

Title: Christian Liberty and Judgement

Text: Romans 14:1-12

Take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 14. The book of Romans chapter 14. Our Topic: Christian Liberty and Judgement.

(Read Romans 14:1-12)

(Prayer)

The theme of Romans is JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. And Paul developed this theme by sharing four principles related to THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

(1B) The principle of condemnation: That everybody in the whole world is condemned. They are lost. And their final destination is Hell, unless they do something about it. (2B) And what we must do involves the second principle: THE PRINCIPLE OF JUSTIFICATION. God knew that we could not save ourselves. So, Jesus came to earth as man and he died on a cross for our redemption or salvation. And thus we are saved by faith.

(3B) Third, we have the principle of SANTIFICATION: This is the act of God which sets the christian apart from sin and to service.

(4B) Fourth, the principle of Security. Our security in the Christian walk is not in works, but in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in our life.

Now, it is one thing to understand these four principles. It is quite another matter to live by them. So, Paul deals with the APPLICATION of these four principles.

And he began by showing us HOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS DEMONSTRATED IN CERTAIN CHRISTIAN DUTIES. He discusses four basic responsibilities: Our commitment to God....Our commitment to others in the use of our spiritual gifts.. Our commitment to love one another...and our commitment to governing authority.

Now, beginning with chapter 14, Paul moves into the (4A) Second area in the application of God's righteousness. (2B) And this involves our Christian liberties. The application of God's righteousness is demonstrated in Christian liberty. This is the major theme in these final chapters of the book of Romans.

These four basic principles of God's righteousness says that we, who have received Jesus as our Saviour, have been set free from sin..we have been set free from the penalty of sin...and we have been set apart to the service of God. In other words, we have complete freedom, or liberty, because of our position in Christ Jesus. But, as you well know, liberty brings responsibilities. And that is what chapter 14 and 15 is all about. In these two chapters God is going to deal with a few major issues that relate to Christian liberty. And the first issue is found in these first 12 verses. And it is something that we need to start out with by just saying..WE SHOULD NEVER JUDGE ANOTHER CHRISTIAN.

Now, I am not implying that we are judging one another. I leave that with your own conscience. BUT IT COULD HAPPEN. And so we need to know God's Word so that it will never happen in our church.

(1C) So, according to these first 12 verses Christian liberty will exclude judgment of others. And I would like you to see four reasons why this is true.

But, before we look at those reasons, let me say this. THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS WE ARE TO JUDGE. We are to judge those things the Bible calls sin. We are to judge false prophets because of what they teach. We are to judge false teaching. ~~Dear friends~~ ^{you ~~are~~ why? Because} sin is sin. If the Bible calls something sin, then that is what it is..SIN... *And we must judge sin.*

But, Romans 14 is not talking about things called sin in the Bible. It is talking about things not called sin that falls into the area of question and doubt as to whether we should do them, or we should not do them.

Now, this brings up an important principle: WE HAVE NO RIGHT AS BELIEVERS TO JUDGE ONE ANOTHER IN ANYTHING THAT IS NOT CALLED SIN IN THE BIBLE.

Dear friends, we have not right to do that at all. I don't care what it is. *And Paul spell that out in chapter 14 and 15.*

O.K. Christian liberty will exclude judgment of others for four reasons...

(1D) Number one, in vs 1-3, we learn that it is because of God's acceptance of all believers. God has accepted all believers, And the Bible tells us to do the same thing.

Vs 1 says "accept the one who is weak in faith". The word "accept" is in the present tense. It means keep on accepting. Don't stop because of ~~the~~ fact which is at the end of Vs 3. The last phrase. "For God has accepted him."

And that is referring to a point of time. When you accepted Christ as your Lord and Saviour, God accepted you. Everybody becomes a member of the family. You become born of the spirit of God. You are a child of God now by faith. And God has accepted you.

Now, I notice something about God when he accepts us. He takes us like we are. ~~And~~, some of us aren't to hot along that line. We have a lot of sin. A lot of problems and weaknesses. But God accepts us like we are. That is what love is all about. It is forgiveness.

And the Bible says to be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving each other as God has forgiven us.

And it is important to understand that if we are to stop judging one ~~and~~ another we must have in our mind that God has accepted everyone. And so are we. Regardless of what we think of their performance.

According to Vs 1 of chapter 14 there is a little qualification that I would like you to zero in on. It says at the end of Vs 1 "not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions."

We are to receive people. Especially those who ~~are~~ ^{are} weak in the faith. But not for the purpose of passing judgment on ~~his~~ ^{their} opinion.

Now, this carries the idea of motive. You see someone and you are trying to judge their opinion to find out what their motives ~~are~~ ^{are}.

Now, the Bible always warns us not to judge peoples ~~motives~~ ^{motives}. That's an impossibility. Why? Because we don't really understand our own motives. We have a hard time understanding ourself. The Bible says that the heart of man is ~~very~~ desperately ~~very~~ wicked and who can know it. It is only the Lord who really knows what we are like. So, stop trying to judge peoples motives. You can't even be honest with ~~your~~ ^{our}.

The Word of God is the clearest judge of motives. That is found in Hebrews 4:12...

it become

The Wind of God

It is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it is the discerner, the judging through, the thoughts and the intents and the motives of our hearts.

So, we are not to go about, believing it is God's will to tell people what their motives are. We are not to do that.

For example. Here is a person who just comes to Christ. And we look at him and say: "Don't you know that you are not suppose to cut your lawn on Sunday. And you give him 35 reasons why he shouldn't cut his lawn on Sunday. And he gives you one why he should. Namely, the grass is long...

Now, don't receive one another in the body of Christ with passing judgments on opinions. The Bible is warning us about that.

(20) Now, the second reason is found in Verse 4. And that is because of God's ability to take care of every believer. Don't ~~start~~ judging people because God is fully able to take care of every believer. ~~Vs~~

Vs 4 says "Who are you to judge the servant of another?." He is not your servant. He is the Lord's servant if he is a member of the Body of Christ. If he is a believer, he belongs to Christ not you ^{me}. "To his own master he stands or falls". You are not the master of another believer. The Lord is the master.

Then Vs 4 concludes "and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand." *Praise God!*

You know, some ^{Christians} ~~of us~~ believe that ^{Their} ~~our~~ life's calling is to correct people. I mean, some ^{Christian} ~~of us~~ feel called to produce spiritual maturity in ^{other} people.

Now, the Bible teaches that Christians ought to guide newer christians into maturity. But we don't produce the maturity. God produces the maturity. God is able to make ~~them~~ stand. ~~God~~ is able to take care of people.

You say, "Yes, put don't you know what he is doing?"....Listen, I don't care what he is doing. God knows about it. And he is able to make him stand.

Don't you know that God can drive that person absolutely batty? until he stops? And He willn't even need you to show him.....That is right!... God is able to take care of each one of us, *if we let God do it.*

So, let's don't accept one another with passing judgment on opinions or motives; and let's, also, realize that God is able to make every believer see it correctly. He can handle the situation. He is perfectly able, last time I heard. And I know ~~God~~ is around because I talked with him this ~~morning~~ ~~morning~~....

(3D) Now, third, in verse 5 to 9. The third reason why we should stop judging one another is because of our acknowledgement of the Lord in all things. Do you acknowledge the Lord in all things?.....Do you give God thanks in all things?

We have no right to judge ~~one~~ another. If one person says I think you ought to eat meat. And another person says I don't think you ought to eat meat. The fellow who says that you shouldn't eat ~~meat~~ meat says, "Listen, I praise God for the things that he has shown me in my life. I thank God for this. And I have a clear conscience."

That is fine. That is nice.

Yet, here is another person and he is eating meat. I mean he loves liver. Perish the thought....And he is just eating all that liver....

Listen, we acknowledge the Lord in all things, then we have no right to judge one another.

Now, there are several ^{examples} ~~issues~~ presented to us in these verses.

(1E) ^{sub-one} ~~For example~~, in Vs 5 we find the issue of observing certain days ... It says "one man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike."

Now, some folks believe he is talking about the Sabbath. Others believe he is talking about feast days that were special days...I don't know.

But the issue ^{in the example} is "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind." Whether or not you think Saturday or Sunday is a day to worship or, whether you think that Tuesday is best day to worship. I am sure that all of us would agree that we are not to be angels on Sunday and devils on Monday. I hope that your response to God is the same every day of the week.

But, suppose you run into someone who is very concerned about Saturday being the Sabbath. Or, very concerned about Sunday being the day of rest.

Now, it is wrong for you to give them 36 arguments why they are wrong. That is a part of what Romans 14 is all about. We ought to move from these surface issues to deeper issues of the Spirit. ~~And we are going to look at some of them before we finish this chapter.~~

(20) There is, also, the issue of life and death here. You know, we don't have any control over that. Only God does. And the Bible says very simply in Vs 8 whether we live or die we are the Lord's.

So, make sure you acknowledge the Lord in all that you do. And you ~~have~~ no right to judge someone else in what they do.

(4D) The fourth reason is found in Verses 10 to 12. This refers to our accountability to God. Vs 10 says "why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." *How True that is!*

That is not the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20, when God will judge unbelievers. The only one's who are at the judgment seat, of christ, which is in heaven, are believers.

And the issue there is not salvation. You are not going to be standing in heaven seeing if you can stay there or not. No...it is going to be rewards. You can find this discussed in 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians chapter 5 in addition to this verse.

The judgement seat of Christ *is for believers. And* Rewards are going to be the issue.

Now, the issue of rewards is always motive. According to 1 Corinthians 4:5, we are to judge nothing before the time when the Lord comes because then the Lord will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest all council or the motives of our hearts. We don't know motives. But at the judgement seat of Christ, God ~~will~~ will bring out ~~the~~ motive. For example, if it is the correct view to argue that one day is more important than the other six. If that is the correct view, it is really God's view. If your motive was wrong, even though you held to that view, at the judgement seat of Christ you are going to be in fore a hard realization. It is going to be a sad day. Because we are going to discovery that God has been judging motives ~~all~~ all along. *and not one day over another*

The issue is not the practice today or the practice tomorrow. The issue is something much deeper: OUR ACCOUNTABILITY BEFORE GOD. And especially in relationship to one another ^{within} the church. None of us stand alone. ^{Dear Friends} We are all effecting each other, whether we like it or not.

So, our accountability before God is every important. It says in Vs 12, "each one of us shall give account of himself to God." Those of us who have been going around trying to correct people are not going to have the opportunity at the judgement seat of Christ to give a four point outline on what is wrong with my brother....NO WAY! Everyone of us will give an account of himself to God for what we have done. And God will bring to light our motives. So, the issue is rewards not punishment. And Christian liberty, ^{The application of God's righteousness} will exclude judgment of other believers.

Now, if you are not a Christian this morrowing, then you will judge others. You have no choice. It is all a part of your old sin nature. You may think that you can control your desire to judge others, but in the end you will judge. And that is sin. And God will judge you for it. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But God so loved you...and God desires that you bring into captivity your sin nature...He desires that so much that he sent His Son, Jesus, to die on a corss for your sins. And the Bible says that who so ever believes on the name of Jesus shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Also, when you believe and accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, God, the Holy Sprit comes and dwells within your life. And it is God's Spirit who brings convition of sin and makes it possible to overcome sin, Thus, we are able to stop judging one another. ^{But} You see, it is Christ in us that makes it possible to live in peace with one other.

That is why we need Jesus.....That is why we need, constantly, to seek the face of him who is able to do abundantly ^{for} more than we could ever image.....In Christ we have real liberty.....Liberty ^{TO STOP Judging and} to be all that ^{God} wants us to be.

Shall we close in prayer