

ROMANS 14:1-23

REVIEW...

- **OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS...**
 - **CHAPTERS 1-8** - The doctrine of Salvation - by grace through faith in Jesus Christ...
 - **CHAPTERS 9-11** - The example of salvation by faith - Israel vs. Gentiles...
 - **CHAPTERS 12-16** - The application of our salvation – how we should live our lives in Christ...
- **CHAPTER 12:1-2** – A living sacrifice...
 - In light of Romans 1-11 – in light of the Gospel of Grace – the gift of God’s Spirit...
 - So do not be conformed to this world – the standards / definitions of this world
 - Instead be transformed – renewed by the power of the Spirit – made into a new man
 - So that we will know the perfect will of God for our lives!
- **CHAPTER 12:3-21** – Living for Jesus in the church...
 - 1st – Live in Humility – we are many members – but one body...
 - 2nd – Live in Jesus – using the gifts you have been given...
 - We all have different gifts we have been given by God – step out to find out your gift...
 - Then use your gift to serve the Lord – bless others within the Body of Christ!
 - 3rd – Live in Love – the mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ...
- **CHAPTER 13:1-14** – Living for Jesus in the world...
 - 1st – Obey the government – they are appointed by God / God has given them authority...
 - 2nd – Do not be in debt to anyone – instead owe nothing but to love one another...
 - 3rd – The Day of the Lord is coming soon – so live for Jesus - put on Jesus Christ!

LIVING WITH ONE ANOTHER...

- **1ST - DIFFERENT CONVICTIONS... vs. 1-5**
 - Doctrine vs. Opinion...
 - The Bible is VERY clear on many issues as to what is right and what is wrong...
 - Do not commit Adultery – it is sin – **Exodus 20:4 / Galatians 5:19-21**
 - Do not murder – it is sin – **Exodus 20:13 / Deuteronomy 5:17**
 - Do not get drunk – it is sin – **Ephesians 5:18**
 - Do not steal or tell a lie – it is sin – **Exodus 20:15-16**
 - But there are issues that are not as clear – are we allowed to do them as Christians...
 - As a believer in Jesus – are we allowed to smoke / can we listen to secular music...
 - As a believer in Jesus – are we allowed to see movies – what rating...
 - As a believer in Jesus – drink coffee / can we have tattoos / can we wear jewelry...
 - Not all believers in Jesus have the same convictions – what we can or cannot do...
 - Paul gives us 2 examples of these ‘grey’ areas in a Christian’s life – Meat & Sabbath...
 - These were critical issues in Paul’s day – he was reaching out to a gentile church...
 - The gentiles did not worry about eating meat / they did not honor the Sabbath day
 - Where as the Jews – who represented the 1st church in Jerusalem – did both!
 - 1st – Being able to eat meat – verses only eating vegetables... vs. 2-3

- Jesus addressed this issue of eating meat...
 - **Matthew 15:11** – “You are not defiled by what you eat; you are defiled by what you say and do.”
 - Whatever you eat – it just goes into your stomach – then into the CR
 - No matter what you eat – it all ends up in the same place – obviously
 - So you are not a better person if you don’t eat pork – or worse if you do
 - If you eat pork – or if only eat fish – it all ends up the same place!
- Someone not knowing what Jesus taught – might think its better NOT to eat meat...
 - Even though we are allowed to eat anything we like...
 - A person might avoid eating meat (*or certain meats*) to honor God...
- 2nd - Worshiping God on a specific day – verses everyday being the same... vs. 5-6
- Jesus also addressed this issue of the Sabbath day...
 - **Matthew 12:8** – “For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
 - God did not create us to follow the Sabbath – He gave the Sabbath to us!
 - It was meant to give us a day to unwind – rest – recover...
 - It is no longer required– but it is probably a really good idea
- Someone not knowing this – might think the only day to worship is the Sabbath...
 - Even though it does not matter what day we worship the Lord...
 - A person might be convinced the only day for church is Saturday / or Sunday...
- Two perspectives – the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’...
 - In these ‘grey’ areas of our Christian walk we should not be judgmental of each other...
 - Those who have more freedom in their faith (*eat what they want / worship every day*)
 - These ‘stronger’ brothers should not look down upon those who have more rules...
 - This tends to be the easier position to take – having more freedom in Jesus...
 - If someone follows more rules than we do – ‘God bless them’ – we don’t mind...
 - So long as they do not force their rules onto us!
 - Those who are the ‘weaker’ saints – bound by more rules (*don’t eat / certain days*)
 - Weak not if their faith – but in their understanding of God’s word - **I Corinthians 8:7**
 - Should not criticize those who have more freedom in their walk in Christ...
 - This is where most people tend to struggle – be judgmental of others...
 - If we think we cannot see movies / cannot listen to secular music / no tattoos...
 - If we have a rule we believe we must follow – and someone else do not...
 - Then we tend to think we are better Christians – more righteous than they are...
- The danger in forcing your convictions on others... vs. 4
 - Passing on your convictions...
 - If I have a conviction that is it wrong to watch movies (*there is a lot of junk in movies*)
 - And I tell you that you should also not watch them – I have given you a law...
 - The problem is I have not changed your heart – you still want to see movies...
 - So I have set you up for failure – you will watch a movie – then feel like a failure...
 - Trusting in the Lord to show others right and wrong...
 - If instead I tell you to go to the Lord – ask Him if you should see a movie...
 - God will tell you – and if He says no - He will change you heart so you don’t want to!
 - God does not just give you the Law- He gives you the ability to live up to the Law!
- 2ND – **WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE JESUS... vs. 6-13**
 - What is the motive behind our actions... vs. 6-9

- God has received both the 'strong' and the 'weak'... vs. 6-8
 - No matter what we do – eat or don't eat / worship on Saturday or any day...
 - It is not so much about our convictions – as it is about the motivation of our heart
 - In other words it does not really matter whether we are the 'strong' or the 'weak'
 - If we are doing it for the Lord - God accepts either way!
- Whether we live or we die – we are the Lords...
 - **I Corinthians 6:20** – “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”
 - Are we using our freedom in Christ to justify our sin – just to do what we want...
 - Are we following lots of rules just to show we are more righteous than others...
 - Or are we doing what we do in order to give our lives completely to God...
 - Only the Lord knows the heart – only God knows our motives...
- So do not judge your brother... vs. 10-13
 - That does not mean we let people get away with open sin...
 - Though we are not called to judge men's convictions – we can judge their fruit...
 - **Matthew 12:33** - "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit."
 - If we see a brother giving into sin – living a life that is contrary to Jesus...
 - Out of love for your brothers warn them – encourage them stay away from sin
 - **Hebrews 3:13** – “You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.”
 - We are not to judge them when it comes to our convictions...
 - We might be absolutely convinced we are right about our convictions...
 - Yet often we get our 'convictions' – not from God – but from other people...
 - We might be convicted that we have to go to church on Holy Friday...
 - Or be convicted that we need to give 10% of our money to the church...
 - Or perhaps we get our convictions from our own experiences in life...
 - If I know I struggle with 'lust' perhaps I am convicted not to watch TV (*images*)
 - If I struggle with gambling – I might be convicted not to play with cards...
 - But the only one who knows which convictions are really from God - is God!
 - Every knee will bow – every tongue confess to God...
 - The truth is we will all stand before Jesus – and He will ultimately decide...
 - Jesus is the only one who can say whether we have been a faithful Christian...
 - Whether we have been obedient to the convictions He has given us or not!
 - Therefore we should not try and judge each others convictions – instead...
- **3RD - CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER... vs. 14-23**
 - To the 'stronger' brother... vs. 14-15, 20-21
 - It is true that things are not sin – but to the one who thinks they are wrong...
 - We might know that pork is nothing / cards are nothing / movies are nothing...
 - But to a brother who thinks they are evil – to him they are sin...
 - So be considerate of the convictions of your brother in Christ...
 - If eating pork stumbles your brother – don't eat in front of him...
 - If watching a movie stumbles him – then don't watch the movie in front of him...

- If playing with cards stumbles him – then don't put out the deck when he comes by...
- Don't use your freedom in Christ – to destroy the faith of someone else!
 - I knew a brother in the Lord who struggled with alcohol – lost his whole family...
 - He grew in the Lord – stopped drinking – and stated to get his life back...
 - One day a 'brother' invited him over to play some pool – offered him a beer...
 - 'We have freedom in Jesus' – the brother told him – what can one beer hurt...
 - He ended up falling back into his old lifestyle – walked away from the Lord
 - One man's freedom in Christ – can be another man's undoing...
 - We need to be sensitive to each other's weaknesses – protecting each other from sin!
- To the 'weaker' brother... vs. 16-19
 - Don't get so caught up in your convictions – you miss what's most important...
 - Following Jesus is not about what you eat or drink – or what you wear...
 - Worrying about what you look like, what you listen to, what you watch...
 - To often in the Christian walk we focus on the little things and miss the big picture...
 - It is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit...
 - If you have these things – then you will be approved by God and by men!
 - If the heart of a person is right – focused on Jesus (*righteousness*)
 - Full of joy – empowered by the Holy Spirit – everything else will fall into place!
 - Therefore focus on the things that encourage one another...
 - So if you are going to say anything to your brother – encourage him in Christ!
 - Encourage him to read his Bible – encourage him to be full of the Holy Spirit...
 - Rather than tearing one another down - build each other up in the Lord!
- To both the 'strong' and the 'weak'... vs. 22-23
 - If you have any doubts about what your freedom or rules...
 - If you are not sure if you should see that movie – play with those cards...
 - If you are not sure if you should eat that pork...
 - Then better not to - because whatever is not done in faith – is sin...
 - Don't let your freedom or rules lead you away from Jesus...
 - **I Corinthians 6:12** – “You may say, ‘I am allowed to do anything.’ But I reply, ‘Not everything is good for you.’ And even though ‘I am allowed to do anything,’ I must not become a slave to anything.”
 - The bottom line – we have incredible freedom in Jesus – but be careful...
 - Do not let your freedom become a snare that brings you into the bondage of sin
 - Make sure whatever you do – or don't do – do it to the glory of God!
 - **I Corinthians 10:31** – “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”