

"The Doctrine of Consecration"

Part 14

Romans 12:1-15:7

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of Romans we have now come to chapter 14. As we step into this chapter Paul is going to teach us about maintaining unity within the body of Jesus Christ. There is a verse in Ephesians 4 that could be placed at the top of this chapter and used as the title. The verse is located within a passage which speaks of the church being one body.

Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Verse 3 could be used as the title of the text which we have come to tonight. As Paul pens the words here his concern is "UNITY" in the body of Jesus Christ.

The passage which we have come to is going to instruct us concerning the believer's liberty in Jesus Christ. You see, there are those who understand the liberty they have in Jesus Christ and there are those who are afraid of their liberty in Jesus Christ. What happens when these two groups come together is that there is often a clash. It is like hot and cold air meeting in the atmosphere. The person who understands his or her liberty in Jesus Christ will look down upon the one who does not. They will label the person who is fearful as being legalistic. Then those who are fearful of their liberty will see those who understand their liberty and exercise it, they will see them as "liberal" believers.

Paul is going to use two practices that were current in his day to teach us concerning unity and how to deal with differences between believers.

There is much to consider before we ever get to the text. First of all, we need to understand that:

➤ **Sin must never be overlooked to preserve unity.**

I point this out because there are some who do not want to see the church deal with sin in the lives of the people. They will often randomly pick verses that seem to suit their cause and they will use them in an argument. They are verses such as:

Matthew 7:1

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

John 8:7

⁷ So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

These are verses they will use to attack anyone who is dealing with sin.

These people have forgotten that sin will destroy a church and we ALL must be reminded of this Truth. It will prevent a church from advancing forward for the Kingdom of our Lord. There is a picture of this in the Old Testament.

Joshua 7:1-12

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

² And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

³ And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

⁴ So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

⁵ And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

⁶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

⁷ And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

⁸ O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

¹¹ Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Jesus Himself taught that sin must be addressed, and discipline must be exercised.

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

¹⁶ But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Let us not forget what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth concerning the man who was involved in immorality.

1 Corinthians 5:4-13

⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

⁵ To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

⁶ *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

⁷ *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

⁸ *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

⁹ *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:*

¹⁰ *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

¹¹ *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

¹² *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?*

¹³ *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

Then in Leviticus we see that when we truly love someone, we will not allow them to live in sin without rebuke.

Leviticus 19:17

¹⁷ *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

Notice Romans 14:1

When Paul instructs us to receive the person who is weak in the faith, I want you to understand that this has nothing to do with receiving a person who is living in sin.

➤ **The Background**

In the text before us Paul is going to present two situations that existed in the church of his day and these two things caused many problems.

1. **Diet**
2. **Days**

I need to take some time to explain these two issues. We will look at one tonight and the other next week.

Diet - There were many Gentiles coming to Jesus Christ in Paul's day and when they were saved many were saved out of pagan worship. In their previous worship of the pagan deities they would offer a sacrifice to the false god and they would then eat of the sacrifice. After they were saved, and their eyes were opened they wanted absolutely nothing to do with any food sacrificed to idols. They wanted nothing to do with any of the pagan worship systems because they now understood how sinful those practices were.

But in the same churches there were believers who would eat the meat sacrificed to the false gods because they understood that false gods were actually no gods at all and there was only ONE TRUE GOD and so the meat was fine.

1 Corinthians 8:4

⁴ *As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.*

This is something which Paul had to deal with in the church at Corinth. Understand that in many places the unsaved would take their sacrifice to the temple of the false god and after the feast whatever was left the priest would take out the back door and he would sell it in the market. So, as people went to the market to buy meat, they were often buying meat sacrificed to idols and those who were weak in conscience really struggled with this. Let us notice how Paul instructed them in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 10:25-29

²⁵ *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:*

²⁶ *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*

²⁷ *If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

²⁸ *But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:*

²⁹ *Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*

The point we need to understand is that the meat could be eaten (liberty exercised) unless it became a stumbling block to another believer.

1 Corinthians 8:13

¹³ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Conclusion:

In the church there were those who would eat no meat if they thought it was offered to idols and there were those who were strong in the faith that understood their true liberty in Christ and they would eat any meat. But there was a conflict between the two groups because each saw themselves as being more spiritual. The weak saw themselves as more spiritual because they abstained from the meat and the strong saw themselves more spiritual because they understood their liberty to eat the meat. Both were wrong.

1 Corinthians 8:8

⁸ But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.