

Romans 14:1-23 *“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. 14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. 22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”*

Romans 15:1-7 *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”* As the body of Christ, our purpose is to express Christ's love. Our text has _____ principles to guide us in our walk of love:

I. RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO RECEIVED US

“I Receive one who is weak in the faith7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” The definition of “weak in the faith” = an individual who does not fully understand the liberty that they have in good news of Jesus. There is a definite article before faith, thus it is literally weak in the faith.

II. MAKE SURE YOU ARE FULLY CONVINCED IN YOUR OWN MIND CONCERNING “DOUBTFUL THINGS.”

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind 22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.” Definition of “doubtful things” = anything that is not expressly and specifically addressed in scripture, i.e., cards, dancing, drinking in moderation, observing Christmas and Easter, contemporary music verses hymns, KJV vs. NIV, Sunday vs. Saturday, etc.

III. DON'T JUDGE OR CONDEMN OTHER CHRISTIANS WHO DISAGREE WITH YOU ON THESE “DOUBTFUL THINGS.”

. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or

falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. ...10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore. One is not more spiritual or less carnal than the other. Jesus is able to save both, regardless of the position they take on these “doubtful things.”

IV. DON'T USE YOUR LIBERTY IN AN INCONSIDERATE AND SELFISH WAY THAT WOULD CAUSE ANOTHER CHRISTIAN TO STUMBLE.

Galatians 5:13-14 13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

What is this liberty that we have in Christ? Well, the Christian life is not a list of do's and don't, instead its done, i.e., already accomplished in the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. . 14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean In this context, Paul is referring to foods, feast days, and “doubtful things.” Paul is not saying immoral acts like fornication, adultery, lying, etc., are not unclean. Those things are clearly forbidden to Christians. He is speaking of our liberty from the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament which were a shadow of the reality that we have in Jesus Christ. This principle would also apply today to those activities that Christians often dispute, i.e., styles of music, musical instruments, moderate drinking, gambling, dancing, cards, observing certain holidays, etc. We have liberty in Christ, but “20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.” Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of a certain style of worship or music. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of” **15** *Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.”* Do not destroy with your liberty in Christ, the one for whom Christ died.

V. OUR TARGET GOAL AS CHRISTIANS IS TO BE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER.

“17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.” When this is our goal as a church, we experience a unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace which allows people of diverse backgrounds, culture, traditions and tastes to worship together.

VI. WALKING IN LOVE MEANS WE ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE OUR WANTS AND DESIRES AND PREFERENCES TO PLEASE OTHERS *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself”* Definition of “strong” = the Christian who understands and appreciates his/her liberty in Christ. The “weak” Christian is the Christian who is weak in his/her understanding of the gospel and our freedoms in Christ.

CONCLUSION: Our purpose as a church body is to express Christ's love. We can apply these principles for walking in love to Reaching up to God, worshipping His Majesty, Reaching in to the Word, growing to maturity, Reaching out in Service, helping others in need, and Reaching over barriers, bringing people to Christ. Following these principles will enable us to do it all while fellowshiping in unity.