

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith

Romans 14:13-23 Ppt 39

MPS: We steward our liberties to help others not hinder them.

INTRO

- Finishing up chapter 14 today
- Last week we looked at the weaker vs stronger brothers
- The ones who adhered to diets and days in order to be better Christians were the weaker and the ones who took liberties (exercised freedoms) without sinning were the stronger.
- I used the story of my friend TJ who got a tattoo then got called into the proverbial principle's office. TJ was the stronger, Buddy the weaker.
- **Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions but honor the Lord.**
- Today is pretty much part 2 of that idea.

OPEN

Hacksaw Ridge:

You've probably heard of Desmond Doss. He was a war hero in WWII. As a medic in the Army, he saved 75 men in one day. He actually received the congressional medal of honor (highest award given) for his heroics in a battle in Okinawa known as Hacksaw Ridge – they made a movie about it in 2016. Hacksaw Ridge.

Doss was a very religious man - a 7th day Adventist and believes: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Saturday is the Sabbath — no work, no weapons. He enlists as a medic — But while in bootcamp, he refused to pick up a rifle.

"Pick up the rifle — it's your duty." But he wouldn't. He had a conviction to not pick up a rifle. He was mocked, beaten, and court marshalled.

There's a scene in the movie, his captain visits him in jail – Doss holding his bible... his captain says,

"I believe in this book as much as any man, just like any man, I wrestle with my conscience. But what do you do when everything you value in this world is under attack?"

Doss was like, "I don't know, but I feel like my values are under attack"

Captain said, **"I don't care about your values because our enemy doesn't care about them. I just don't want to see you rot in prison"** in other words, just take up the rifle.. you don't have to kill anyone.

Then they bring in his fiancé who also says, just meet them half way... compromise, stop being prideful.

Doss says, "I don't know how I'm gonna live with myself if I don't stay true to what I believe"

The officers took liberty because they believed in a just war and fiancé just wanted to have her future husband with her... they were not bad people, but they did become stumbling blocks

Pressuring Doss to violate his conscience — to do what he believed was sin.

Paul is writing the church in Rome to help some of the stronger brothers to not become a stumbling block to weaker brothers.

We steward our liberties to help others not hinder them.

1. One person's freedom can become another's fall

Vs 13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

- The first part of the verse is directed to the weaker brother (sister), but the rest of the passage seems to be directed to the stronger brother (sister).
- **Don't condemn liberties nor criticize convictions but honor the Lord.**
- Stumbling block means a snare or trap – like how people use snares to trap animals.
- Don't do anything that will impede progress. Don't do anything that will bring them harm, anything that will negatively affect their growth in discipleship
- You don't have to use your freedom to trample on the conscience of the weak.
- Your liberties are a gift, but if we don't steward them, they can become a weapon.
- Illustration: Drinking in moderation brother vs non drinking brother.
- watching movies with sexually content, music with inappropriate language

We steward our liberties to help others not hinder them.

2. We help others not fall by walking in love

***Vs 14-15** I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. **15** For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.*

Mark 7:18–23 (ESV) ***18** Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, **19** since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) **20** And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. **21** For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, **22** coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. **23** All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”*

- In the context of Jewish faith, “destroy” means to cut off from the covenant community.
- To encourage behavior that weak believers’ consciences forbid is to encourage them to go against their conscience, a serious and dangerous act.
- Sometimes freedoms are given in order to lay them down.
- if you can't put a freedom down, it's not a freedom. You're enslaved to it, and you're not going to enjoy a freedom that you can't put down.
- Paul’s saying, give the weak room. Okay, respect their opinion.

3. We help others find peace and joy

***Vs 16-17** So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. **17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

- Don’t let your freedoms, which are good, be spoken of as bad... its not worth it.
- The only place in Romans where the kingdom of God is mentioned

***Vs 18** Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

- Though both are in the kingdom as servants, the stronger serving the weaker by laying down rights and freedoms is acceptable to God and men.
- We please God when we're thinking of others more than our freedoms.
- We are esteemed by the Christian community because they see that as mature.

4. We help guard the work of God together

Vs 19-21 *So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. 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.*

- It's a great summary. Let's be peacemakers and let's live to build one another up
- you can destroy the community of faith over carpet, over the time of the services, the clothing of the minister or whatever.
- Paul says, do not destroy the work of God for something that is a non-essential.
- When you turn nonessentials not non negotiables you can destroy the work of God.
- The well-being of the brother will take precedence over the enjoyment of meat and wine

Vs 22 *The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.*

- You don't have to flaunt your freedoms. You can be mindful of others.
- Do not behave in a way that injures the faith of others and thereby brings judgment on themselves

Vs 23 *But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.*

- Anyone who goes against their convictions is sinning. A stronger brother may do the same act, but believes he is free to do so and not sin, but a weaker brother who goes against his conviction is in sin.
- "Sin is not first what we *do*—it's what we *believe*."
- James says desire 'conceives' and 'gives birth' to sin.

"The sin lies not in the meat, but in the man. If your heart says, 'I dare not,' and yet your hand says, 'I will,' then sin is conceived in the womb of your own unbelief and brought forth in the act. Whatever is not of faith is sin—because it comes from a heart not fully resting in God." Spurgeon.

- Examples: social drinking, watching movies with sexually content, music with inappropriate language, participate in Halloween, or practicing yoga
- Receive, reject, redeem
- It is good for us to revisit our convictions and ask why? And it's good for us to revisit our liberties and ask is this harming anyone?

CONCLUSION:

- Desmond Doss heroically put his life on the line to save 75 men in one day – it was May 5, 1945. His sabbath. He but probably sinned in the process because he worked to save them on his sabbath.
- Jesus heroically gave his life on calvary to save saved millions yet never sinned. He traded our sinful status with his sinless standing for all who simply believe.
- We are wounded sinners born into a war, stung out all over the battlefield and by His goodness, He comes to save us.
- Jesus laid down his right to call on 10k angles, so to finish the sacrifice for you and me.

THIS TIME TOMORROW

- Question #1: “ How would you describe your work?”
- Question #2: “As an image-bearer of God, how does your work reflect some aspect of God’s work?”
- Question #3: Because of the fall, we have to push back thorns and thistles in our work. “How does your work give you a unique vantage point to the thorns and thistles (the brokenness) of the world?”
- Question # 4: Our work is not primarily about a paycheck, but about loving our neighbor with the gifts and talents God’s given us. How does your work function as an opportunity to love and serve your neighbors?”

Pray for: Bankers, tellers, loan officers, financial advisors, wealth management, investment analysts, payroll specialists, tax attorneys, tax preparers, bookkeepers.

Psalms 112:5 (ESV) “It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice.”

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. Have you ever harmed someone else with liberties you had taken?
2. Are there some freedoms you take that you may need to lay down for the sake of another?