

Romans Sermon Title

Well, after a 12 week pause, we are back to Paul's letter to the Romans

This is a sermon series that I have called The Road to Righteousness

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Rome

To help this believers to understand what God has been doing throughout the history of humanity to bring them back to himself after the rebellion of our parents in the garden

In Romans, Paul provides a magnificent picture of the metanarrative of the salvific plan of God to rescue his creation from sin and eternal damnation

This letter is about the righteousness of God

Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,[\[e\]](#) as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

God's plan to bring about righteousness in us through the gospel

That is why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel

Because it is the power of God for salvation

And through it the righteousness of God is revealed

God's righteousness is our salvation

That is why our series title is Road to Righteousness

The gospel is the work that God has done to bring about our salvation

And righteousness is the resulting work of the gospel in our lives

Not only the imputed righteousness we have received from Christ through which the Father now views us

But also a righteousness brought about by an obedience of faith

So, at the start of this year, we began the final section of Paul's letter

Up to this point, chapters 1 through 11 were a theological treatise on how

God's Righteousness is being applied to us and exhorts us to pursue righteous living in light of our salvation

In this fifth and final section of Paul's letter to the Romans

Chapters 12 through 16

He now begins to unpack for us exactly how we should live as righteous people

Since we have been made righteous by the gospel

Now we are to pursue righteous living through the gospel

And Paul began these entire section with these words

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,[\[a\]](#) by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship **2** Do not be conformed to this world,[\[c\]](#) 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.[\[d\]](#)

Romans Subtitle

And so, now we jump into chapter fourteen and make our way to the end of the book by the end of August.

We are in Romans 14

Starting in verse one

And the title today is Follow Your Convictions

So let's begin

Romans 14:1

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

We are about to jump into the deep end of practical Christian living within a community of believers

In the first four sections of the letter, there were some deep waters when it came to Christian thinking about theological issues

But now we are in the deep waters of Christian living with regard to biblical principles

And Paul begins as for the one who is weak in faith

What does that mean

Some might suggest that this is a person who not sure if they are saved

They are wavering on if they are genuinely saved
Or perhaps they are a new believer
A babe in Christ
So they are weak as in ignorant as to knowing
truth

But, the idea here is more not ignorance, but rather uncertain

Many times, people who quote this verse
Use it to define any Christian who holds opposite views on secondary
matters

Follow me for a second
Christ is the only means of salvation - that is a primary matter
Any self-proclaimed follower of Christ who believes
differently is a heretic

Now let's look another issue
Christians should only read the King James Bible - that is a
secondary issue
But they would say any believer reading any other
translation is a weaker brother
Still a Christ, just weak in faith

I think that is how many have looked at this passage
I have studied the Scripture and I have an orthodox opinion about
living as a Christ follower
So, if you hope a different interpretation than I do
You are weaker in faith than I am

And to be honest
That has been the way I have looked at this passage
But I do not think that is what Paul is saying here

I believe what Paul is saying here is this
Followers of Christ are those who are uncertain as to what is right
Or, they are cavalier in how they live

Let me explain
But first, we need to understand the issues at hand

Romans 14:2

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

So, here, we have the carnivores versus the vegetarians
Some are meat eaters and some aren't
What is the issue here

Well, one interpretation is that the Christians were eating meat
And some vegetarians were saying, well in the garden they only
ate fruits and vegetables, so we are more holy
And the meat eaters were pointing out that after the flood,
God gave permission to eat meat - so trust God more
Or, they may have been eating meats that had been
declared unclean in the OT, but opened to believers in
the New Testament - So trust God more
Or, what really could be the underlying issue in
Rome was that most of the meat had been
sacrificed to idols, and the church had been
commanded by James and the council in
Jerusalem not to eat it
But Paul had said there are no other Gods
So, it doesn't matter
So, you have Christian freedom to
eat it

This was such a big issues
Paul dealt with it here
In his first letter to the Corinthians
In his letter to the Colossians
In his letter to the Galatians
And In his first letter to Timothy
So, it was an important topic

So, that is the first issue
To eat meat or to not eat meat
Let's look at the next issue

Romans 14:5

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

So, here we have a second controversy

Some people are celebrating certain days in religious days
And others don't celebrate those days as special

What is this referring to

Well, one interpretation is that Christians were still honoring the Sabbath

Which is Saturday

And other Christians had stopped observing the Sabbath laws

Or, the Jewish calendar was filled with all kinds of religious holidays

Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Purim, Shavot, Hannukah

Some Christians, called Messianic Jews, still observe these holidays

Or, there were Roman converts still celebrating Romans pagan holidays

But again this is an issue

Paul talks about in this letter

It is in the letter to the Colossians

It is in the letter to the Galatians

So, again, it is an important issue

So, issue one: to eat meat or to not eat meat

Issue two: to celebrate certain days or to not celebrate days

And then there is a third issue that is not in our passage

But it is worth mentioning

Romans 14:20-21

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. **21** It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.[\[c\]](#)

This is talking a freedom and the willing self-limitation for the sake of a brother

And we will talk about this next week

But we see Paul say in verse 20, everything is clean

But in verse 21, he says not to eat meat or drink wine for the sake of the brother

So, we have dealt with the meat

But this throws drinking wine into the mix

So, the third issue is can Christians drink alcohol

Or can they not

And if they do drink, for what purpose and to what level

Was it medicinal only

Was it watered down or unfermented

Those were some of the issues

So, can we eat meat

Should we regard certain days as more holy

Should we drink wine

Those are the issues

And the way we have interpreted this passage has been

I have the right theological interpretation so I am the strong brother

And you have the wrong one, so you are the weak brother

And therefore, Paul tells us superior ones how to live with the wrong ones

But that is not what this passage is saying

And we will look at that

And then we will look at how we should live in community

So, what is it saying

The key to interpreting this passage is verses 5 and 6

Romans 14:5

5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

One celebrate holidays
Another does not
And here is the key
Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind

Fully Convinced
That means willing to carry the full load
What does that mean
It means, if you have that conviction
You should be willing to

1. Defend it
2. Live it out
3. Be willing to take the condemnation for it
 - a. Either by people
 - b. Or even the Lord

What you would think Paul might say is
Hey, lighten up on your beliefs
You may be wrong
It is not that big of deal
Harmony is more important than personal holiness

But that is not what he is saying
He actually says
You need to dig in and know what you believe
And why you believe it
And then practice it
Even if no one else is
Look at verse 6

Romans 14:6

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.

So, if you think you should observe certain day to honor the Lord

Then do it
But if you think you shouldn't do it to honor the Lord
Then don't do it

And, if you think you should eat meat to honor the Lord
Then do it
But if you think you shouldn't do it to honor the Lord
Then don't do it

Paul is not asking us to weaken our faith or convictions for the sake of harmony

Our first call is to honor the Lord with our faith and actions
So, figure out what you believe and stick to it

So, then, I ask again, who is the weaker brother
If Paul is saying eat or don't eat
Then he wouldn't be saying that those who eat are strong
And those who don't eat are weak
So, then how should we understand it

The weaker brother is either

1. One who is uncertain as to what is right
There is a vacillating on what they believe
Like a fan that keeps changing positions
Today, I will do this
Tomorrow, I will do this

Paul called out Peter for being like this
He would eat with the Gentiles when Jews weren't there
But when Jews showed up
Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles
And Paul called him a hypocrite

So, figure out what you believe
And base it on the foundation of Scripture
Not culture or opinion

2. The other weaker brother is the one who says they believe one thing but practices another

Don't profess one thing
And then live something else

Don't call out people for cursing
And then make excuses for your potty mouth

Don't call out people for drinking
But just love those occasional drinks you enjoy

That is weak sauce

Now, how are we to live in community
Both with weak brothers and sisters who are uncertain of their faith
And with strong brothers and sisters whose convictions are different
than our own

Let's just walk through Paul's advice

Romans 14:3

3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Do not despise those who hold different convictions that you do
Do not pass judgement on them

We should not hold ill will for our brothers and sisters in Christ
We should practice community unity

Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Our common bond is Christ
Our fellowship is that we all have the same Spirit dwelling in us
So, be humble

Be gentle
Be patient
Be caring while bearing with one another in love
And maintain the unity of the Spirit in the
bond of peace

So, what should our thinking be

Romans 14:4

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

Everyone has a master
And you are not it
Listen, if you are right and they are wrong
God will uphold the brother
He is covered under the righteousness of Christ
So, give allowance for grace and growth

Accept them as God in Christ accepted you
He demonstrated his love for you that while you were still a
sinner, Christ died for you
Romans 5:8

Let's look at more instruction

Romans 14:7-9

7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. 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. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

We each individually must answer to the Lord
So, why would you try to sway someone away from trusting the
Lord

This is something that I learned recently
We need to not teach people to doubt the Spirit

If a Christian comes in and says God told them to never
drink caffeine again

Then, we should encourage them to follow the Lord

And next week, we will see that we should then
not tempt them with caffeinated drinks

Does it crush your faith for another to not drink caffeine?

Does it ruin your freedom in Christ to not drink around them?

By no means

They have the Spirit

And they have to obey Him as they understand Him

Let's look at how Paul finishes his argument

Romans 14:10-12

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; **11** for it
is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall confess[[b](#)] to God.”

12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

We will all stand before the judgement seat of God

There are two judgement seats

The white throne judgment seat

Where you give account for trust or rejecting Christ

And the bema seat of Christ

Where we give account for following Christ

And that is where we be judged for our
convictions and our follow through of those
convictions

Were your beliefs wrong

Or Were they right and you just
didn't live according to them

Takeaway++

So, what is our takeaway from today

1. Get Some Convictions about what you believe

Don't be the weaker brother who has no idea what God's Word says

2. Follow your convictions

Do not say one thing and do something else

Do not use your freedom as a license to sin

Some don't drink because of conviction - right

Some don't drink because their scared God will shoot them with lightning bolts - wrong

Some do drink because of conviction - right

Some do drink to be naughty - wrong

3. Put others over self for the sake of community unity

Open and Honest

Mess up Fess up

Other's over self

Look you may disagree

But don't be disagreeable

Encourage people to trust the Lord and the Spirit

Ask questions about convictions

Be able to answer why you believe what you believe

TRSBC

One final word

We are about to go through a major transition

Not only moving

But new people coming

Here is what I ask

For the next 90 days

Will you do all you can to not be offended by anything

You might think I am kidding

But I am serious

I am certain that something will be said or done that could possibly hurt your feelings

And would you make a commitment today to simply trust that everyone is just following the Lord as best they can

And I am not talking about at Church either
I am talking about at home
Give grace
How much grace
The same Grace Jesus has given you

Response

Christians - come to the table as experience grace
Really bask in it
So that you might be full of grace to give others

Guests - do you not need the bread and juice
You need to come and experience what it means to truly be accepted in
God in Christ through the Spirit