then we are free to make a choice to do something else. And if we choose to be slaves to other men, I tell you b&s, the rewards will be enormous, not only in the kingdom of God (and we know what happens) we know what happens, that when we make an agonizing decision, and we say, 'ah, well, okay, I've got this request, darn it all, I don't want to do that, it's against my will and I would really love to go away, and I'm tired, but oh, well, okay brother I will come! And we drag ourselves out of the house and get into the car and go where we've got to go, and our attitude is one of compulsion and necessity is laid upon us, and we feel a bit ashamed because we ought to do this willingly for the love of God; we say we do it that way, but we don't! and b&s, in every case where that happens, it's never been any different with me, I come home absolutely richly rewarded for that! Not only because in a sense of a job well done perhaps, or done to the best of my ability, not just that, b&s, but I've loved it, I've loved every minute of it! And I go home with a completely different attitude than I came, and I've got more out of it than ever I gave to anybody else; and the sense of satisfaction that one was able to break the shackles of self, and to be free to make a choice to do something for somebody else, and in return to receive a reward that I never would have got, if I had served myself. What a

wonderful way to live!

And so Paul could be all things to all men! He was free to be a servant or slave to all, that he might gain them all. He was all things to all men that he might gain SOME, he knew he wouldn't gain everybody, but there would be a response among the crowds; some would respond to a free man. And that freedom, b&s, you see, allowed him to do things that nobody else could do. Look, if you look at Romans, (nobody else could do this) you take Romans chapter 1, he says to the Romans, verse 13, 'Now I would not have you ignorant brethren, that oft times I purposed to come unto you, but I was let (or hindered) that I might have some fruit among you also, and even among other Gentiles. Because I'm both a debtor to the Greeks and the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise'. So you see what he is saying, he said, 'Look, I'd have loved to come to Rome, I'd have loved to come but there were hindrances to my coming and they were these, these were the hindrances. Then he said, 'I have an obligation to Greeks, educated, to the barbarians, uneducated, to the wise and brilliant, to the unwise not so brilliant; I've got an obligation, do you know why? because nobody was free to do that like he was. Some could go to the Greeks, but they couldn't go to the barbarians; some could go to the barbarians and not the Greeks; some could go to the wise and not to the unwise, some could go to the unwise and not the wise! There are brethren who travel on behalf of the truth and can only go to a little ecclesia here or a little ecclesia there and another one a couple of hundred miles that way, and home, because they can't go anywhere else, because they're the untouchables. They're not free to do that! But Paul says I can come to Rome because nobody else can do this, because they're not free to do it, but I'm free to do it and being free to do it, I'm under an obligation, I'm a slave to do, because I'm free to do it. So I'm a slave to do it, because other people have made themselves slaves to their narrow corridors that can't do it, and they're not free! I'm free, he says, so to the Jew I became a Jew; to those that are under the Law, as under the Law; to those without Law as without Law, however he says, never without Law to Christ; he didn't compromise! Even to the weak, he says, I was able to be weak; and let us look at what he did!

So to the Jew he became a Jew, now there were those brethren who came into Christ and said, 'the Law's fulfilled', they were right, the Law was fulfilled and so for them to have anything to do with anybody, or with the Law itself, was apostacy, absolute apostacy! They could never be a Jew to the Jew; now Paul knew that the Law was fulfilled, he knew, b&s, that to do things under the Law as a commandment of necessity, was apostacy; because if it's a necessity to do it, then Christ is not necessary, so he wouldn't do that! He would not compromise the truth, but there was nothing wrong with him going into the temple of Jerusalem and purifying himself as an act of faith, in seeing the typical aspect of that which had its embodiment in Christ. There was nothing wrong with him taking Timothy and circumcising him, not because he believed that Timothy had to be circumcised, but because he believed that Timothy would be more acceptable to the Jews, because his father was a Greek, and the motive was that he might preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified and circumcised unto the world! Paul wasn't circumcising him because he had to do it, but he had no worries whatever in seeing those things in that light and therefore he could merge among the Jewish people and he could move

with freedom among them, perfectly free in his own conscience and yet doing things to bring people to God.

And to them that were under the Law, they were obviously not Jews because he just mentioned Jews; they would be Jewish proselytes who would come into the synagogue and join to the Jewish faith under the Law of Moses, but they had not accepted Christ yet! And Paul could move freely into that synagogue, he could walk up to that Gentile (and a lot of Jews couldn't) but he could, because he saw all men has having an equal need before God; and coming up to that man, he could put his arm around him and talk about the wonders of God's Law, the marvellous principles of sacrifice and of the typical aspects of the tabernacle, and go through it and thrill this Gentile with the exposition of the Law of Moses and show that he had great respect for the Law, and at the same time teach him Jesus Christ, as the temple made without hands, and bring him into the truth!

He could go among those who were not under the Law, he could go among Greeks and Romans, Gentiles who had never heard of the Law of Moses, whose lives were debauched like the Corinthians, who came from the slums of humanity; he could go to people, b&s, like at Lystra who were full with superstition and never at any stage, would the apostle condone what they believed, never would he practice what they practised, but he moved among them with perfect freedom, because he believed that God was the Saviour of all men! And he would not offend them initially, he would do all he could to bring them around to a better frame of mind; you know, he'd quote their own poets 'made of one blood all men to dwell upon the face of the earth' and so on, and set the bounds of time, and 'you can't worship gods made with hands' and he would appeal to these people, b&s. And when they wanted to make him a god because he was the chief speaker, he ranted among them, 'no, I'm just a man like you are!' And brought himself down to their level as a common level of humanity, that he might lift them to the ideals of divinity. He's free to do that!

He was free to go to the weak brother and go to his home and the brother nervous about Paul's presence and thinking to himself, 'ah, he's one of these people who agree with the other party in the ecclesia, with whom, of course, we've had a division and I can't do it, I can't bring myself to do it, and he'll be offended' and Paul could walk in there and say, 'brother, I understand you've got a problem with meat unto idols, I understand that; I respect your conscience over that, don't worry about that, I love veggies'. And they could sit down together in perfect harmony and he could win that weak brother and by a process to educate him in the things of the truth, and never at any stage did he compromise anything!

And in all the list of those people, b&s, to whom he could be all things unto all men, there's one party missing. There's one party not on the list; Paul could never be strong with the strong, they're not in that list! because he would never adopt that attitude. Now I want you to hear that, they are not in that list, he never said 'to the strong I was strong' because that was never his spirit, and had he been strong with the strong, he could never be a Jew to the Jew, he could never be under the Law with those under the Law, he could never be among those without Law, and he certainly could never be with the

weak. And when you paint yourself into a corner, with all the pretensions of righteousness, and look down with scorn upon lesser human beings, b&s, you've got yourself painted into a corner where you can do no good for any man and you'll finish up, nothing more or less than a bond slave to your own opinions and righteousness. You'll be an absolute slave to it and not free to help a soul in the world. And I watch that every day of my life, I see that happening; and people get themselves into a situation where they can help nobody, and in the end, the little enclaves of parochialism, with their high walls to keep people out. In the end, they turn on themselves because they're watching each other with peer pressure, dare you be less righteous than me, or I'll be more righteous than you, and it becomes an intolerable situation when there's a slave camp of people, slaves to establishing reputations, holding up what they believe are the principles of Jesus Christ and who could never in a fit, go out to help anybody that they considered lesser than themselves! B&S, that's the worst form of slavery out, and it is not Jesus Christ; it is certainly not the apostle Paul and he can never ever ever be, to make himself strong to be with the strong. They are just not in that list!

And from here on, b&s, as a matter of fact, from this point on, even in this 9th chapter, there's a turn in the argument, where he begins to show the danger of the position in which the intellectually strong had taken them. He had no argument with what they believed, Paul was not a reactionary; when people take a stance of righteousness, b&s, self-righteousness and they quote the bible correctly, they quote voluminously from the pioneer writings, (and I'm not referring to bro. David, I don't believe he's in that category, I love his talks) but the thing is, you do have these people that do everything correct, the worse thing that we could ever do is react! because it's not what they're saying that's wrong, it's their attitude to what they know to be right! If we understand the bible, the reason we understand is because we ought to help other people; if we understand the pioneers the reason we understand it, b&s, is because we've got to spread the works of the pioneers as far and as wide as we possibly can. It's not what they always say, it's the way they handle what they know, and this is what the apostle is saying; he agreed with the strong. When he referred to their party, he used the plural pronoun 'we', he was in the party, in it intellectually; he never denied what they said, he was to point out the danger, not only to themselves personally, but the fact that they could help nobody in that situation. It wouldn't do anybody any good, and that was his point, b&s.

So he says in verse 24, 'Don't you know this, he said to the strong, and now he's really addressing the strong, 'don't you know this, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?' So you see, he wasn't saying, if you took that literally, of course, you could almost say Paul is sort of supporting this idea of me first; one receiveth the prize, that's not his point! He's not talking about one numerically in that sense, he's talking about the fact that we must get a prize; I mean, there is a prize to be won, b&s, and that prize is Christ, that I might win, win Christ. Fancy winning Christ? Fancy He's a prize in a race? as he said to the Philippians, 'I might win Jesus Christ', how do you do that? NOT HAVING MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF LAW, see, you can't win Christ that way. 'Not having my own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is the righteousness of faith'. Ah, that's a different thing, so this is how we've got to win Christ, and so he gets into this idea of a race. We've got to run, b&s, that we may

obtain that prize, and we know what he says in Philippians and we know what he says in Hebrews chapter 12 and we know what he says in other places about this race, and Paul must have been a very, very watcher sometimes of the Olympics, not that he'd pay a fare and go in there and enjoy it as a sensual pleasure, but he was a wise man. He would absorb the things that were around him and he would know all about running, (I know about running, you know, b&s, I use to be a runner at high school, I use to be a champion runner and then I use to go and train with the professional marathon champion who won it 3 years running, and I use to ride my motor bike and time him on my motor bike, distance wise and speed wise, when he use to run regularly 20 miles at a time). And I know all about running, and I know what the apostle means here; and running, b&s, entails great patience and great discipline and when we're talking about a marathon and not a sprint, we're talking about a marathon, b&s, and so Paul says in Philippians, he says 'you've got to press towards the mark, you know how long the race is'. You take that into account, he says in Hebrews chapter 12, 'looking unto Jesus the beginner and finisher of faith' he calls it, and it's a race he's talking about! And you've got to have this champion athlete, you've got to say, 'well, if I can sort of use him as my role model, I'm going to get somewhere, because he's the champ!' But he knows, b&s, that as far as Christ is concerned, we'll never beat Him! and if we were to concentrate upon the perfection of the Lord and think that that was the goal that we've been taken to, we would give up the race, so he says in chapter 12 and verse 15 of Hebrews, 'looking diligently' and that means 'to look all around about you' and what do you see?, he says in Hebrews 12:15, why, he said, 'we see that the grace of God has shorten the course; we don't have to run like that runner in front; He's our role model but we're not going to match Him, and we don't have to, because we look about us and what do we see? We see 'a great crowd of witnesses' cheering us on in the stands, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah herself, Noah, Enoch, they're all in chapter 11, and they're all there, they've had their race, they've all won, everyone of them have come first! because of the righteousness of faith. And we look at that wonderful example in front of us, and God says, 'He's an exception, you won't beat Him, but follow Him, and then you look what I'm doing' says God, and by the grace of God the course is coming back at us, the finishing line is racing up to us; we don't have to run the whole course, and the crowd of witnesses are saying, 'hang on, hang on, hang on, that they without us should not be made perfect'.

Paul knew all about that, he took all of that into account, and he's telling these strong people, 'you be careful, you're aiming at personal perfection; you're excluding others that can assist you in the race. And in your aim for personal perfection without the help of others, he said, you'll finish up a miserable last'. Beware! In verse 25, he says 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things', now let me tell you what he's talking about! This is the tradition of these Isthmian games which were held by Italy in Corinth on the Isthmus of Corinth, and you go there today and they've got the site and certain excavations there sufficient to tell us about the way in which they set the place up. Wonderful olympic stadium and what they did, b&s, was this that ten months before those games, this is what they found in all the records that have come forth. Ten months before the games, all participants would be called into a compound at that stadium and locked in, for 10 months! And in that time, they would be put under rigid

supervision and discipline of training and personal hygiene and personal conduct. They would have daily exercises, excruciating training to do, they would be set diets, their food would be regulated, they would have to eat exactly the right food, and they would be denied all sensual pleasure; this was in the Isthmian games in the Gentile world. They were denied access to anything outside that camp, denied all sensual pleasure that might in any way inhibit them and reduce their ability to win. And at the end of the 10 months, at the end of the 10 months the administrators of the games, would determine among all the athletes who were there, the man who was the fittest and who had the greatest self-control. And he was brought out when the games were ultimately open, he was chosen before they opened, he might not win, but he was given this honour because he was the best prepared athlete; he had not eaten the wrong food, he had not gone outside that compound to visit any sensual place of pleasure, he had been rigid in his self-discipline, he had been rigid in his training, his muscles were steel, and he was brought out on the oval and as the vast crowd gathered, and the fanfare of trumpets were blown to open the games, this man proclaimed the games open; he was given that honour.

Now with that in mind, Paul says, 'every man that striveth for the mastery must have himself under control'. Temperate means 'self-control, now he says, they do these things extremely to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore, so run, not as uncertainly', you can run very uncertainly, b&s, I'll tell you that now, when you're an American you must be relaxed; arms play an enormous part in Americans. They mustn't be clenched up here, the knuckles mustn't be tight, you must be relaxed; the elbows about level just above the hips, and the arms must swing very rhythmically as you run, so that the whole body, this side and that side sort of goes rhythmically so that the weight of your body just carries you along, with your body just slightly forward over the top of your feet, so the impetus of your body all the time, is pushing you on. And you know how far the race is, you know exactly the time you can run it, you've been told by all your spies about all the other times, and you know if you're patient you'll get there first! So when a joker sprints out in front, you don't try and follow him, and think 'oh, he'll get away'; you've got 26 miles to go, so let him go, let him go, because you know the times he's run, and you've got him beaten, providing you're patient! And with a golden objective in your mind, and with great patience, you run with certainty! Concentrating, breathing evenly, relaxed, the sides of the body swinging with great rhythm and the head tilted forward, so that the motion of the body is just sort of propelling you along. Pounding along those roads, don't worry about the other guys who are erratic. That's the great secret of marathon running!

Paul say, 'I know that!' and then he turns to boxing. And he says, 'I don't do any shadow boxing, I don't beat the air, I'm not there fighting shadows; he says, 'every punch I throw is a winner, it hurts!' But who does it hurt? He says in verse 27, 'I keep under my body' and the Greek means 'I pommel my body, I punch it, and every punch hits'; I'm not hitting someone else, I'm hitting myself, and you know, in chapter 8 he said, 'they had wounded the weak conscience of their brother', and the strong were boxers, b&s, they were tremendous spiritual boxers, and they grabbed the poor little weak brother, dragged him from off the floor, and punched him in the nose, and went away and said, 'I

showed him a thing or two from the Word', and left him bleeding on the ground, with the bible, hit him over the head with the bible for whom Christ died! Well, Paul said, 'I hit this guy (himself) this is the one that needs discipline, and every punch I swing, he said, is a winner and it hurts, but it's going to make me spiritually fit.

Why would he do that? He says, 'I pommel my body to bring it into slavery so he was free to fight himself'. He was free to bruise his own body, he was free to do that! and that freedom enabled him to make himself a slave, a bruised and battered slave. And he says, 'If I didn't do that, well, he says, that when I preach to others, I myself will be a castaway', and b&s, that's a dramatic end to that chapter! because the Greek here is important. 'Preached to others' as one translation puts it, b&s, Rotherham puts it 'when I have proclaimed the contest' and the other word, 'that I should be a castaway' is rendered by the RSV as 'disqualified'. So if Paul was going around proving that he was strong, he knew the bible, he's got it all straight you see, and he knows what the principles are, the principles of this and the principles of that; 'well, if you don't believe that, then cop this, just cop this brother, just be told', and wounding other people and leaving yourself a moral cripple, but instead of that, b&s, this book is taken in here (heart) and the wounds are our own. And we keep this body and if we don't, if we go around with those sorts of principles, well, we might be chosen by the ecclesia to stand in front, and to open the school for everybody else!' Like that wonderful athlete who had himself under control (so he thought), only to find that somebody found a discrepancy in his conduct. And in the middle of the arena in front of everybody, thousands of people, just as he's about to proclaim the games open, the umpire says, 'sorry, you are publicly disqualified'. That's what that means, and that's where the strong brother was headed!

Do you know something? he didn't know it, he was unaware that's where he was headed, and he thought he was spiritually fit, but you see, b&s, Paul's going to find a discrepancy, an inconsistency in his own life, because he hadn't kept himself disciplined by that book; he'd been busy disciplining everybody else. Yes, he was a Jew to the Jew, under the Law to those under the Law, people without law he could be without law, he could even be weak to the weak, Paul could never be strong with the strong!