

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
4 July 2021
Romans 14:14-17 (KJV)

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. **15** But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. **16** Let not then your good be evil spoken of: **17** For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Foster True Peace

(1) Foster True Peace

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

The Apostle Paul giving practical advice that foster true peace among brethren in Gal. 5:13-15:

Galatians 5:13-15 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. **14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **15** But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

- Serve one another (v13)
- Love one another (v14)
- Devour not one another (v15)

We have been given this freedom from the bondage of sin. Let us not abuse this freedom by allowing the flesh to manifest itself Gal. 5:19-21. This word "serve" is a command the believers are to do continually as a habit of life. It means "to do service, to perform services of kindness and Christian love." [Thayer Lexicon]

To love one another is to treat others like how you would like others to treat you. And to devour describes the scheming heart to get gain by destroying the other person.

May the Lord bless His people.

(2) Walkest Thou Not Charitably

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. **15** But if thy brother

be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

The Apostle Paul is exhorting the believers to exercise forbearance concerning the differences in eating preferences and eating habits amongst them. No food is ceremonially unclean for the Jewish Christian. Let it not become a reason for disunity. His reason is that Christ died for such a weak one. As such, he is precious in God's sight. Do not tear him down because he chooses not to eat meat.

This seemed such a petty matter as we assess the matter with a clear mind. However, the reality is that the contention is stark amongst them. I believe this is the reason for the Apostle Paul to use such strong words by a command to always exercise charity, "*Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*" God accepts such weak one, do not despise and reject them. As Proverbs 18:19 states, "*A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*" Not deferring one to another on such matters weakens the bond of fellowship.

While we may not see conflicts pertaining to Jewish customs, we may see differences in general eating habits when believers go together for a meal. May charity be exercised so that the bond of unity be preserved.

(3) Guard Your Testimony

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. **15** But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. **16** Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

The Apostle Paul is asking the believer to guard his testimony that he is not charged by the weaker brother for being unkind and lack grace in accommodating his weakness. The weaker brother would understand that his weakness does not warrant such harsh treatment from a fellow believer.

Even when a weak brother does not submit to God's truth, the Apostle Paul advised Timothy to be gentle in giving counsel, 2 Timothy 2:24-25 "*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.*" Giving room and time for the weak brother – Do not despise or discourage a weaker brother who needed time to search the Scriptures to discover the truth for himself. Pray for him. Give him time, be patient and gentle, do not condemn the person. The gentle spirit is patient and helps brings others to understand the truth.

The idea here is to show tolerance and forbearance. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord help us to cultivate the spirit of gentleness.

(4) Cultivate Spiritual Virtues

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Christians are exhorted to cultivate spiritual fruit their lives – to grow in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He urged them not to be squabbling concerning differences in the physical aspects of life, scrutinizing and taking offense over one others' eating habits. Rather focus on cultivating a strong walk with God through self-examination, confession of sins and obedience to God's Word.

Fleshly sins must be repented as the Apostle delineated for us in **Galatians 5:19-21** *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

- Adultery – sexual sin in marriage
- Fornication – any sexual sin
- Uncleanness – immoral lust,
- Lasciviousness – shameless lifestyle
- Idolatry – worship of false gods (mammon-greed)
- Witchcraft – sorcery (deceptions and seductions of idolatry),
- Hatred – enmity, hostility
- Variance – contention
- Emulations – an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy
- Wrath – anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again
- Strife – intriguing for office, fractiousness (desire to put oneself forward)
- Seditions – dissension, division
- Heresies – dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aim
- Envyings – promoted by envy
- Murders – killing
- Drunkenness – intoxication, make drunk or become drunk
- Revellings – feast and drinking parties till late night (half-drunk)

When sin is put off, God's peace and joy will more and more abound in the believers' life. This ought to be believers' focus! May the Lord help His people to bear fruit. Amen.