

Romans Ch.14 to Ch.15:7 (DDC) – November 15, 2009

Story about getting out of school with principal knowledge

Working on a problem trying to apply my principal knowledge

Totally overwhelmed

Another engineer shared with me that I needed to start here

I needed practical knowledge

- Well that is what Paul is doing in these latter chapters in the Book of Romans.
 - If you recall the book of Romans is broken into 3 sections
 - Ch.1-8 Principals of Salvation (doctrine)
 - Ch. 9-11 is (dispensational)
 - Showing how Israel is an example of how these principals are true.
 - In the way God chose them.
 - Offers Grace to them.
 - And will continue to keep his promises to them.
 - Next Paul comes along side us and begins to show us what these doctrinal principals look like practically.
 - So Ch. 12-16 (practical)
- (pause)
- Now Paul begins this practical section of the book of Romans by saying in Ch.12 vs.1

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore [**so based on all the doctrine he has spelled out**], brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

- Can you imagine if the Book of Romans ends there?
- We are told all these things
 - That we are hopelessly sinful
 - Because of Christ through faith we have been Justified
 - Christ conquered sin... he is the second Adam

(pause)

- Great stuff... it's the principals of our faith.
- But Paul... how do we apply that practically??

(pause)

- So to answer that Paul begins this practical teaching
- Jon Courson calls it Practical Christianity 101
 - Ch.12 Paul outlines how Christians should act within the Christian body
 - Talks about sacrificial living
 - Spiritual gifts, etc.
 - Ch.13 outlines how Christians should act within society
- Seems like a logical way to teach practical Christianity.

(pause)

- Now it interesting to me the next topic Paul next turns his attention to in Ch.14
- How Christians should act when they disagree... on non essential items.
- Think about how often Christians disagree.
 - I was thinking about it... there are not two of us in this room that completely on everything.
 - In fact quite the opposite... as demonstrated by our discussions afterwards.

(pause)

- Now there is something we need to clarify before we just into the text.
- Lets look at where Ch.13 left off.

(pause)

Rom 13:13 Let us walk **properly** as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

- The Bible is clear on many issues.
- And we as Christians shouldn't disagree on those.
- We be unified on things like:
 - Deity of Christ
 - Murder is wrong
 - Debauchery is wrong

(pause)

- It's implicate in the text at the end of Ch.13 that we are called to follow those things the Bible is clear on.
- We shouldn't be disagreeing on these issues.

(pause)

- But what about the issues the Bible is not explicitly clear on?
- Is it wrong to:
 - Drinking alcohol
 - Smoking or Dancing
 - Wearing makeup
 - Eating meat
 - Observing the Sabbath

- What do we do with issues like that?
- Should we argue with each other?
- Should we look down upon those who disagree with us?
- Or should we just do nothing... and pretend that we all agree?

(pause)

- Ch.14 addresses this.
- Paul addresses two issues that were prevalent in the Roman church at that time.

- And by way of example he shows us how to practical deal with our disagreements.
Note---specific purpose of this chapter is not to answer those arguments
Rather a method to deal with differing opinions on nonessential items
(pause)

Paul says in Verse 1:

Rom 14:1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

- Well stop there for a second.
 - Notice a couple things.
- (pause)

- Paul at the end of Ch.13 says...
 - Do not walk in sin.
 - Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - And don't gratify the flesh.
- (pause)

- But now he shifts the focus.
 - He says... as for the one who is weak in faith
 - In that their theology isn't quite right
 - Or they hold some conviction that isn't biblically founded
 - Paul says... welcome the persons who is weak in faith.. but not to quarrel over opinions.
- (pause)

- Just receive him:
 - Don't pass judgment.
 - Don't feel like you have to make him or her see it your way.
 - Just embrace them.
 - So.... in other words... welcome the person who is weak in faith.
 - But not in order to use it as an opportunity to make them see it your way.
- (pause)

Example of my Dad.... and me watching as this guy was saying stuff
Talking to my Dad afterwards...

- Next in Vs.2 Paul begins the first of two examples where the Church of Roman had been arguing over opinions.
 - The first example we will see is in regard to Eating Meat
 - And the second it in regards to observing the Sabbath
- (pause)

Rom 14:2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.

- So example 1.
- Paul says... one person believes what we eat is **not** relevant to our faith.
- And another believes a Christian should only eat only vegetables.

(pause)

- So why were they having this disagreement?
- If you look at the Church in Rome at the time Paul is writing this letter it becomes more clear.

-Scholars believe the Church in Rome was started by Jews who were converted at Pentecost

-Went home formed the Church of Rome (around AD 30)

-Gentiles converted and taken into the church

-In AD 49 Jews expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius

-Church of Rome only made up of Gentiles

-Claudius' reign ended in 54 AD

-Paul writes Romans a few years after that.

-Jews began to filter back into the Roman Church

(pause)

- Now the majority of the Jews in the Roman church were Hellenistic Jews (in that they adopted much of the Roman culture).
- However, they were still underscored by their Jewish roots.
- They still made trips home to observe the feasts... etc.

(pause)

- As we've talked about in the past there was tension in the Church between the Jews and Gentiles.
- Which is understandable.
- The Jewish culture (even if they were Hellenistic Jews) versus the Gentile Pagan culture were incredibly different.

(pause)

- So now when we get into issues pertaining to our faith... it only makes sense that they would have deep seeded differences in how they view things.
- We all have very similar world views... and none of us see eye to eye complete.
- Imagine the Church of Rome.

(pause)

- So just to give you a taste of some of the opinions the church members could possibly have held... as they pertain to the issue of what you can eat.
 1. The more devout Jews could have wanted to avoid unclean foods because of carry over from the mosaic law.
 2. The gentiles who were converted from paganism before their conversion could have previously been partaking of food sacrificed to Idols... so in their conversion they felt it was necessary to avoid meat.
 - Paul addresses this in 1 Cor. Ch. 8

3. Other Jews or Greeks (who had a better theological understanding of the new covenant) felt that we are free to eat whatever we like.
4. And I'm sure there was amalgams of these views.

(pause)

- What do you do with all these opinions?
- Or more practically.... let say someone came in here tonight and said... "I believe anyone who eat meat is sinning"
- How would you react to that?
 - Feel compelled to argue with them?
 - Say nothing?

(pause)

- Well it's interesting to me that Paul tells us point blank who the weaker brother is.
 - He doesn't beat around the bush and say everyone is right.
- The weaker brother is the one who feels they need to abstain from eating meat.
- But remember Paul told us in verse 1 that we should accept the weaker brother w/o arguing over opinions.

(pause)

- So what does that mean in regards to this specific example Paul brings up regarding meat?
- Paul Goes on in Verse 3.

Rom 14:3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains [**don't get mad at them**], and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats [**don't get judgmental**], [**why?**] for God has welcomed him.

- Paul gives us the natural reactions that we will have.
- Either to become incensed
- Or to become Judgmental.

(pause)

- Paul says... Don't get mad... and don't get Judgmental.
- These are nonessential issues.
- Remember... God welcomes the person you are arguing with.

(pause)

- Bottom line is God doesn't really care about a lot of things that we are really concerned with.

I was listening to Jon. Courson and he had a story about this:

One preacher got his point across quite powerfully:

He said in the hour that I preach this sermon... 250,000 people in our country will have died not knowing Jesus Christ... and will be going to eternal destruction.

And most of you people don't give a damn

*Then he said.
And you're shocked because I said the word Damn
Not shocked because 250,000 people are going to hell.*

- What shocks and jolts us personally often are things that are insignificant to the bigger issues of where person will spend eternity.

(pause)

- God has a whole different set of priorities.
- And Paul says here... it's not an issue.
- God receives them... and so should you.

(pause)

- Well that's sometimes more difficult than it sounds.
- So next Paul gives us a practical helpful way to think about it.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

- I can almost hear Paul saying think about it like this.
- That person does not answer to you... but rather to God.
- But more than that... it's the Lord who is able to make that person stand.

(pause)

- In other words... it's between them and God.
- And ultimately Jesus is the reason they are acceptable to God.
- Not because we can convince them to think the way we think.
- Just relax!!

(pause)

Discussion regarding having positive enlightening challenging discussion vs. arguing

- Next Paul begins his second example where the church of Rome was arguing over opinions.

Rom 14:5a One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. ...

- The controversy was not only about diets.... eat meat or not.
- But also about days.
- What day should be the day to worship the lord.
 - Some say the Saturday.... the traditional Sabbath.
 - Some say it should be on the first day of the week. The day Jesus rose.
 - Others say... there shouldn't be a set day.

(pause)

- This argument goes on to this day.
- Many seventh day adventus churches believe if you worship on Sunday you salvation is in jeopardy
- Some of the really radical seventh day adventus believe that if you worship on Sunday and not Saturday that you are worshipping the beast.

- Not true of all advent us

(pause)

- What does Paul say?

Rom 14:5 ... Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

Rom 14:6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

- Paul says... be convinced in your own mind.
- On controversial issues you don't have to make others see it your way.

(pause)

- **Bottom line is... if someone is doing something for the lord.... it's a good thing.**

- Even if your theology doesn't say it is necessary.
- It's still good.

(pause)

- Many people avoid the controversial issues.
- But we are told to be persuaded in our own minds.
- Which means we shouldn't completely avoid these issues in our minds.
- We should think them through and be convinced of what we believe.

(pause)

- Now I want to again reiterate.
- The scripture speaks clearly on many issues such as:
 - Drunkenness
 - thievery
 - Fornication.. etc.

(pause)

- Someone can't say I don't have a conviction about lying... so I lie.
- The scripture speaks clearly on that.

(pause)

- The problem is that most of the issues that cause controversy between Christians are issues that are not clearly spelled out in scripture.
 - Not black and white
- And on these issues we are called to be convinced in our own minds.

- Have conviction on what you believe.
 - And give people the latitude to have their own personal convictions.
- (pause)

Give example of a conviction I had in college re: alcohol.... and felt was necessary
Don't have it now
Was a good thing at the time
Would have been damaging if someone tried to tell me not to have the conviction

- Paul Goes on and explains further:

Rom 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

Rom 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Rom 14:9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Rom 14:10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

Rom 14:11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Rom 14:12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to **[who?]** God.

- We are told:
 - Be convinced in our own minds.
 - None of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself.
 - Christ is lord and he owns everything.
 - And every knee will bow.
 - And we will be called to give an account of

I get this picture in my head... someday your life will be spread out before the Lord
And you will be sitting with the Lord giving an account for your life

- Think about that...
- You will be there naked in front of God.
- Who cares what someone else thinks.
- Our focus should be on our convictions.
- We are going to stand in front of God.
- And whether we convinced someone of our opinion is irrelevant.

(pause)

- It's easy to think if we can convince someone of our view then it must be right.
- But what they think doesn't matter.
- We should want to be right in front of God.
- Not have a whole bunch of people agree with our opinion on a certain issues.

(pause)

- So thus Far Paul has said:

- Receive the weaker brother... but not to argue over opinions.
- He gave us two examples where that was occurring in the Roman Church.
- And he concluded **not** by telling us all to believe as the stronger brother believes.
- Rather that we are to be convinced in our own minds.
 - God didn't make it clear... so it's not essential.
 - But it's ok to have convictions about certain areas.
- And really the bottom line is we personally are going to stand in front of God.
 - Is God telling you to do that... or not.
 - Be convinced in your own mind
 - That's what matters.

(pause)

- Now in light of what he just said... Paul goes on to say:

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

- Stop passing judgment on each other.
- Give people the latitude to have convictions.
- They will stand in front of God.
- And you don't want to be the person that convinced them not to do the thing God was asking them to do. *—refer back to my conviction re: alcohol*

(pause)

- So instead... Paul says.... let's build each other up by deciding never to put a hindrance in the way of a brother.
- If someone holds a conviction... let them have it.
- And more than that.... help them be true to that conviction.

(pause)

If they have conviction not to drink any alcohol... then don't drink in front of them

Description about how this is the opposite response to how the world treats disagreements that relate to conflicting opinions

World says... don't let your convictions get in my way

The Bible says... don't hinder your brother's convictions... even if you disagree with them

- Now next verse is very interesting.
- Verse 14 says:

Rom 14:14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.

- Here Paul says first that nothing is unclean in and of itself.

- Not pork
- Not shell fish.
- Not Alcohol
- Nothing

(pause)

- Remember Paul is saying this... formerly Saul.
- The Pharisee of Pharisees.
- He had obviously had a huge encounter with Christ.
- And he's concluded that now.... nothing is unclean in itself.

Discussion re: I wonder what Saul thought as he picked up his first ham sandwich

- But then Paul goes on and makes a rather astonishing statement.
- He says but... if you think something is unclean... it is.
 - Whether it's because of poor doctrinal teaching...
 - Or because God has called you personally to abstain....
- If you think something is unclean... then it is.

(pause)

Abstained from Alcohol end of college... was unclean to me...it would have been wrong for me to impose that on people

- If you think something is unclean... then it is.
- That means...
 - If you feel convicted that eating meat is wrong.... then it is wrong to eat meat.
 - If you feel convicted that you shouldn't do something... then you shouldn't

Example about my kids... disobeying what they think I want them to do... still disobedient

- So... if someone holds a conviction (assuming it's not clearly in contradiction to the Bible) help them be true to that conviction.
- Of course it's ok to help them understand their freedom in Christ... if they want their opinion.
- Bur otherwise... help them be true their convictions

(pause)

- Paul goes on:

Rom 14:15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. **[true... you it might be ok for you to eat it but you are no longer walking in love]** By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.

Rom 14:16 So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

- The kingdom of God isn't about these things.
- It's about serving Christ.
- We shouldn't let these things become hindrances.

(pause)

- Rather we need to remember:

Rom 14:18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Rom 14:19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

- As we consider the nonessential issues that we disagree on... we need to remember this.
- That we are all serving Christ.
- And what we should be pursuing is mutual upbuilding.

(pause)

- That means that the strong... need to bear with the weak (as we will talk about in Ch.15)
- We are in this together.
- If I feel free to do something and I cause someone else to sin... that hurts both of us.

(pause)

Story about ships moving at same speed...

Like wise, Paul goes on:

Rom 14:20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats.

Rom 14:21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

- Again we are in this together.
- Our enemy is not the person who holds convictions that we don't think are necessary
- Rather that person is our brother.

Rom 14:22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

Rom 14:23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

- This is huge.
- Do you get what he's saying?
- If you convince someone intellectually of your point and they decide to go against a conviction that they hold... if it is not of faith that they made that decision... then it is sin.

(pause)

- In other words you (or me) winning an argument with someone... may convince them to go against a conviction they have.
- But winning an argument doesn't necessarily increase their faith on that issue.
- And thus by arguing your opinion with them... may cause them to sin.

(long pause)

Chapter 15 Vs.1-7 Conclusion

- Well that brings us to Ch.15.
- As I said we will be covering verses 1-7
- In these verses Paul gives us the conclusion to this teaching.

Rom 15:1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

- It's interesting... my guess 99% of the people who read that assume that they are the strong.
- That's what I naturally assume.
- But really... what does the strong look like?

Rom 15:2 Let each of us [**speaking of the strong**] please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

- The strong is some one who will instead of pleasing himself... with please his neighbor for his good... to build him up.

I had a friend in college who quit drinking around me... encouraged me...

He was a strong brother... helped me with my convictions

Had other friends who did every thing they could to convince me that it was ok to drink...

They selfishly wanted to feel it was ok themselves.

They weren't convinced in their own minds.

Had they got me to start drinking again... they would have convinced me to sin

- The strong brother is the one says... I'm not threatened by your believes on nonessential items.
- In fact I will help you keep your convictions.

Rom 15:3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Rom 15:5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

Rom 15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 15:7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- There is a lot we could talk about in there.
- But really it answers the question of why should we do all this?
- Why we should treat the weaker brother with love... and not try to manipulate them into thinking like we think on an issue.

(pause)

- I think about how much my theology and my understanding... and my convictions have changed over the years.
- But from the beginning Christ has not accepted.
- Despite the fact I'm not right on all the little issues.
- He accepts me.
- **Where do I get off thinking that I shouldn't accept a brother because we disagree on something?**

(pause)

- In John chapter 13...in the upper room... hours before Jesus was to be put to death... shortly after he had washed their feet... he turned to his disciples and said

Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

Joh 13:35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

And here Paul says...

Rom 15:5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

Rom 15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- That's what Jesus asked us to do.
- Not... sit and argue over opinions.

I thought I would just end with this:

Listening to a sermon by Tim Keller)

-suggests the bulk of the problem in Rome had to do with Jews who felt meat was unclean because of their Jewish Roots.

-suggested that

- What does that tell me?
- One culture may:
 - Areas where they are inclined to be weak.
 - Likewise that same culture may have areas where they are included to be strong
- A different culture/upbringing/background because of their background will different areas where they are include to be both weak and strong.

(pause)

- Now that being said.
- Our Goal is not to fix everyone else's weak spots.
- God will take care of that.
- Rather it is to:

Rom 15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 15:7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- That means when we are strong in an area... we must bear with the weak.
- Rather we need to accept each other in love so that we may with one voice glorify God.
- What do you think is going to damage that more...??
 - Someone having a differing opinion on something
 - Or me not accepting someone because of their opinion

Practical Christianity 101... we must accept each other as Christ accepted us

Closing Prayer