

ROMANS 14-15:13

June 28, 2026

Becky Burkert

THE HEART OF THE DISUNITY PROBLEM

-Paul wants the Roman church's theology to be LIVED

ROMANS 14:1-12

I. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM???

People are worshipping in different ways

A. Meat and wine

-partially about Jewish dietary law

-partially about sourcing issues

B. "esteemed" days

-Jewish feast days, New Moon celebrations (28 days + 12 days)

- Jewish Sabbath vs "The Lord's Day"(52 days)

II. WHO'S ON THE OPPOSING SIDES???

A. "The Weak"

1. The Jews (but not all of them)...but also

2. God-fearing Gentiles

3. Gentiles trying to distance themselves from paganism

B. "The Strong"

1. The Gentiles (but not all of them)...but also

2. Jews who have been released from obeying the Law

3. Paul!

III. WHO'S RIGHT???

None of the above? All of the above?

A. What Paul DIDN'T say

1. That the behaviors in question are WRONG,

a) All matters of our Christian walk fall into one of 3 categories

i. ESSENTIAL – fundamental; does it affect me getting into heaven?

-God as creator, Gospel of Jesus, Salvation by faith alone

- 1 Cor 15:1-4

ii. IMPORTANT, BUT NOT NECESSARY – things that shape visible ministry

-baptism, communion, the Lord's Supper

iii. ADIAPHORA (things indifferent)

-matters of conscience...between you and God

-THEN: meat, wine, feast days

-NOW: alcohol, 6-day creation, end times theology

***This part of the letter is about the ADIAPHORA. Important in YOUR walk, but not necessarily in your brother's walk.

AND NOT MORE IMPORTANT THAN SHOWING LOVE FOR YOUR BROTHER.

b) How do we decide which it is?

-What does Scripture say?

-Have you prayed about it?

-What is the Holy Spirit saying to YOU?

- Have you discussed it with a mature Christian?

- Have you considered the possibility that it is ok for someone else to believe differently.

“ Where the gospel is not threatened, and holiness is not tainted, liberty may be given.”

~James Bird

2. Paul does not say that anyone has to change!

-He isn't trying to create UNIFORMITY

-He is trying to create UNITY in their differences

3. Paul does have a strong theological stance on this...

-Rom 3:20-21, Gal 3:23, Rom 12:5

-But Romans need to focus on unity more than freedom!

4. Paul holds a position while not taking a side
 - He is “persuaded” – **Acts 10:15, Mark 7:14-15**
 - Does take a side with other churches **Gal 4:8-11, Col 2:16-17**

IV. WHAT'S THE REAL PROBLEM IN THE ROMAN CHURCH???

***quarrel, despise, pass judgment

- A. Paul gives 4 reasons why their attitude is wrong
 1. God has already welcomed these brothers
 - *Instead of the Golden Rule, ask How does God feel about them?
 2. God is their Judge (and yours!) **2 Cor 5:10**
 3. They are His servant (and so are you!)
 - Eph 6:6, Col 3:24, Rom 6:22**
 4. He is the one who will make them stand (not you!)
 - Jude 1:24-25, 1 Thess 5:23-24**

V. IF ALL THESE THINGS ARE PERMISSIBLE, HOW SHOULD WE LIVE???

- A. Live a Christocentric life!
- B. Be FULLY CONVINCED IN YOUR OWN MIND
 - A conscious decision, not carelessness
 - Does the Bible weigh in?
 - Have you prayed about it?
 - Would it lead you – or someone else - into sin?
 - Would you do it before Christ?
- C. Can you rely on your conscience? Yes! ...in Christ
 1. He gave us the Holy Spirit – **John 16:13**
 2. He gives us a renewed mind – **Rom 12:2**
 3. Our confidence is from Him – **1 John 3:21-22**

ROMANS 14:13-23

VI. HOW SHOULD WE TREAT EACH OTHER????

- A. Message to the weak
 1. Don't judge the strong.
 2. Worry about your own heart...if you doubt, DON'T!

B. Message to the strong

1. The strong carry a higher burden, because they are in less danger of falling into sin
2. Don't despise the weak
3. "Stumbling block" and "hindrance" have SPIRITUAL meanings
 - a) Stumbling block = cause to fall, give an occasion for APOSTASY
 - b) Hindrance = a trap or a snare on a person's path with God
4. What work of God could the strong destroy?
-The good work that God has begun - **Phil 1:6**

C. Messages for both

1. Requires COMMUNICATION from BOTH
(It's the weak's job to initiate – **Matt 18:15**)
2. Freedom is not a bad thing! **Gal 5:1**
3. But it's not the main thing! **Gal 5:13-14**
4. Our witness depends on this! **John 13:34-35**
5. Keep it to yourself!
6. **Each** of us should please his neighbor, to build **him** up

ROMANS 15:1-7

VII. WHY AND HOW DO WE LIVE LIKE THIS???

- A. WHY...**because Jesus did!**
-**John 5:30, Phil 2:5-8, Mark 10:45**
- B. HOW...vs. 5-7: in His power, through His peace and His joy and His desire for harmony, as we are united to Christ in both His death and His life, with His Holy Spirit dwelling in us
- C. WHY...so we can praise God with ONE VOICE
- D. "Welcoming" or "accepting" each other...as Christ welcomed you!

VIII. SO...ARE WE JUST TOSSING THE OLD TESTAMENT NOW? (vs 4)

NO! Just because we are now free from the law DOESN'T mean that the OT doesn't have things to teach us!

ROMANS 5:8-12

IX. A REMINDER OF WHAT THE OT HAS TO SAY ABOUT “ONE BODY”

- A. Christ came to confirm all those OT prophecies given to the Jews
- B. Christ ALSO came so that God’s mercy would be available to the Gentiles
- C. Series of quotes reminding them
 1. Vs 9 quotes **PSALM 18:49**
-Jews praising God AMONG the Gentiles
 2. Vs. 10 quotes **DEUTERONOMY 32:43**
-Gentiles invited to praise God WITH His people
 3. Vs. 11 quotes **PSALM 117:1**
-ALL people are praising God
 4. Vs. 12 quotes **Isaiah 11:1, 10**
-The Root of Jesse will come TO UNITE the Jews and Gentiles

ROMANS 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For them and then...

The Roman church is learning something new: how to bring together its very different social and spiritual backgrounds to become the One Body in Christ that God always meant it to be. It isn’t easy to know how to deal with their differences. Paul tells them. Love each other. Prefer your brothers, and do not get in the way of what God is doing in their lives.

For us and always...

The Church must be mindful of the way we handle our differences. Being able to exist in unity – even when we don’t have uniformity – will be a sign to the world that our God is doing something special among His people. The hope and peace that He provides will draw others to Him...if we manage to live in a way that they can actually see it!

For me and now...

Am I aware of the things in my walk that I treat as vital when they’re really not? Am I aware of the attitudes I have and the ways I act that might hinder a brother or sister from serving God the way He is calling them? Do I allow God to show me areas where I need to change? I praise Him that through His Word and His Spirit, I can have confidence that He will show me how I can serve Him well. He is our hope that we can all serve together in peace and love.

SCRIPTURE

1 Cor 15:1-4 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

Rom 3:20-21 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it.

Gal 3:23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

Rom 12:5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Act 10:15 And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common."

Mark 7:14-15 And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him

Gal 4:8-11 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

Col 2:16-17 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Eph 6:6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart

Col 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Rom 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Jude 1:24-25 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

1 Thess 5:23-24 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 John 3:21-22 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

Phil 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Matt 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother

Gal 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Gal 5:13-14 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

John 13:34-35 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. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 5:30 I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me

Phil 2:5-8 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

PSALM 18:49 For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations and sing to your name.

DEUTERONOMY 32:43 Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people."

PSALM 117:1 Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples.

Isaiah 11:1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:10 In that day, the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and His resting place will be glorious.

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