

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith

Romans 14:1-12 Ppt 38

MPS: Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions but honor the Lord.

PRAYER TIME

Psalm 55:1–2 (ESV) *1 Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! 2 Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,*

“God” here is Elohim; it’s the name of God used in Genesis one describing GOD creating everything. It is a plural noun, but almost always has singular verbs surrounding it in the Bible.

This is a wink to the trinity. God the Father, son and Holy Spirit, which we see all present in creation (when you see the Spirit hovering over the waters and NT passages stating Jesus as an agent of creation as in John).

Elohim means mighty. Where in your life have you seen the mighty hand of God move on your behalf –

“God, we thank You for showing Your mighty power in our lives by _____”

provision in need

healing and restoration

guidance through trials

reconciliation and relationships

spiritual transformation

protection from harm

community or church blessings

overcoming sin or temptation

Psalm 55:22 (ESV) *22 Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

Many times we see the Psalms say something like, remember the deeds of the lord. We just did that in worship and thanksgiving. Let that spur your faith; if He came through before, HE will come through again.

God, I/we cast the burden of _____ upon you as you sustain me/us.

When this life of trials test my faith

I set my hope on Jesus

INTRO

- We are in Romans 14 today

- Let's keep in mind why Paul is writing this letter.
- He is wanting to bring unity between Jews and Gentiles in the church
- Most likely he is speaking to Jews who came back to Rome after being expelled by Claudius and to the Gentiles who have found liberty in the gospel

OPEN

Are we supposed to follow all the commands in the OT? Aren't we supposed to follow the Bible? Don't Mix Fabrics in Your Clothes, Don't Touch a Dead Lizard, No Cooking a Goat in Its Mother's Milk

The Westminster Confession of Faith uses this framework in Chapter 19 and some well known and trusted theologians like RC Sproul and Sinclair Ferguson ascribe to this:

The Tripartite [try-PAR-tight] Division of Old Testament Laws

- **Civil Laws:** These governed the social, political, and judicial life of Israel as a theocratic nation. Examples include laws on property, commerce, and penalties for crimes (e.g., Exodus 21–22). They were specific to Israel's context as a covenant nation and are generally seen as not directly binding on Christians today, though they reflect principles of justice.
- **Ceremonial Laws:** These regulated worship, sacrifices, and rituals, including the priesthood, tabernacle/temple practices, and festivals (e.g., Leviticus 1–7, 16). They pointed to Christ's redemptive work and are considered fulfilled in Him (Hebrews 10:1–18), so they no longer apply in their literal form to believers.
- **Moral Laws:** These reflect God's unchanging character and ethical standards, applicable across time and cultures. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17) are often cited as the core example, addressing universal principles like worshiping God alone, honoring parents, and prohibiting murder, theft, and adultery. These are seen as enduring for all people.

There has been some pushback over the last century on this division of the Mosaic law, stating the law is not divided but is seen as a whole and Jesus' death and resurrection abolished the binding of the law BUT the NT reintroduces 9 of the 10 commandments. OK, but let's get on the same page... Much of the OT is no longer binding for Christians today.

"When I was pastoring at Lakeshore Baptist in Lake Blackshear, I had a good friend who was also our associate pastor, TJ Maulding (who helped plant GB btw) TJ back then was a fiery young guy and he got a Jesus fish tattoo (**Ichthys** – **[ICK-this]**) on his wrist and that sort of stirred up some trouble. Back then, tattoos were taboo in our SBC circles, especially with the older folks. I didn't mind, but I knew it'd ruffle feathers. Sure enough, Mr. Buddy, a dear older saint now with the Lord, called a meeting. He was livid, quoting Leviticus 19:28—'You shall not tattoo yourselves'—to say TJ was sinning. Then TJ fired back, pointing out the next verse forbids trimming beards, and Mr. Buddy sported a neatly trimmed mustache! It was a mess:

TJ took liberties; Buddy clung to convictions.

Romans 14 calls one the stronger brother, one the weaker and both are to honor the Lord.

Surprisingly, it's the one with liberty—TJ—who's stronger, not the one with strict convictions. How does that work?

- Buddy had convictions based on non binding OT ceremonial laws; TJ took liberties that didn't break any moral laws – he got it to remind himself of who he belonged to... “whatever I put my hands to in life was marked by Jesus”. Both men wanted to honor the LORD.

Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions but honor the Lord.

1. Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions.

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

Romans 15:1 (ESV) 1 *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

- There are strong brothers and weak brothers, and Paul includes himself in the strong category.
- Now both groups, the strong and the weak, are Christians. They both trust in Jesus for salvation. The weaker Christian is the one who has a conscience that's easily offended.
- The weaker Christians were caught up in diets and days – thinking how they ate and what days they observed would make them 'better' Christians.
- Paul doesn't want them caught up in arguments of diets and days but instead caught up in loving one another and honoring the Lord.

Diet

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

Days

Vs 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.

Diets:

- In Rome, the meat that was most available would have been pork, and the other types of meat were often associated with pagan idolatry and ritual meals.
- Some were very scared that they would eat unclean foods
- Or that they would eat something God called unclean
- Peter had a hard time with this as we see in Acts 10

Acts 10:12–15 (ESV) **12** *In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.* **13** *And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”* **14** *But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.”* **15** *And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”*

Days:

- Unpack Sabbath since most likely that is what he is talking about.

Vs 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.*

Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions

- The strong hold the weak in contempt as legalistic and self-righteous; the weak judge the strong to be irresponsible at best and perhaps depraved.
- BUT GOD welcomes BOTH!
- The Christian's basic attitude toward a fellow Christian is one of welcome and acceptance based on God's attitude to us in Christ.

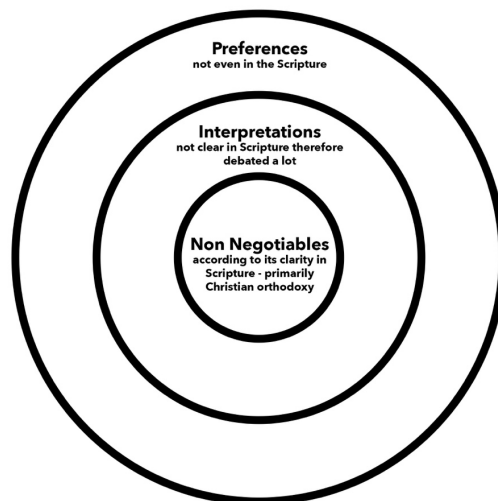
Romans 15:7 (ESV) **7** *Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

- Do we have instances where we are judgmental toward the weaker bros and sis's convictions?
- Do we have instances where we are judgmental toward the stronger bros and sis's liberties?

Examples of things we get out of whack about:

- Drinking

- Working on Sunday
 - Translation of the Bible
 - Drums in church services
 - Eschatology
 - Medications
 - Tattoos
 - Homeschool, Christian school, public school
 - What you wear – to church (or should preach in)
 - Politics
- We've got to major on that which is essential that is NON-NEGOTIABLE, and we must give liberty to one another on matters that are secondary or preferences.



- Examples of non-negotiables
1. **God exists as the sovereign Creator of all things –**
 2. **The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God –**
 3. **Humanity is fallen and sinful –**
 4. **God is one essence in three persons (Trinity) –**
 5. **Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human –**
 6. **Jesus is the only way to salvation –**
 7. **Jesus died on the cross for our sins –**

8. Jesus rose bodily from the dead –
9. Salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ –
10. The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers believers –
11. Jesus is coming back (Second Coming) –
12. Believers will be resurrected to eternal life

***Vs 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.*

- This verse is likely directed to the weak. It is not their place as fellow servants **to pass judgment** on the strong. The strong stand or fall before God, and they will stand righteous before God on the last day because God will give them grace to keep them from falling away.
- We strive for unity on the non-negotiables and give liberty on the non-essentials
- **Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions**

2. Honor the Lord.

***Vs 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.*

- The strong believer eats whatever he pleases and thanks the Lord. The weak brother eats according to his ceremonial diet and thanks the Lord that he made a sacrifice on His behalf. In either case, the believer thanks the Lord, so the motive is the same
- That both belong to Him puts minor divisions into perspective

***Vs 7-8** 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.*

- We don't belong to ourselves, we belong to the LORD and we honor the LORD by honoring others who take liberties and cling to convictions.

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

- By emphasizing Lordship, we can understand fellowship.

- Fellowship problems most of the time comes from lordship problems.

Vs 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;*

- Now it is certainly right to be concerned about a Christian who's fallen into grievous sin.
- We're called to go to that person and to restore that person - that's not being judgmental, that's being a Christian.
- That's not what's going down here, though, the weak are condemning the strong, not because of grievous sin, but because they don't take Saturday off work and they eat bacon, and they're saying you're not a Christian because of it.
- "Also, a strong conscience is an informed conscience. It's not a license to do sin. The problem with the weaker Christian is they were having a hard time accepting the liberties of the strong Christians. They both agree on the gospel, they both agree on moral norms, like both agreed killing was wrong, and stealing and sexual sin and so on, but they were disagreeing on cultural practices, and they're trying to live together in community." Tony Merida
- The strong should not despise the weak, and the weak should not judge the strong, for everyone will stand before God, who will judge all on the last day
- Both have the same motivation to honor the Lord, whatever choice you make on a debatable issue. Let it be known that you're making that choice because you want to honor the Lord.

Vs 11-12 *for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

- Quoting Isaiah 45:23
- Christ alone is the Lord (v. 8) and Judge of His people. The cost to Him of this privilege was immense and exposes the inappropriateness of believers' judging or despising their brothers. We must give an account of our own lives to the Lord, as those being judged, not as those who judge.

"Paul is bent on stressing that Jesus is Lord of the weak. That is teetotaling Sabbatarian vegan Jews and the strong wine sipping, Saturday shopping, bacon munching, Gentiles. If God has justified them, they cannot condemn each other. If God has raised them up, they cannot put each other down. If they belong to the Lord, they belong to each other. If everyone calls him

Lord, they must call each other brothers and sisters. If God has accepted them, they must accept each other," Michale Byrd.

CONCLUSION:

Is the Sabbath a moral law binding today? Or is it a ceremonial law fulfilled in Christ?

Colossians 2:16–17: “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” (ESV).

- Jesus is our sabbath
- Some of you have been pastored or led by weaker brothers – putting non essentials into the category of non negotiables... that has made you question Christian liberties and maybe even judge other believers.
- **Matthew 23:4 (ESV) 4** *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders*

Hebrews 4:9–10: Speaks of a “Sabbath rest” for God’s people, fulfilled in Christ, implying the Sabbath’s ultimate purpose is spiritual rest in Him.

Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV) 28 *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS

1. **Look at the concentric circles graphic and ask, ‘what non-essentials have I put in the non-negotiables circle?’**
2. **How can we honor the Lord by honoring other brothers and sisters who either take liberties we wouldn’t or cling to convictions we don’t.**