

1 Corinthians 8:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

Analysis

And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish (ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἐν τῇ σῇ γνώσει, apollytai gar ho asthenon en te se gnosei)—the present tense apollytai ("is perishing, being destroyed") depicts ongoing spiritual ruin, not necessarily final apostasy (though Paul's warning is dire). Your gnosis (knowledge), used without love, becomes an instrument of a brother's destruction.

For whom Christ died (δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν, di' hon Christos apethanen)—Paul's knockout punch. Christ valued this "weak" brother enough to die for him, yet you won't surrender a meal for him? The infinite sacrifice of Christ exposes the selfishness of insisting on your rights. If Christ's love moved Him to cosmic self-sacrifice (Philippians 2:6-8), your love must move you to trivial self-denial. The "weak brother" isn't an abstraction but one for whom the Son of God bled—thus infinitely precious.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman culture viewed social inferiors as expendable. Slaves, freedmen, and the poor existed to serve elite interests. Paul's theology demolishes this hierarchy: the "weak" believer, perhaps a slave or recent convert with no education, is precious enough that the eternal Son became incarnate and died for him. This radical leveling—the weak brother's value measured by Christ's cross—revolutionized social ethics.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does "for whom Christ died" transform how you view believers whose scruples you find tiresome?
2. What rights or liberties is Christ calling you to surrender for the sake of a weaker brother?
3. Where are you more concerned with defending your freedom than preserving your brother's spiritual health?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀπολεῖται	ὁ	ἀσθενῶν	ἀδελφὸς	ἐπὶ	τῇ	σῇ
And	perish		the weak	brother	through		thy
G2532	G622	G3588	G770	G80	G1909	G3588	G4674
γνώσει	δι'	ὃν	Χριστὸς	ἀπέθανεν			
knowledge	for	whom	Christ	died			
G1108	G1223	G3739	G5547	G599			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:15 (References Christ): But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

