



Empowering People to Change the World

Walking in Love, Romans 14

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Romans 14 – Walking in Love

This morning we are going to continue our Romans study. Today's message is really a continuation of Pastor Steve's message from last week on Romans 13.

If you have your Bibles with you this morning, please turn to Romans Chapter 14.

Romans 14 is a continuation of Romans 13.

This message primarily about:

- love and unity within the body of Christ.
- passing judgement and personal convictions that we have as believers.

It's also a passage that is so relevant to us today as believers in Christ.

But before we read the text, I want to do a brief refresher on the context of Romans. Paul is writing to the Roman church, longing to be with them in person but unable to travel there. So, this is a long letter. He hadn't been there in person to talk to the Roman believers, and he is trying to cover a lot of stuff.

The Roman church was diverse. It was made up of Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

- This was causing some issues within the church.
- It was causing conflict and division.

Fortunately, we don't have any conflict or division within the American church today, do we? I kid... unfortunately, there are many things that divide believers today.

- How we worship.
- What version of the Bible we should read.
- How Pastors should dress when they preach.
- How church members should dress when they come to church!
- And there are so many more!

Should believers . . .

- drink alcohol,
- get tattoos,
- celebrate Halloween,
- listen to non-Christian music?

And I am sure that you can find articles written by believers who have strong opinions about all of that. This is what chapter 14 in Romans is about.

- What we do with our opinions and convictions on these topics.
- We all have convictions on these things – even within this room we would divide on many of the things I just mentioned.

This is the topic that Paul is addressing in Romans chapter 14. Let's read verses 1-4.

Paul was addressing conflict and division in the Roman church.

What we gather from the text is that much of this division was centered around what people were eating. Go back to the context that we started with . . . the Roman Church had both Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

- The Jewish believers were used to following the laws of the Old Testament and eating a certain way and strict way.
- Gentile believers did not have that background at all. They were used to eating however they pleased.
- And now you have both groups of people fellowshiping together in church and probably eating together.

Paul uses the words strong and weak in this chapter to describe the believers.

What Paul is describing really has to do with personal convictions. Which is what many of our arguments today are about as well.

In verse 2 Paul writes that "he who is weak eats only vegetables."

- Now to some of you that's a no brainer. And you are thinking of course he is weak he's not getting any protein!
- But the reason someone would only be eating vegetables back then would most likely be because they were worried about eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols, which is forbidden according to the law. Because Rome was a Pagan city.

When Paul is describing someone as "weak in the faith" he is describing someone who has convictions about a certain behavior and acts in an offended way when around that type of behavior.

- Weak because they are allowing that conviction to control them and dictate their actions and attitudes towards other believers.

Just like there are things today that divide believers, the Roman church was dealing with it as well.

And perhaps it may seem silly or not important to argue about what you eat but think about the division that this could have caused!

- Fellowship often happens around food!
- And if there is division over the food then fellowship probably won't take place.
- Fellowship is important!
 - Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - Be in a community group! It is important – unity.

Let us read verses 5-7

- We all have different convictions and that is ok!
- The body of Christ is filled with people who have different gifts, convictions, and roles.

This is good. God can use each person in different and unique ways because of their convictions and gifts. The important part here and the purpose of this passage is what do we do with our convictions.

Four ways that we should handle our personal convictions.

- 1) Seek the Lord about each conviction. If there is a conviction on your heart, make sure that it is coming from the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Do everything for God! We should be living our lives in a way that glorifies God NOT us. Scripture tells us that if you are a follower of Christ, you are no longer living for yourself.
 - Verse 8–As believers we are living for the Lord, so do everything for Him and for His glory! Not your own.
- 3) Don't use your convictions to pass judgement on others.

Read verses 10-13

It is the Lord's job to judge – not ours.

Don't let these things and issues divide us as believers.

There are issues that we should divide over. There are biblical truths that we shouldn't allow to slide. So, let's not be quick to judge because it's not our job!

○ 4) Be wise with your convictions

Read verses 14-16

Walking in love.

1 John 4:19, "We love Him because He first loved us."

What if the church was known for walking in love instead of known for passing judgement. Paul is saying here, be aware of your surroundings, be aware of who you are around and how your actions could be perceived. And by doing this, you are showing people love.

Don't drink alcohol around a recovering alcoholic.

We have now arrived to verse 17.

Paul is bringing it all back to the main thing – The Kingdom of God.

And he says the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. It's not arguing about what you are eating and drinking.

○ The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Righteousness – right relationships.

- How are we interacting with people in a holy and righteous way.
- Peace – Do we have peace in our hearts?
- Are we allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us with His peace?
- Joy – are we choosing joy?
- Are we spreading joy?

What is the result of seeking the Kingdom of God and living this way?

The answer is in verse 19.

Acceptable to God and approved by men.

Our primary goal should not be the approval of men. However, when we are seeking the Kingdom of God and pursuing Him, God will open doors for us and to reach the lost.

Read verses 19-23.

We serve Christ and make peace by handling our convictions well and focusing on Christ and His Kingdom. We should be seeking peace within the body of Christ.

Verse 20 warns against “destroying the work of God.”

- I don't know about you but that is not something that I want to be guilty of.
- But that's what can happen through arguments and division.

We need to be acting in faith. Which means we need to be in a relationship with God daily.

So let's wrap all of this up with three things we should be doing as believers in Christ Jesus from Romans Chapter 14.

- 1) Engaging in healthy fellowship
 - Acts 2:42
- 2) Seeking the Kingdom of God
 - Matthew 6:33
 - Romans 14:17
- 3) Walking in love
 - 1 John 4:19
 - Romans 14:15