



Sermon Discussion Questions
September 1, 2024
Unconformed

TRANSFORMED FELLOWSHIP

Romans 14:1-12

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
 - a. What are the three most important days on your annual calendar? Why are they special? To what lengths will you go to make sure that there are no conflicts that keep you from enjoying them the way you prefer?
 - b. What was your favorite meal while you were growing up? Did your tastes change as you grew older? Are there now some foods you once liked that you can no longer eat because of health reasons? If so, how difficult was it to give them up?
 - c. Have you ever had the experience of being a guest in the home of someone from a different culture (perhaps even while on a short-term mission trip) where you were offered a dish that you found repulsive? What did you do? Is there something that you would just have to refuse to eat even if it meant offending your host?
 - d. In the 1924 Olympics Eric Liddell refused to run a qualifying race on Sunday, even though failure to qualify would eliminate him from competition. He believed that to run on Sunday would break the commandment "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy". Do you think his decision was right or wrong? Explain.
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
 - a. Transform Your Fellowship with Christians Regarding Debatable Matters
 - i. Don't pick fights with other Christians
 - ii. Debatable matters involve some areas of theology as well as practice of one's faith
 - b. Don't Condemn Fellow Christians Over These Matters
 - i. Don't pass judgment on other believers
 - ii. You don't have authority to condemn a brother or sister over a debatable matter
 - c. In These Matters, Do What You Do for God's Glory
 - i. In debatable matters, your heart attitude is what matters
 - ii. Live for Jesus with the humility to love and respect those who think differently
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
 - a. *Sunday Afternoon*
 - i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
 - iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?

- v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday:

- i. Before concentrating on this week's focal passage, it will be helpful to step back and look at it in context. First, read Romans 10:8-13. Then read Romans 13:8-14:12 and 15:7 (better still, if you have time read Romans 12:1-15:7).
- ii. Now go back and reread Romans 14:1-12 in at least two different translations.
 - 1. How would you describe the topic that Paul is addressing in the focal passage?
 - 2. Look up the meaning of "adiaphora" in a dictionary or online. How well do you think this word describes the subjects Paul is writing about in this passage?
 - a. God specifically commands us to do some things. What are some of the things we are commanded to do?
 - b. God also specifically forbids us from doing some things. What are some of the things that are forbidden?
 - c. Between these two extremes are a host of things that are neither commanded nor forbidden. Make a short list of some such areas that have often been an issue in the church.
 - d. If you could take the time to develop a comprehensive list of all three categories which list do you think would be longest? What does that suggest about the importance of what Paul is addressing? Which of the three categories do you think has caused the most division within the church?
 - 3. Read 1 Corinthians 8 as background for the rest of the week.

c. Tuesday:

- i. Read the focal passage, Romans 14:1-12 and meditate on verse 1.
- ii. Who is Paul addressing in verse 1 (see Romans 15:1)?
- iii. What do you think Paul means when he says, "weak in faith"?
 - 1. Considering 1 Corinthians 8:9-11 and 9:22, what kind of faith do you think he is referring to in this verse?
 - 2. Why can it not be the same "faith" as that which is the basis for our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16, Romans 3:22 & 9:30)? How does the end of the verse where he mentions "disputable matters" (NIV), or "opinions" (ESV) rule out salvation as the object of faith?
- iv. Paul commands that the weak be accepted, received, or welcomed (depending on your translation), but "not to quarrel over opinions" (ESV) or "without quarreling over disputable matters" (NIV). Why do you think it was necessary to give this caveat?
 - 1. In Rome the issue Paul is addressing probably centered on how willing new Jewish Christians were to abandon the dietary laws and holy days they had

been taught from childhood and a concern by gentile Christians about the source of meat bought in the markets – neither being much of an issue today. What would be some modern examples of issues that might lead to someone being “weak in faith”? Why would those stronger in their faith be tempted to quarrel about them?

2. If the strong are to welcome the weak but are not to try to impose their beliefs what should be the basis for accepting them (see Romans 12:10 and 13:8)? If accepted in this manner, why would disputes be unlikely?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read the focal passage, Romans 14:1-12.
- ii. Paul provides at least three (maybe four) reasons why the “strong in faith” should accept the “weak”. What reasons do you see in these verses:
 1. Romans 14:3
 2. Romans 14:4
 3. Romans 14:5-9
 4. Romans 10-12
- iii. Verses 2 and 3 discuss a specific dietary issue that may seem somewhat trivial to us since vegetarians are common and accepted in our society, but it would have been a serious concern between Jewish and gentile background believers in Rome.
 1. Read this account of an Old Testament vegetarian. Would you have viewed Daniel’s faith as “strong” or “weak”?
 2. Why does Paul call those who eat only vegetables “weak”? What do you think motivated them to be vegetarians?
 3. If you grew up attending church, did you ever encounter people saying something like “A good Christian doesn’t (you fill in the blank)”? By the principle Paul uses in these verses would people who believed and taught this way be considered “strong in the faith” or “weak”? If you were from a legalistic church background how would the leaders have felt about a Christian that did some of those objectionable practices?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read the focal passage, Romans 14:1-12, and meditate on verses 5-9.
- ii. Compare verses 5-9 with Galatians 4:8-11 and Colossians 2:16-17.
 1. How is Paul’s tone different in the passages?
 2. Why does he seem to be less concerned about the Romans’ observance of special days than he is about the Galatian or Colossian Christians?
- iii. Read verses 5-9 again, counting the number of times the word “Lord” appears.
 1. What does that suggest to you about the real thing Paul wants us to be concerned about?

2. What should be our ultimate concern when deciding if an issue/act is right or wrong when the Scriptures don't tell us?
3. In verse 5 Paul says we should "be fully convinced" in our own mind. What does that mean to you? Is Paul saying that if we truly believe something is okay it is fine to go ahead and do it (see 1 Corinthians 4:4)? How do you think Romans 12:10 would apply at this point?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read the focal passage, Romans 14:1-12, and meditate on verses 4 and 10-12.
- ii. Compare these verses with Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:37 & 41-42, and 1 Corinthians 4:3-5.
 1. What must be the guiding standard by which we should live according to these verses? What exceptions does Jesus give us to the command that we must not judge others?
 2. How would you paraphrase verse 4? The Message paraphrases the last half of verse 4 as "If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help." How accurately does that reflect your understanding of the passage?
- iii. Verse 10 reminds us that we all, even Christians, will stand before God's judgment seat. See Matthew 12:36, 2 Corinthians 5:10, and 1 Peter 4:5.
 1. Why is that such a compelling reason for not judging our brothers and sisters?
 2. Read and meditate on Philippians 2:5-11 and Isaiah 45:23 as you conclude today's study.

g. **Saturday:**

- i. As you have done each day, read the focal passage, Romans 14:1-12, but this time pause after each sentence and meditate on what it means to you personally. Is there any aspect of your life as a Christian that needs to change?
- ii. Ultimately these verses deal with maintaining unity in the body of believers. Read John 17:20-26. How important was unity to Christ?

h. **Application.**

- i. Spend time this week contemplating about how you respond to those who differ with you on issues that the Bible does not provide explicit guidance. Are you living up to the standard Paul is describing?
- ii. Recognize that there is nothing in these verses that prohibit the church from addressing sinful behavior when it occurs, and these verses should never be used as an excuse for failing to do so.

4. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19