

Romans 14:18-23

Faith, Doubt, and Serving Christ

1. 14:16-18 – Serving Christ

- a. v16 – Don't let your good be confused for evil.
- b. v17 – The rule of God is not by flesh, law, doubtful disputes, but righteousness, peace, joy.
- c. v18 – *"in these things"* (described in context, require faith, if you're strong... serve here)
- d. *"serveth Christ"* -Yes, we serve the Lord. Remember, the issue is how to serve him?
- e. *"acceptable to God"* - acceptable service - see Rom 12:1-2,5,16, 13:1,14, 14:1, 1 Tim 2:2-3,
- f. *"and approved of men"* - by your humility, honesty, and profit to all -1Ti 4:15, 1Th 4:11-12

2. 14:19 – Edify One Another

- a. *"Let us therefore follow after..."* – A clear rule for how we serve Christ.
- b. *"the things which make for peace"* - among believers, not a wicked world - Eph 2:14, 4:3-6
- c. *"and things wherewith one may edify another"* - This the first mention of a new thing!
- d. Edify ~*def.* To build up in the faith; to teach, instruct, improve, persuade, establish...
- e. Edifice is a building. We are God's building. Paul laid the foundation. Eph 2:22, 1 Cor 3:9-11
- f. We build with faith, knowledge, wisdom, doctrine (true, pure, profitable, strong)-1Cor 3:12
- g. Serving Christ is to edify one another in love - 1 Cor 10:23-24
- h. To build up another is serving Christ. The work of God is done through edification.

3. 14:20 – The Work of God

- a. *"destroy not the work of God"* - The work here is people in the faith growing in the Lord.
- b. *"For meat..."* – There may be times severity is needed, but not for meat (see 1 Cor 5:5)
- c. *"all things indeed are pure"* - True doctrine about all meat (see 14:14, 1 Tim 4:3-5)
- d. *"but it is evil for that man..."* - Don't encourage him to do evil (caution against evil is good)
- e. Corinthians didn't put away/mourn evil, strife, threw caution to the wind - 1 Cor 5:2, 6, 13
- f. God's work is in growing men by faith into righteousness, peace, joy.

4. 14:21 – Offended Brothers

- a. Acts 24:16, 2 Cor 6:3, 1 Cor 10:32 – Paul does all things to no offence toward God and men.
- b. The wrong idea here has led the church to allow the wicked/ignorant to judge what is right
- c. Claiming offense does not make you right, nor give you authority to demand obedience.
- d. When people are a law to themselves, then offence abounds from any not under that law.
- e. Act 24:12-14,18-21; 2Co 6:14-16; 1Co 10:33 -He avoided doing wrong, not offending wrong
- f. True offence is against righteousness/godliness/Christ, not self/wickedness/false morality
- g. Paul faced persecution for what unbelievers were offended by → Gal 5:11
- h. 14:21 – Here, a brother is offended (injured) by drinking with you when he sees it's wrong
- i. Most Christians claim "legalism", use liberty for flesh, harden conscience, weaken others.
- j. Beware offending what is Christ's: these brothers trying to avoid evil are Christ's.
- k. Read 'brother' as 'children' to make it hit home. (Most children have faith destroyed.)
- l. Walk with them in avoidance of evil and strengthen their faith in what is true.

5. 14:22-23 – Faith and Doubt

- a. *"Hast thou faith?"* - Convinced in the knowledge of truth ... regarding digestion (1 Tim 2:4)
- b. *"have it to thyself before God"* – This is not anti-evangelism, not lifestyle evangelism.
 - i. The law is public and enforced upon all. All faith is personal and not by compulsion.
- c. *"Happy is he that..."* - There is life, peace, joy, in spiritual mind 8:6; in liberty (not in sin)
- d. *"he that doubteth"* – Doubts the truth (faith) ... regarding eating meat.
 - i. Doubt is not a good place, but doubtful people can be received and edified – 14:1
- e. *"is damned"* - 1) in himself, 2) to him before God, 3) conscience now defiled to do wrong
- f. *"because he eateth not of faith"* – Because he does not have that knowledge.
 - i. The error/weakness is in his mind/faith (i.e. he doubts)
 - ii. The instruction: do not operate/serve God from a position of doubt. Walk by faith.
- g. *"whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* - It is a sin to go against your conscience, why?
 - i. Because it goes against a God given law - Rom 2:14-15, 10:17, but God gave more...
 - ii. So much of faithfulness depends on a pure conscience - 2 Tim 1:3, 1 Tim 1:5, 19, 4:2
 - iii. The rule: Keep a pure conscience! Increase in the knowledge of God/truth. 1Tim 3:9