

11/28/10

Romans 14

Freedom is the most valuable possession of man, the only problem is that he does not have the capacity to exercise it in moderation or with the concern for others.

Paul now gives us a view of the Roman church as to their internal problems of spiritual liberty and its abuse and restrictions by believers.

14:1-12 **The believer's liberty in Christ through conscience.**

14:1 The believer is to welcome the weak believer in the faith.

- 1) The stronger is to receive him, this is an imperative command, in the present tense.
 - a) The weak in the faith does not mean lack of faith, but lack of knowledge regarding their liberty in Christ.
 - b) The weaker is a part of the body Christ. Rom. 12:3-8
 - c) The stronger is to be ruled by love. Rom. 12:9-21
 - d) The stronger is to put on Christ. Rom. 13:14

- 2) The stronger is not to do it to disputes and doubtful things.
 - a) Disputes “dialogismos”, means to think of a man, indicating the process of deliberating with himself, inward reasoning and questioning.
 - * We get our word dialogue from it.
 - b) Over doubtful things “diakrisis”, means to judge two ways, doubting which is correct.
 - c. In other words, areas that are none essentials, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the First and Second Coming, the Inspiration of Scripture, etc.

14:2 The two groups in the church at Rome in tension and disagreement.

- 1) The strong were those who eat all things, without any conviction or guilt of conscience.
 - a) There could have been some Christian Jews in this category, but probably most were Gentile Christians.
 - b) The Gentiles came out of the world without any regards to kosher food.
- 2) The weak were those who eat only vegetables, due to conviction and a more limited conscience.
 - a) The early church was Jewish and had difficulty with accepting the Gentiles, apart from the Law

- b) The first church council settle the issue and sent letters out to inform the Gentiles that they did not have to be circumcised to be saved, keep themselves from fornication, blood and strangled things. Acts 15
 - c) At Antioch Paul confronted Peter for playing the hypocrite and stumbling Barnabas. Gal. 2:11-14
- 4) Paul when writing to the Corinthians on the matter of sacrifices offered to idols told the believer, he was not to ask any questions about the origin of the meat, but simple by it from the butcher or eat what is put before us at dinner. 1Cor. 10:25-29

14:3 The two parties are at fault, due to pride.

- 1) The strong despises with contempt the weak. vs. 3a
 - a) The word despise “exoutheneo”, means to throw out as nothing, to place no value on, to treat with contempt.
 - b) This is not a suggestion, but an imperative command, present active.
- 2) The weak judges critically the strong who eats. vs. 3b
 - a) The word judge “krino”, means to observe and discern critically and

ensorious, always finding fault. Matt. 7:1-2

- b) The command again is an imperative present active.
- 3) Yet God has received the strong and weak in faith. vs. 3c
- a) They are both save by grace through faith.
 - b) They are both being true to their conviction of conscience.

14:4 The judgment is out of line for we are not each others masters.

- 1) Each person is the household servant of Jesus, not of each other.
 - a) The word “you” is emphatic.
 - b) The word to judge “krino”, again means to observe and discern critically and censorious, always finding fault, disdain or despising. Rom. 14:3, 4, 5, 10, 13
- 2) Each stands or fall to his Master, Christ.
 - * The context is the area of personal conviction and liberty in meat and vegetables.
- 3) Each will be made to stand by God. Jude 24
 - * The grace of God is sufficient for all, strong and weak.

14:5-6 The days and food are a matter of personal preference, not doctrine.

- 1) The various warnings about such legalism. Gal. 2:11-14, 4:9-10, Col. 2:16-23, 1Tim. 4:1-5, Heb. 13:9
 - a) The phrase fully convinced “plerophoreo”, another imperative present.
 - b) The word means to be thoroughly persuaded of their liberty of lack thereof, acting out of their personal conviction.
- 2) The heart is what defiles man not foods, Jesus told His disciples. Matt. 15:16-20
 - * The important thing is that both are giving God thanks, out of their liberty and conscience!
- 3) The early church met on Sunday, not Saturday. Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 16:2
 - * Paul always went to the synagogues first on the Sabbath and then to the church on Sunday!

14:7-9 This verse is often used out of context to teach that we affect one another, but in context verse 8 explains it to be our relationship to the Lord.

- 1) The goal of the believer is not to do his own will, living selfishly. vs. 7
 - a) Living and dying is up to the Lord’s will, not our own!

- b) Based on being a living sacrifice. Rom. 12:1-2

- 2) The goal of the believer is to do the will of God, living sacrificially. vs. 8
 - a) Living or dying, we are the Lord’s.
 - b) Our lives are His to command, even to death.
 - * “To live is Christ and to die is gain.” Phil. 1:6
- 3) Christ made this all possible by His death and resurrection, out from the dead. vs. 9
 - a) The dead and living, refer to Christians.
 - b) The living are those saved still on earth, the dead are those in heaven now, having died physically.

14:10-11 The rebuke now is from the perspective of family.

- 1) To judge with critical observance, censorious towards the stronger. vs. 10a
 - * Ja. 4:11
- 2) To show contempt to the weaker in the faith. vs. 10b
- 3) The Bema-Seat of Christ is for the believer at the rapture to receive reward. vs. 11
 - * 1Cor. 3:12-15; 4:5, 2Cor. 5:10
 - a) This is distinct from the white Throne for the non-believer at the end of the 1,000 years. Rev. 20:11-15

- b) The quote is from Isaiah to acknowledge and confess our motives before God at the Bema-Seat. Is. 45:23
- 1) The original context is to all the nations that will bow to Jesus by force, now during the age of grace it is by choice.
 - 2) Paul quotes it in Philippians. Phil. 2:10-11
- c) There are many judgments in the Scriptures.
- 1) Sin at the cross. Jn. 2:31
 - 2) Self. 1Cor 11:31; 1Jn. 2:1
 - 3) Bema. 2Cor. 5:10
 - 4) Nations. Math. 25:32
 - 5) Israel. Ezk. 20:37
 - 6) Angels. Jude 6
 - 7) Wicked. Rev. 20:12

14:12 All will give an account to God without any one else, at the Bema-Seat of Christ.

- 1) For reward.
- 2) For loss of reward.

14:13-23 **The believer's liberty in Christ through love.**

14:13 The first conclusion of the passage.

- 1) The verse is the conclusion based on all that has preceded. vs. 1-12
 - a) We are not to judge one another in a continuous fault-finding way.
 - b) We are to determine not to cause one another to trip up in the faith.
 - c) We are brothers, in the same family of God.
- 2) The context again is these gray areas of liberty.
 - a) Not sinful practices by Christians.
 - b) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Gal. 5:13
 - c) as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 1Pet. 2:16

14:14 The clear understanding of the problem.

- 1) Paul knew and was persuaded as a complete and permanent understanding that there is nothing unclean of itself in foods. Acts 10:15; 15:28-29; 1Cor. 6:12; 10:23
- 2) Paul declares that the uncleanness is due to personal conscience.
 - a) The weaker in faith is stumble easier than the strong, more mature in faith.

- b) The obedience to conscience is honored by God.

14:15 The clear responsibility of the strong.

- 1) If one is grieved because of one's food and has not concern for the weak, then he is walking in self love not the Lord's. vs. 15a-b
- 2) The command and obligation of the strong believer is not to destroy a weak brothers spiritual, for mere food. vs. 15c

14:16 Second conclusion of the passage.

- 1) Don't let your good in the sense of not being evil in itself be reproached as evil, due to your flaunting of your selfish and inconsiderate liberty. 1Cor. 10:25-29
 - a) The word evil "blasphemo", means blasphemy.
 - b) That which is an affront to God.
- 2) We are not to give offense in anything. 2Cor. 6:3

14:17 The true nature of the Kingdom.

- 1) It is not meat or drink.
- 2) It is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 - a) Righteousness in the context means right living towards one's fellowman.
 - b) Peace in relationship to the members of the body of Christ.

- c) Joy means the result the work of God in every member of the body.

14:18 The two-fold relationship of the kingdom.

- 1) The individual who focuses on these is acceptable, well pleasing to God, for He sees his heart intent and motives.
- 2) The individual who focuses on these is approved by man, having passed the test of love for God and his fellowman.

14:19 Third conclusion of the passage.

- 1) Let us pursue the things which make for peace. Matt. 5:9
 - a) The word pursue "dioko", means to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, eagerly.
 - b) "**Pursue peace** with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." Heb. 12:14
- 2) Let us pursue the things by which one may edify another.
 - * To build up a house or a building.

14:20 The repeated warning.

- 1) The believer who is strong is not to destroy the work of God, but from the perspective that the individual is the work of God. vs. 20a

* We are God's workmanship in Christ
Jesus, unto good works. Eph. 2:10

- 2) All things are pure, in and of themselves.
vs. 20b
- 3) The weak should not eat anything with
offense, for it is wrong, it defiles his
conscience. vs. 20c

* Conscience is very important!

14:21 Love is the ruling principle.

- 1) We should be willing to sacrifice our
liberty for the benefit of the weaker
brother or sister.
- 2) The principles is for all areas of
conscience regarding others.

14:22-23 The basic principle is for both parties.

- 1) The one who has faith should exercise it
before God, not man. vs. 22a-b
- 2) The individual will experience peace in
his freedom, if he lives according to his
conscience. vs. 22c
- 3) The weak should not do things that are
questionable to their conscience, for
whatever is not of faith is sin. vs. 23