



ROMANS

The Gospel of God

The Gospel of Liberty!

Romans 14:1-23

Message #31 of 33 – S1162

Sermon given on August 24, 2025



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel of Liberty!

Romans 14:1-23

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 14**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel of Liberty!**
- A healthy church is very diverse.
- It ought to be a reflection of the community around it.
- Different cultures, socio-economic levels, professions, and views on politics are normal in a healthy church.
- That diversity adds to the beauty of the church, it is also a breeding ground for disunity.
- Deliberate effort must be applied to maintain unity.
- Paul, in chapter 14, is going to address some of the things that break unity.
- He addresses a couple of things that would have been controversial in his day, and they are still somewhat divisive today.
- **Romans 14:1**
- The word 'receive' has the meaning of welcoming.
- A healthy church ought to be welcoming. Everyone is welcome.
- Everyone is welcome, especially people who have not yet come to faith in Christ.
- Paul tells the Roman church to be welcoming to people who are weak in the faith.
- This could be new believers or believers who have not progressed very far in their faith.
- These might be marginal or carnal Christians.
- They were to welcome them.
- Paul does put a condition on their acceptance, those who want to argue about doubtful things.

- These would be issues that do not affect our salvation.
- That does not mean we agree on everything, we just don't divide over the things we don't agree on.
- He begins by addressing a potential conflict with food.
- **Romans 14:2**
- It is not clear where this conflict regarding eating meat versus only vegetables arose.
- It is possible it had something to do with the fact that non-believers regularly offered their animals to false gods as a ceremonial sacrifice and then sold the meat in the market.
- Some people didn't want to eat meat sacrificed to idols by accident.
- You can see Paul addressing that in 1 Corinthians 10.
- There is nothing wrong with choosing to eat only vegetables.
- If someone chooses to be a vegan, they can.
- Paul is challenging their spiritual motivation for doing so.
- There are people who are vegans for health reasons.
- And there are people who are vegans because they don't like the idea that animals have to die so they can eat their meat.
- The obvious inference here is that someone in the church is saying Christians should not be eating meat and they are causing division in the church.
- Paul tells them how to relate to one another.
- **Romans 14:3**
- You should notice that Paul does not say that either one of them is right or wrong.
- The problem arises out of the vegan claiming that not eating meat is a matter of biblical obedience when it is not.
- This is an issue of liberty.
- If the Bible doesn't command for or against something, the Lord leaves it up to each individual believer to decide for themselves.
- Nowhere does the Bible command Christ-followers to abstain from eating meat.
- If someone chooses to be a vegan, go for it.

- What we can't do is despise one another for our liberties or judge someone who sees 'doubtful things' differently than we do.
- Paul is saying if you despise people who don't eat meat or you judge someone who does, that your faith is weak and you are wrong.
- **Romans 14:4**
- It is God's job to judge people. Let Him do it.
- Paul then addresses another point of conflict for people.
- **Romans 14:5**
- This is a radical thing for Paul, a Jew, to say.
- To the Jews, the Sabbath is holy. The Sabbath runs from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.
- Again, Paul doesn't say either is right or wrong.
- 'be fully convinced' – When you come to one of these issues of liberty, be fully convinced in your heart and mind that what you are doing is right and pleasing God.
- But be careful that you are not letting your flesh make the decision.
- If God's Word hasn't spoken on something, that doesn't mean He will approve of what you are doing.
- **Romans 14:6**
- If it is a matter of liberty and they are convinced in their heart that it is okay, and they are doing it to the Lord, leave them alone.
- **Romans 14:7-9**
- The Lordship of Christ is the foundation of our faith.
- Jesus died on the cross so that we all could be a part of His kingdom.
- **Romans 14:10-12**
- Paul challenges them to examine the motive of their attitude toward weaker believers. Turn to **1 Corinthians 3**
- The Judgment Seat of Christ is where all believers will stand someday.
- It will not be a judgment of our sins because Jesus took that judgment with Him to the cross.
- It will be for the things we have done in this life.
- Paul gives us a sense of that in...
- **1 Corinthians 3:9-15**

- Paul makes it clear this judgment is not about salvation, but about the rewards we gain or lose based on the works we do in this life.
- Turn back to **Romans 14**.
- Depending on how we walk through this life will determine some aspect of how we spend eternity in heaven.
- I don't mean we should be overly concerned about the rewards in heaven, but that God cares about how we live this life.
- He especially cares about how we treat others.
- I want to live a life that allows me to hear Jesus say at the Judgment Seat, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'
- That would be the greatest reward I can imagine.
- Based on that, Paul tells them to watch how they treat others.
- **Romans 14:13**
- Judgmentalism is one of the things that can cause a believer to stumble in their faith.
- Instead, Paul tells us to help them. **1 Thessalonians 5:14**
¹⁴ **Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.**
- We should be patient and do what we can to help them grow in their faith.
- Paul comes back to the topic of food.
- **Romans 14:14**
- Paul discussed this topic at length in 1 Corinthians.
- The issue of whether a believer should eat food that had been ceremonially offered to idols is a matter of faith.
- Idols or false gods are not real – they are nothing.
- The fact that the meat was offered to idols meant nothing – it didn't change the meat.
- But, if your faith is weak in that area and you are not sure, not convinced, then don't eat it.
- Even though other believers have liberty to eat it, you don't because your faith is not fully established in that area.
- Where this becomes complicated is when you have two believers together, one who believes it is okay to eat meat, and another who doesn't. What do you do then?

- **Romans 14:15**

- Everything we do with one another ought to be motivated by love for God and for each other.
- If a believer's faith convinces him that eating meat, regardless of where it came from is okay, is with someone whose faith is not strong, and is uncertain if it is right to eat meat, and the strong believer eats meat in the weaker believer's presence knowing it offends them, the stronger believer is not walking in love.
- The stronger believer should be willing to forego a liberty to protect a believer of weaker faith.
- I would say to those who are offended by the liberties some people enjoy that you do not feel free to enjoy.
- The issue is not their liberties; it is your faith.
- That doesn't mean you should do what they are doing, you are not convinced it is right.
- You need to grow your faith to the point that you are convinced in yourself what is true or right in that matter.
- Because when you are convinced about what you believe then it won't be offended you that others enjoy liberties that you do not.
- Strong faith is not offended by other people enjoying the liberties you do not feel free to participate in.

- **Romans 14:16-21**

- Our faith should draw us closer to other believers and encourage us and them to peace and joy.
- We should be focused on building each other up and not looking for reasons to tear them down.
- If you are enjoying your liberty knowing it is offensive to a weaker believer, you are the one who is wrong.

- **Romans 14:22**

- If you demand your right to partake in that thing that you have liberty, you are being selfish and unloving.

- **Romans 14:23**

- Paul puts the emphasis for this whole thing on faith.
- Faith is what we believe that manifests in what we do.

- If you do something that is contrary to your faith, it is sin.
- Even if everyone else is doing it, if your faith says it is wrong or is uncertain about it, it is sin if you do it.
- Even as a pastor, I have liberty to have a beer or a glass of wine.
- In my faith journey, I have concluded that they are not for me.
- For those of you who love rules and boundaries, be careful.
- It is my guess that a message like this might make you very uncomfortable.
- Faith is not about rules and boundaries.
- Faith is about knowing God, His Word, His Son, and His Holy Spirit.
- It is about walking with God and responding to His direction as He gives it.
- Every time I give a message about liberty, people will come to me and give me scenarios and ask me what the rules or boundaries are.
- My response will be something like, what is God telling you to do about that.
- If their response doesn't go outside the clear teaching of Scripture and is in the area of liberty, my response is going to be, go do that.
- Well, how do we know we are doing it right?
- Trust God and let His Holy Spirit guide you.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, but trust God to help you navigate most of these things.
- The church is very diverse, and that diversity can be challenging to maintaining unity.
- From a starting point of love, try to build each other up into the likeness of Christ.
- For me, I believe my greatest work in this life is the love God with every bit of myself and to try to do that with others.
- The way that I do that is I cooperate with the working of the Holy Spirit to grow my faith.
- And as I grow, I work to help others grow their faith.
- Jesus died so that we could do that.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be faithful.
- **Pray! Last Song!**