

## Salt Church

Romans 14:12-23

*“Harmony in the Church”*

May 24, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14) 12 days

RECAP:

Romans 14:1-11

14 Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. <sup>2</sup> For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer **with a sensitive conscience** will eat only vegetables.<sup>3</sup> Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. <sup>4</sup> **Who are you to condemn someone else's servants?** Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

<sup>5</sup> In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. <sup>6</sup> Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, **since they give thanks to God before eating.** And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give

thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. <sup>8</sup> If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. **So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.** <sup>9</sup> Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

**<sup>10</sup> So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.** <sup>11</sup> For the Scriptures say, “As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.’”

### **Here is what we learned:**

- **There are debatable things**
  - In other-words there are no clearly defined “thou shall not” verses for some things
    - Therefore, we trust God to speak through our conscience as to whether is acceptable or sinful.
- **There are mature and immature believers**
  - We learned that often the biggest difference between a “mature and immature believer” is knowledge of God’s Word, submission to the Holy Spirit, time, and experience.
- **Food and drink**
  - In Paul’s day food and drink were debatable things
    - Paul makes it very clear that there is nothing evil about food and drink unless it causes the believer to sin.

- And all food and drink should be received with thanksgiving to the Lord.
- **Days of worship**
  - Christianity was new and worshipping the Lord on Sunday was an adjustment for those that had converted from Judaism.
  - In the end we learned that ***everyday belongs to the Lord***
    - That the Sabbath wasn't created for the Lord it was created for man.
      - We all need a day of rest, reflection, and worship of the one true God.
        - We also learned that God has given the believer the freedom to choose one day out of seven as a Sabbath rest.
- **Judgement of action vs judgment of the heart**
  - Paul makes it clear that sin is still sin, meaning things like murder, lying, adultery, dishonoring of parents are still sins.
    - Those things are expressed through actions and are easy to judge and should be judged correctly.
      - Judging motive (the heart) as it relates to debatable things is not permitted. **4 Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall.**
- **In the end Paul reminds us:**
  - **“Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.”**

## *Paul continues under the power of the Holy Spirit*

### *Romans 14:12-23*

#### ***12 Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.***

- Why?
  - What could we possibly tell God that He does not already know?
    - Unless it is not for God's sake.
- **Confession is the ultimate pride destroyer.**
  - Humility and the glory of God is the goal of the child of God.
    - Confession sets us free from sin especially pride.
- So, we can see why Paul would remind us that we will give a personal account to God.
  - Paul's motivation is simply this:
    - **Why wait to confess?**
    - Why would you want to do anything motivated by pride?
    - Why would you want to judge anyone without knowing the motivation of their heart?
      - *Paul has a very simple solution.*

#### ***13 So let's stop condemning each other.***

- In the Greek it is “no longer shall you judge one another”

*Pastor, are you saying that we should never make judgements about each other's actions?*

- No
  - When we come to a verse like this, we must understand it in its proper context. (**Context is King!**)

**This chapter began with this admonition:**

- *“1 Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.” NLT*
- *“1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.” NKJ*
  - The Greek says “do not pass judgement on debatable matters.”

**We came to the conclusion** that there are some things that are sinful **not because the Bible speaks directly about the issue but rather it is a matter of conscience.**

- We also learned that often the difference between a clean conscience and unclean conscience is maturity in Christ, which comes with knowledge of scripture and time.
- We also learned last week that both parties have a responsibility to know the truth and accept the truth.
- **Along with accepting the truth, Paul** (*through the power of the Holy Spirit*) **reminds us that both parties should not condemn nor judge each other in these “debatable things.”**
  - In other words, there is no debate about sin.
    - Adultery is sin
    - Sex outside of marriage is sin
    - Lying is sin
    - Stealing is sin
    - Murder is sin
    - Not honoring your father and mother is sin
      - Eating or not eating bacon is a debatable thing.

- Drinking or not drinking alcohol is a debatable thing.
  - Doing those things and causing a weaker brother to stumble is a sin.
  - Judging someone, when you know the truth permits those things, is a sin.

### **This filters into every area of life.**

- What we watch on TV and at the movies.
  - I remember an older couple visited us one Wednesday night and the husband immediately came to me to find out what I thought about the show “The Chosen.”
    - I expressed that **I was a little uneasy with the liberty that they had taken** with some of the characters but there are worse things the church could watch.
      - He got ticked off at me and began to lecture me as to why no Christian should ever watch that show.
        - **That is a debatable thing!**

### **The same can be said about clothing especially in Honduras.**

- For some reason (*in the hottest place on earth*) it is not acceptable for people to wear shorts to work, school, or church.
  - The ladies have to wear long skirts
  - The men are always in pants
    - And if a lady is seen in public in shorts she is looked down upon as if she is a loose lady.
      - **That is a debatable thing.**

## *Moving on...*

*<sup>13</sup>So let's stop condemning each other.*

*Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.*

- **So, what does that look like for us practically?**

- It means that maybe you don't drink alcohol in front of your brother for fear of sending the wrong message or causing him to stumble.
- Maybe you don't eat meat when you spend time with someone who is a vegetarian.
- Maybe ladies you don't dress to be the center of attention especially when you go to church.
- Maybe we all should consider what we watch, read, and listen too.

- **In the end the mission is to bring glory to God in everything that we do.**

- And sometimes bringing glory to God means not causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble even though you know that it is not a sin.

- One final thought, **to the weaker brother, you too have a responsibility to not condemn as well.**

- **Alcohol, pork, playing cards, whatever may be an issue for you because of your past that does not mean that it is an issue for everyone.**

- You also have a responsibility to not judge and not condemn.

## **Romans 14:12-23**

***14 I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong.***

- ***How about that...***

- Now you know why I don't eat black liquorish
  - Its dark like sin
  - It sounds like it has liquor in it
  - It looks like it is made out of ear wax
    - My conscience screams "don't do it!"
      - **I must be obedient to the Lord!**

***14 I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong.***

- ***Why would God say that?***

- Because your conscience may be all you have.
- For the believer the conscience is often how we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- If you are unsure, just walk away.
  - If you cannot do it for the glory of God, just walk away.

***15 And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it.***

- ***Do you see how that is worded?***

- In the Greek it is "And if another believer is grieved"
  - **This is something that is known by the one that is eating.**

- The point is “**don’t hurt your brother.**”

***Don’t let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died.***

- This could be a real issue for those converted from Judaism or a recovering alcoholic.

***<sup>16</sup> Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good.***

- This verse touches on something that is important to see.

- ***“something you believe is good”***

- There are some who seem determined to express their freedom in Christ no matter the circumstances.

- It is almost as if they get some joy in their “mature freedom.”

- Be careful of that way of thinking.

- Pride is often the motivation behind that expression of freedom.

***<sup>17</sup> For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

***Jesus said these words***

**Matthew 15:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup> Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. <sup>11</sup> What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”***

- That statement was a shock to His Jewish listeners

- That statement is absolute truth
  - But we do not have any recorded incident in which Jesus ate anything that was offensive to His Jewish brothers.
    - **“What people say is what defiles them.”**

## Okay Pastor, but what about Acts 10?

- Context is King!
  - Meaning Peter was instructed to go to a gentiles house and witness to him.
  - That meant he would enter his home (Not acceptable under the old law)
  - That meant that he would eat whatever that man had prepared so as to not offend or condemn.
    - So, ***God the Father is saying that we may be called to eat or not eat for His glory and for the sake of the weaker or stronger brother.***
      - Before you offer me black liquorish let me remind you that I am the weaker brother in that scenario.

***<sup>18</sup> If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too.***

- This is the goal and our hope.

***<sup>19</sup> So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.***

- Amen!
  - Church unity is a lot like marriage

- If you consistently demand your way soon you find yourself without a home.
  - Unity only comes with sacrifice.
    - But we never compromise truth for unity.

***20 Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat.***

***Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble.***

- This one verse sums up this entire chapter.
- ***Be careful with your freedom***
  - Everything is acceptable but not everything is beneficial.
  - Too much alcohol, bacon, liquorish, or fried chicken is not good for you.
    - In fact, the only thing you can overdose on without adverse consequence is Jesus.

***21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble.***

- Be careful what you eat, drink, wear, because you could cause your weaker brother to stumble.

***22 You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God.***

- Time
  - Place
    - And people matter

***Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right.***

- ***Freedom in Christ is a wonderful thing and there is a blessing in it.***
  - ***But be careful in your freedom.***

***<sup>23</sup> But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it.***

- ***You must be fully convinced that whatever you are doing is not a sin or sinful in any way.***

***For you are not following your convictions.***

- God has given us the gift of convictions,
- Listen to that voice of conviction, it may be the Holy Spirit.
  - The only way to know for sure is to get into the word of God.
  - And if it is a debatable thing use what God has already given you.
    - If your conscience is clear and it won't hurt another believer, then go ahead with the blessing of God
    - But if not, walk away to the glory of God.

***If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.***

- Plan and simple...

## **The goal of Romans 14 is unity and harmony within the church.**

- It matters and is often the difference between a thriving church and a dead church.
- Jesus prayed in John 17 that we would be one with Him
  - One with each other
    - Just like He is one with the Father.
- This becomes more difficult as the church grows.
  - It requires maturity
    - It requires sacrifice and humility
      - It requires submission to the Holy Spirit

## **Church growth is good and it is God's plan**

- Why?
  - Healthy things grow
  - More people requires more discipleship
  - More changed lives
  - More changed homes
  - More changed communities
    - Changed cities
    - Changed states
    - Changed nations
      - A changed world.
        - That's the plan for the church