

August 15th – Our Liberty in Christ

“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”

(Romans 14:5)

As Paul began to set forth his practical theology at the end of Romans, he entered into an explanation of Christian liberty. Understand this – following the resurrection of Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles were being saved. Jews had grown up with a great deal of customs and observances that most Gentiles knew nothing about. When Jews placed their faith in Jesus, some desired to continue some of their Jewish observances, while others did not. That led to problems in the early church.

In this case, Paul said that well-meaning believers were arguing over dietary restrictions and holy days. The issues that those first Christians were arguing about were not essential matters of faith and practice. Instead, they were secondary issues of Christian liberty – issues where believers are free to exercise different practices without disobeying the Word of God. We’re reminded of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. There, a question arose – is it necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised upon coming to faith in Christ?

The apostles agreed that circumcision was not necessary for salvation or sanctification. But they said it was non-negotiable “that you abstain from thing offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality” (Acts 15:29). Here’s the point – some aspects of our faith are non-negotiable, while others are matters of Christian liberty. When it comes to the latter, “let each be fully convinced in his own mind” without shaming a brother or sister who sees things differently.