

# SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

## *In The Grip of God's Grace*

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

### Romans 14:13-23 - "When Christians Disagree (Pt. 2)"

Romans 14:13-23, *"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."*

In Romans 14:1, Paul is dealing with a problem that existed between two groups in the Church at Rome.

Who were they?

The 'weak' and the 'strong'

What was the problem?

'diet and days'

In the first twelve verses Paul's' focus was on 'attitudes' – the strong were to receive the weak, and not to despise him. The weak brother was not to judge the strong (vs. 3)

We saw four reasons why the strong should welcome the weak brother and not dispute over doubtful things:

- because God has received him (vs. 3)
- because God will help him stand (vs. 4)
- because Jesus Christ is LORD (vs. 9)
- because we will all give an account to Gos (vs. 12)

In our text today, Paul moves from attitudes to actions, from not despising one another to not causing others to stumble or fall.

The focus moves from how the strong should regard the weak to how they should treat them.

To summarize (vs. 13-23) Paul is saying to the strong, “do not offend or destroy the weak believer.

It’s not enough to just leave each other alone!

Paul gives us four positive principles to live by:

#### 1. Live so as not to stumble others (vs. 13-16)

*Romans 14:13-16, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:”*

#### Christians affect each other

In verse 13, Paul uses a play on words, ‘judge’.

Don’t judge others, but do judge yourself.

What is it that we are to judge ourselves for?

Are my actions, and the exercising of my liberties, a source of stumbling to others? (vs. 13)

Paul tells us in:

*1 Corinthians 8:9, “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.”*

*1 Corinthians 8:13, “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”*

Is your life a stepping stone or a stumbling stone?

How we affect others:

- stumble (vs. 13)
- grieve (vs. 15)
- destroy (vs. 15)

## 2. Live as citizens of the kingdom of God (vs. 17-18)

Romans 14:17-18, *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”*

### Christians must have proper priorities

Even as Christians we become like the Pharisees who majored on the minors. We forget to focus on the internals instead of the externals.

Matthew 23:23-24, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”*

In verse 17 we find what our priorities should be:

1. The Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)
2. Righteousness
3. Peace
4. Joy

Notice its source – The Holy Spirit (vs. 17)

We are not to major on ‘food’ and ‘drink’.

God looks at the heart.

## 3. Live to bless and build others up (vs. 19-21)

Romans 14:19-21, *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”*

### Christians must help each other grow

Both the strong believer and the weak need to grow; the strong need to grow in love; the weak in liberty.

Notice Paul’s three exhortations:

1. Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (vs. 19)

Instead of bickering over doubtful matters, we should seek to maintain peace and harmony in the church.

Instead of stumbling others by insisting on your rights, we should strive to build up others.

2. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food (vs. 20)
3. Don't do things that will stumble others or make them weak (vs. 21)

It's a liberty limited by love

Things change when children come into a home

What about people who have major hang ups and are legalistic?

Notice verse 22, good is beautiful!

Is your life beautiful to others?

4. Live with a clear conscience (vs. 22-23)

*Romans 14:22-23, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."*

#### Christians must not force their opinions on others

What Paul is saying is, if you have faith or a conviction, have it between yourself and God. Let God and His word be the basis for your conviction that something is right.

Never act off of doubt. Act only from faith or conviction (vs. 23)

1. Limit your liberty by love so you will not stumble others – remember, we affect each other,
2. Make the Kingdom of God the priority of your life.
3. Help others grow by building them up.
4. Don't force your convictions on others:
  - be considerate (vs. 21)
  - be convinced (vs. 22-23)