

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 26TH - 27TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

## MINOR ISSUES (ROMANS 14:1-4)

### DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS COMING TOGETHER

The Christians in Rome were united in their faith in Jesus, but because of their different cultural backgrounds, they were getting into arguments about non-essential standards.

- We still fall into this trap today. **We as Christians must know what the majors of the faith are (salvific), and what things we can agree to disagree on.**

### "DON'T ARGUE ABOUT DISPUTED MATTERS"

Paul tells us not to get hung up on matters that can be disputed (minors). The two that he focuses on in this chapter are how we eat and what day of the week we worship on.

- The Jews held very tightly to the diet standards of the OT and the Sabbath day being on Saturday, but to non-Jewish converts, this meant very little.

### WE STILL SQUABBLE OVER FOOLISH THINGS

Christians still argue over things like drinking alcohol or if worshipping on a particular day of the week is necessary. **Arguing over non-essential things is a waste of our time and slows down the progression of the gospel.**

- This is exactly why Paul wrote this chapter. We must focus on Jesus, His Word, and His mission for our lives.

### THE GAME-CHANGER IS JESUS AND HIS WORD

The burden of the OT law was too much for humanity. Not because the law was bad, but people were. For this reason, Jesus came to fulfill the law and give us liberty through grace.

- **Freedom is found in the understanding that Jesus is our only hope. The realization that we're incapable frees us from the impossible task of being perfect.**

### IT TAKES STUDY AND WISDOM

If we are to know what is important to God and what is detrimental to our spiritual growth, we must read the Bible and pray for wisdom.

- By spending time in scripture and prayer we can easily decipher the majors and minors of Christianity. **In knowing God and His Word better, we also eliminate division in the body of God.**

### "ACCEPT ANYONE WHO IS WEAK IN FAITH"

Though some things aren't salvific, they may be a **personal conviction** to someone because in some areas they may be "weak in faith."

- Though it isn't a sin to drink, one may have a past of addiction. Music, places, or even styles of dress may be triggers for some. **We are to be sensitive to God's voice and where others may be in their walk.**

### BECAUSE WE HAVE ALL BEEN WEAK

Paul asks, "Who are you to judge another's...servant?" This is not a prohibition against judging what is right or wrong, but about the convictions of others. Each "servant" has to be at peace with the Master.

- **This means our convictions are between us and God, and we're held accountable if they don't align with scripture.**

### ACCOUNTABLE (ROMANS 14:5-12)

#### "LET EACH BE FULLY CONVINCED.."

Paul moves from food to what day people choose to worship. Telling us to be "fully convinced in our own mind" is not a license to do whatever we want, but a challenge to make sure everything we do is to glorify God.

- **The Bible goes deeper, from what we do to why we do it. Are we convinced that what we are doing honors Jesus?**
- **1 Corinthians 10:31 (CSB)**

#### "IF WE LIVE, WE LIVE FOR THE LORD..."

We should not be in the practice of making our own rules if we claim to be Christians. **If we claim Christ, we are to be following Him regardless of our feelings or understanding.**

- This is important because **we will all stand before Him and be held accountable for how we've lived** (v12).

### OUR PROBLEM IS ROOTED IN SELFISHNESS

**The god of our generation is self.** Even in Christianity, many people have bought into the lie that this life is about us. V8 says, "we belong to the Lord." This means that in this life we are to submit to and honor Him.

- **In our selfishness, we become myopic and fail to see that if we honor Jesus now we are blessed for eternity.**

### OUR PROBLEM IS MANIFESTED IN ENVY

V10 asks why we "despise [our] brother or sister." **Because we tend to be selfish, we have created a culture that tears others down so we can be elevated. This is the sin of envy.**

- If we love people, we should find joy in their success. It is not biblical to compare ourselves out of jealousy or envy.

## **SPIRITUAL INTROSPECTION IS HEALTHY**

Though we are to not be self-centered, we are to evaluate our thoughts and actions in light of God's Word.

- **Christians shouldn't be in the habit of shifting blame or skirting responsibility. We are to lean on God, humble ourselves and admit mistakes, and work towards living righteously.**

## **CHOOSING LAST PLACE (ROMANS 14:13-18)**

### **"NEVER PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK...IN THE WAY"**

This part is difficult because **the Bible tells us to put the well-being of others above our personal freedoms.**

- Paul was a mature Christian that was "persuaded" that the minor things were exactly that: minor. But, he also knew that others still struggled over minor issues, and he should be sensitive to that.
- **1 Corinthians 10:23 (CSB)**

## **MATURE FAITH**

People with a mature faith understand that **we willingly lay down freedoms for the greater good of the faith and the community.** This follows the pattern of Jesus who laid down His rights for our sake.

- **When a "Christian" insists on their rights to the detriment of another person, they are no longer acting in love.**

## **TRUE FREEDOM**

We live in a culture that thinks freedom is no boundaries or concrete principles. Ironically, **we have become slaves to our money, lusts, intoxications, and materialism.**

- **True freedom is not getting everything you want and still being content because we have Jesus.** We have something deeper than a temporal burst of pleasure.

## **WE WERE MEANT FOR MORE THAN PLEASURE**

V17 says, "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." This means that joy and purpose in this life aren't from what we have, but by the Spirit of God.

- **We should be willing to make sacrifices so others can experience salvation and a relationship with God.**

## **PEACE AND FAITH (ROMANS 14:19-23)**

### **"LET US PURSUE WHAT PROMOTES PEACE AND WHAT BUILDS UP ONE ANOTHER"**

We are told to make every effort to do what leads to peace and a lifting up of other people, especially other Christians (12:18, 14:19). Of course, we do this without compromising biblical integrity.

- **Can we honestly say we make every effort to promote peace and uplift others?**

## **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

Paul says we are to keep our personal convictions "between [us] and God." This is another affirmation that we are to stick with salvation issues and let minor arguments be just that: minor.

- **It boils down to a personal walk with God and a love and respect for other people.**

### **"EVERYTHING THAT IS NOT FROM FAITH IS SIN"**

Paul is reminding us to listen to the convictions God has placed on us. **If we feel conviction but push through and do the opposite, we are not living in faith, therefore sinning.**

- This is referring to non-essential things, but it applies to essentials as well. **If we don't do what Jesus commands, we do not truly love Him (Jn. 14:15).**

## **LISTENING TO GOD**

- God speaks to us in a still small voice. Our problem is that we often aren't listening. **We must ask for His Spirit to fill us, pray, be still and listen, and cut the distractions.**
- We also hear God's voice through the Bible. This means we must take time to read it.
- It is only through a relationship with God that we get direction and conviction.

## **PICKING OUR BATTLES WISELY**

- When we learn to hear from God, we are then equipped to know what battles to engage in and how to fight the ones God deems important.
- It is also by God's Spirit that we are able to not sweat the non-essentials. And in this wisdom, **we become more internally peaceful and externally gracious.**

## **THE LIBERTY OF SERVITUDE**

- We are liberated by the life, death, resurrection, and teachings of Christ. We as Christians are to model this **humility, servitude, and grace** to people regardless of their response.
- As hard as it is, **we're called at times to lay down our freedoms and privileges for the sake of others and the glory of the kingdom.**

The true Christian life is an evolution of **humility** and a conformity into the image of Jesus.