

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Application of Grace: Personal Convictions
Romans 14

Last time...what grace looks like in the lives of followers of Jesus Christ as citizens

1. Citizens of the kingdoms of man: How we function in a society ruled by a civil government
2. Citizens of the kingdom of God: An urgent call to the Body of Christ to wake up!

This time...in Rom 14, the application of grace in our lives continues – personal convictions

v1-3 The application of grace when it comes to foods to eat

On the surface, we might think this is the same issue that was in the fellowship at Corinth...eating meat sacrificed unto idols (1 Cor 8)

That certainly applies here, but this application of grace in the Body of Christ is broader than just eating meat sacrificed to idols

One person in the Body...who is strong in the faith...believes he can eat anything

- Meat sacrificed to an idol is no big deal because an idol is nothing in the world and there is no other God but the One True and Living God, to Whom the earth and the fulness thereof belongs (1 Cor 8:4)
- The Dietary Law in Leviticus has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Rom 10:4)
 - “Grilled ham and cheese sandwiches and cheeseburgers are delicious!”
 - “Shrimp salad is amazing!”
- A card-carry member of PETA – People Eating Tasty Animals
Per the vision given to Peter in Acts 10:9-16

Another person in the Body...who is weak in the faith...believes

- eating cheeseburgers and shrimp salad and meat/animals is horrifying and disgusting
- eating vegetables (vegetarian or vegan) is the only proper way to eat

What is the application of grace in the lives of the believers and in the Body of Christ?

- The strong in the faith are to receive...take into friendship with brotherly love...the weak in the faith, without any
 - judgement/condemnation of the weaker person's faith
 - personal convictions
 - personal beliefs
 - vs
 - believe = to have faith in, to trust
 - John 6:28-29, Rom 1:16, Rom 4:3, etc
- that leads to pointless debates and strife and disputes
- the strong are not to despise/judge the weak for their personal conviction
- the weak are not to despise/judge the strong for their personal conviction

Because...God, by His grace, has welcomed both the strong in faith and the weak in faith into His Family!

Therefore...

v4 Who am I to judge someone else's (God's) servant?

The servant is accountable to his Master...not to me!

God will help His servant to stand, whether weak in the faith or strong in the faith

God is the Judge...I am not!

Rom 2:16 God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (the Gospel of Grace)

So, the difference of personal convictions between me and another person is...

none of my business and none their business

AT&T ad with "OK tattoo artist": "Stay in your lane, bro."

Mind our own business and keep my nose out of where it does not belong

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Prov 30:10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

What is our business, whether strong in the faith or weak in the faith, is the liberal application of grace

The weak in the faith need the support, encouragement, and understanding of the strong in the faith...grace

The strong in the faith need the support, encouragement, and understanding of the weak in the faith...grace

Another example of personal convictions and the application of grace in the life of the believer and in the Body of Christ...

v5-6 One person thinks "this is the day" to worship the Lord...Fri or Sat or Sun

But another person thinks every day is the day to worship the Lord

What does the Holy Spirit thru the Apostle Paul say?

- Let every person be fully convinced in their own mind
 - as they have gleaned from the Word of God
 - as they are guided by the Holy Spirit
- Let him that thinks "this is the day", think so unto the Lord
- Let him that thinks differently, think differently unto the Lord

Just as

- Let him that has a personal conviction about food have that personal conviction to the Lord, giving thanks to God

Example of legalism vs the application of grace: 7th Day Adventism

- strictly, legalistically hold to public worship on Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath vs Mark 2:27)
- “Sunday” is named after the pagan Sun god; to worship on Sunday is tantamount to taking the Mark of the beast
- But...fail to see/acknowledge that “Saturday” is named after Saturn, the pagan worship of the host of heaven vs the Creator

What is the plague of every legalistic religious person?

- Self-righteousness
- hypocrisy

But we have not so learned Christ

Col 2:3-17

Grace is Christ-righteousness, Who is devoid of hypocrisy
And grace is to be applied liberally by His followers/Body
Because...

v7-9 1 Cor 15:3-4...the Gospel of Grace
John 3:16

We who believe in Jesus have been purchased by the blood of God (Acts 20:28),
we are not our own (1 Cor 6:19),
we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16, 1 Cor 6:19)
so we glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's (1 Cor 6:20)

By His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ is

- Lord of...ALL (Acts 10:36)
- Head of the Body/Church, of which His followers are members

Whether alive in a mortal body or dead, having moved out of the mortal body into a glorified body in the presence of God, Jesus Christ is Lord

If we are alive in a mortal body, we are the Lord's

We live for Him as He lives in us...the Life in us is Him (Gal 2:20)

He never leaves nor forsakes us

When we die and move out of this mortal body, we are the Lord's

Absent from the body, present with the Lord

Given that, the members of the Body of Christ are all connected

- to the Head
- to each other
- ruled by the Law of Love which is fueled by grace

No person is an island, no person is alone, every person matters to the Lord and others
All are intricately connected...and the Body is strengthened by grace and love among the
members

So...

v10-12 How can we, a member of the Body of Christ, judge another member of the Body...
to whom we are intricately connected...
for his/her personal convictions on non-salvation issues?

Does our diet save us from eternal death?

Does our eternal salvation depend on the day we worship the Lord?

How can we dismiss and despise the personal convictions of others that are different than
ours?

Me and you and that person have something in common – all will stand before the
judgment seat of Christ,

- to Whom the Father has given all judgment (John 5:22)!
- before Whom every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess
(Is 45:21-23, Phil 2:5-11)

We will all stand before Jesus personally,
not for judgment of sin but for rewards and “refining”

We will all have to give an account of our “new creature in Christ lives” to the
One Who purchased us

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;
that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body,
according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

1 Cor 3:9-15

1 Cor 6:9-11 with 2 Cor 5:21

We are not given to judge each other!

1 Cor 4:4-5

We are accountable to the Lord for ourselves, not to each other or for each other

Does that make your heart skip a beat?

It should!

We all have enough issues with our own lives to have any time to take issues with others

- v13 So it is high time to stop judging each other and to focus on love and grace:
- denying self for the good of another
 - not doing anything that will cause a brother to stumble or trip in their walk with the Lord

The Law of Love...John 13:34-35, 1 Cor 8

We to help others always, hinder others never

Grace “pays the expense”

Grace always helps, never hinders

v14-16 The Law of Love is fueled by grace, not by knowledge

1 Cor 8:1-2 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know

So we need to humble ourselves before the All-knowing God!

Col 2:2b-3 the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Ps 147:4-5 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names. Great *is* our Lord, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

The infinite mind of God –

- numbering and naming all the stars
(James Webb Telescope)
- The Mandelbrot Set

blows our finite mind!

The Law of Love is fueled by grace, not by knowledge

The Apostle Paul knows,

being fully convinced by what the Lord said (vs what he figured out in his mind)

since Rom 11:33-34 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?

nothing, in and of itself, is unclean/common...

Acts 10:9-16, 28

But...it is unclean to the person who thinks it is unclean

Therefore, to keep the Royal Law, if a brother/sister in Christ has a personal conviction contrary to ours,

- don't make an issue of it, thereby causing him/her to stumble in their walk with Jesus
- don't fall into legalism and self-righteousness
- receive him/her
- mind our own business, stay in our own lane

1 Tim 4:1-5

seducing spirits and doctrines of demons to attack

- the Gospel of Grace
- the application of grace by the followers of Jesus Christ
- the Body of Christ

If a brother is offended by what we are eating or drinking and we stand on our liberty to do so rather than standing on the Royal Law, we are not walking

- in Love toward the brother
 - God so loved that He sent Jesus to die for his sins
 - Jesus lovingly, graciously died for that he might be reconciled to God
- with God, Who is walking with the brother

1 John 4:20-21

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
Agreed on and living the love and grace of God

Rather, walking in the love and grace of God, deny ourselves (our personal conviction) and apply grace liberally to our brother by avoiding the stumbling block so as to not tear him down and possibly shipwreck his faith

In so doing, our good

- strength of faith
- maturity of walk
- witness of Jesus Christ

will not be reviled or vilified

The strong are to undergird the weak, not destroy them

Such is the stuff of the Law of Love and the application of grace in our lives

v17-18 The kingdom of God is about

- Jesus Christ and Him crucified
- the salvation of lost souls
- the reconciliation of enemies
- new birth by the Spirit of God
- eternity in the presence of the Father in heaven
- selfless love and grace

The kingdom of God is NOT about

- what we think we should eat or not...sushi (uncooked)
- what we think we should drink or not...glass of wine with a meal
- when we think we should hold a public worship service...Sat/Sun/any day
- any other bone of contention over our personal convictions

The kingdom of God is not about these things...unless those things stumble a brother weaker in the faith, in which case love is to rule, fueled by grace

We serve the Lord Who died for us and the Father Who has made us His children with

- righteousness...Gen 15:6, Hab 2:4, Rom 1:16-17, 1 Cor 1:30
- peace...John 14:27, Rom 5:1, James 3:18, Matt 5:9
- joy in the Holy Spirit...delight in the indwelling Spirit of Christ

Living in Christ-likeness is pleasing to the Father and attractive to others

So what should we do?
It's not rocket science...

v19 Let's pursue with everything within us...grace

1. things which make for peace...not division or contention
2. things whereby we can edify each other...not tear each other down

The application of grace by a follower of Jesus Christ and by the Body of Christ

- makes peace...submitting to the will of the Prince of Peace
- builds up...the person and the Body

When grace fails

- strife, contention, envying, confusion, every evil work abounds
- bitterness poisons and tears down relationships
- shipwrecked faith
- wrath of man which does not the righteousness of God

v20-21 Food, drink, and any other personal conviction is not what the work of God is all about
The work of God is all about

- trusting Jesus, the Head of the Body
- seeking and saving the lost
- reconciling enemies
- making new children
- people...not things

All things are clean

Acts 10:9-16, 28

v14a

Is eating a cheeseburger evil?

Is drinking a glass of wine or beer evil?

But it is

- evil to purposely and maliciously cause another person to stumble by so doing
(Matt 18:1-6)
- good to not eat a certain food or drink a certain beverage or anything
(1 Thes 5:22) if it causes another person to
 - stumble in their walk with Jesus
 - be enticed to sin
 - stagger or retreat in their faith/belief in Jesus

v22-23 Do you have faith?

Not “faith” as in “belief in Jesus Christ” – eternal ramifications

But “faith” as in a “personal conviction” – of no eternal consequence

while Phil 1:6 and Rom 8:29

Keep it to yourself and God...stay in your lane, bro

Blessed is the person who believes in Jesus Christ that has the personal conviction that eating X and drinking Y is allowed, not contrary to the Word of God

Judged/Not blessed is the person who believes in Jesus Christ that has a personal conviction that eating X and drinking Y is contrary to the Word of God and he does not accept it as OK, but does it anyway

Because he is serving Self (flesh), and not the Lord or others

Application/Exhortation

Personal convictions that are “held as the Word of God” foster Self-righteousness and hypocrisy
Legalism always attacks the Gospel of Grace
Beware of Legalism!

Keep our

- opinions
- personal convictions
- personal preferences

to ourselves

Don't gossip about other people's

- opinions
- personal convictions
- personal preferences

Do that which we allow privately, not publicly, so that no one stumbles at our liberty

Don't get into “Sword fights” with brethren over non-essential issues

2 Tim 2:22-23 follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

I am not going to judge you for the food you eat or the beverages you drink

Jesus didn't

Luke 7:33-35 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children.

What you eat and what you drink and all other personal convictions you have are
between you and the Lord Jesus Christ

It's none of my business!

I am going to mind my own business because I have to give an account of my own life at
the judgment seat of Christ!

Besides, who am I to judge anyone about anything?

I am a sinner saved by grace!

Anybody else?

Apply grace, always err on the side of grace

Because grace fuels the Law of Love and Love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom 13:10)