



Sermon Discussion Questions  
September 8, 2024  
*Unconformed*

## **TRANSFORMED FREEDOM**

Romans 14:13-23

### **1. Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)

- a. America is a country built upon the principle that individuals have certain “inalienable” rights. Other than freedom of religion, what do you feel is the most important right you have because you live in America? How far would you go in defending that right if someone tried to take it away?
- b. Think of a country where you know the citizens have less freedom and fewer rights than we do in America. If you had the power to give them one and only one right/freedom, excluding “freedom of religion”, what would you provide? Why?
- c. Our society is known for our often-excessive focus on self which is why selfless acts often make the news. Avoiding anything related to your family, group, or church, what is the most selfish act you have seen or heard of recently? The most selfless act? How did each affect those around the individual performing the act?

### **2. Sermon Outline/Key Points**

- a. The Ultimate Expression of Christian Freedom Is Surrendering Your Freedom for the Good of Others
  - i. You have enormous freedom in Jesus Christ
  - ii. A conformed Christian exercises their freedom without concern for others.
  - iii. A transformed Christian voluntarily surrenders their freedom for the spiritual well-being of other Christians.
- b. Use Your Freedom to Build God's Kingdom
  - i. The heart of Kingdom life isn't your freedom, it's the well-being of all believers.
  - ii. Don't undermine Christ's Kingdom work by how you choose to use your freedom.

### **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. Read this week's focal passage, Romans 14:13-23 from at least two different translations. Meditate on the verses, contemplating what they mean and how they apply to your life as a Christian in 2024.
  - 1. In many translations verse 13 starts with "therefore", pointing us back to preceding verses. Read verses 10-12.
    - a. Why does Paul say that we should not pass judgment?
    - b. What does the wording of the first sentence suggest about the way Christians were behaving when Paul wrote the letter?
    - c. What significance do you attribute to the fact that Paul includes himself by using the term "us" in this command?
    - d. In light of the "us" what would you say about someone who claims that they never judge anyone?
  - 2. Using your own words summarize the main points of what Paul is teaching in these verses.
- ii. In the context of promoting harmony in the Christian fellowship, what basic rule does verse 13 should guide us?
  - 1. Thinking back over the previous several sermons and weekly studies in chapters 12-14 what things do you think would be likely to cause a brother or sister in the church at Rome to stumble?

**c. Tuesday:**

- i. Read the focal passage again but focus particularly on verse 13. What, if anything, do you find surprising about this verse?
  - 1. What does the wording say about our ability to control if we are stumbling blocks to others? According to 1 Corinthians 8:13, how seriously did Paul take this charge in his own life?
  - 2. Read these verses: Matthew 5:29-30, 16:23, 18:6 & 18:8-9, Mark 9:42, Luke 17:1-2, John 11:9-10, Romans 9:32-33, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 1 Peter 2:8, 1 John 2:10, and Jude 24.
    - a. How would you define or describe a "stumbling block"?
    - b. How serious was Jesus about our avoiding things that make us stumble?
    - c. What do the scriptures say will enable us to avoid stumbling blocks?

- d. What do you understand the “light” to mean in these verses?
- ii. 1 Corinthians 1:23 tells us that Christ’s crucifixion is a stumbling block. What wording does verse 13 include that would prevent us from ever using the verse as an excuse not to share Christ with others?

*d. Wednesday:*

- i. Today read 1 Corinthians 8. What similarities do you see in these chapters to what Paul taught in the focal passage?
  1. How does 1 Corinthians 8:8 support and amplify Romans 14:17? If food and drink do not bring us closer to God, what does?
  2. To most of us there is very little association between what we eat and drink and our worship of God. Why would that not be true for the Jews that are in the church in Rome that Paul is writing to in the focal passage?
- ii. Now read 1 Corinthians 9:1-19 Paul talks about both rights and freedoms in these verses. What is the basis for his decisions on when he should demand his rights and when he should not (see verse 19)?
  1. How would it change the church in America if all Christians adopted this same attitude?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. The focal passage deals with the issue of what foods can be eaten. Read these other New Testament passages on that subject: Acts 10:9-16, 1 Corinthians 10:25-33, Colossians 2:16, 1 Timothy 4:3-5, and Titus 1:15.
  1. How does this compare with what the Old Testament tells us in Genesis 1:29 and 9:3?
  2. What do these passages teach us about what food a Christian is allowed to eat?
  3. Combining the teaching of all of these passages, including the focal passage, what should we eat? What guides us in this decision?
- ii. While the focal passage deals primarily with what we eat, and makes a brief reference to drinking, what are some modern-day examples of things that a Christian could do that would become stumbling blocks? As you consider answers be careful to distinguish between those actions that we are free to do as Christians and those actions that society says are acceptable but may actually entail sinning or be an enticement to sin (for example, when does a movie transition from acceptable, but perhaps a stumbling block, and one specifically intended to cause us to lust).

*f. Friday:*

- i. Read the focal passage again looking for the guiding principles that are to be used to decide if we do or do not eat something.

1. What principle is found in verse 15?
  2. What principle is found in verse 16? One of the heresies that plagued the early church, and still exists to this day, was Gnosticism which taught that the material creation was evil and the spiritual good. How does his verse apply to countering such a belief in view of Genesis 1:9, 12, 18, 21, 24 & 31?
  3. What principle is found in verses 17& 18?
  4. What principle is found in verse 19?
  5. What principles are found in verses 20-21?
  6. What principles are found in verses 22-23?
- ii. Read the account of Paul standing up to Peter (Cephas) in Galatians 2:11-14.
1. How do Paul's actions demonstrate the principles he taught in Romans 14:13-23?
  2. What does this passage suggest about what can become a stumbling block? How should it serve as a warning, particularly to those who consider themselves to be strong in the faith?
- g. **Saturday:**
- i. Read the focal passage one final time pausing frequently to meditate on what it means and how it should apply to your life.
  - ii. Then read and meditate on Romans 8:2, Galatians 5:1, and 2 Corinthians 3:17. How important is the freedom Christ purchased to you? How often do you thank Him?
- h. **Application.** Our need to limit how we exercise our freedom, out of love for God and other believers, is the key principle in this chapter. Our culture emphasizes that we need to insist on our rights, and it is easy for Christians to bring that attitude into the church. But the spiritual health of the church body is far more important than our rights. The freedom God has purchased for us through his Son is a precious gift, but it is a freedom to live as God wants, not as we want. Spend time this week thinking and praying about how any of your practices or attitudes might distress or destroy – be a stumbling block – to a brother or sister in Christ. Also, consider what practices of other Christians have or do offend you. Ask God for wisdom to know how to respond in these areas and for the grace to forgive.

#### 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