**Our Liberties and Our Love** *(An exegesis of Romans 14)*

**Introduction**

1. Christians are commanded by God to dwell with each other in unity.
   1. ***“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called…endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1, 3)***.
   2. ***“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10)***.
2. This is not supposed to be done at the expense of truth. We are to ***“contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3)***, not condone contradictions to it.
3. However, when the truth is not at stake, but matters of **indifference** (***things which God permits, but does not require – neither commanded, nor restricted – a lawful thing***) affect individual’s consciences differently, how is a Christian supposed to act?
4. **Romans 14** answers this question. (Very similar to **1 Corinthians 8; 10:23-33**)
5. Our Liberties **(vv. 1-13a)**
6. Receive Him **(vv. 1-4).**
   1. Receive who? – **Weak in faith.**
      1. **Faith** – either object of faith (gospel), or subjective faith (in relation to the gospel, or as a matter of conscience)
      2. The conscience of the one **(v. 5b, 14)** 🡪
      3. The matter is approved **(v. 14),** but if it violates your conscience you shouldn’t do it.
         1. Eating of meats – liberty.
         2. Observing of days – liberty.
   2. **(v. 1)** – Not for the purpose of arguing – ***“not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions”*** (NASB – ***“opinions”*** is a bad rendering – not opinion, but indifferent matter).
   3. **Judge** – condemn (weak brother – does not eat)
   4. **Despise** – look down on (strong brother – does eat)
   5. **Received by God** – because matter is indifferent.
   6. **Made to stand by God** – because faithful in the gospel.
7. We Are The Lord’s **(vv. 5-9).**
   1. **Be fully convinced** – **(v. 23** – if not convinced, i.e. hurts conscience even a tad, it is sin).
   2. ***“to the Lord”*** – Because he is His servant **(v. 7),** **and remains submissive to Him in the practice**.
   3. **(v. 9)** – Christ’s death was for the purpose of securing this relationship. **We are His servants, and as fellow servants of Christ’s, we are to receive each other for Christ has received us**.
8. Let Us Not Judge One Another **(vv. 10-13a).**
   1. **Judge** – condemn.
   2. **Contempt** – disdain, despise, look down on.
   3. **(vv. 10b-12)** – Christ is the ultimate judge, we will give account to Him, not each other.
   4. **(v. 13a)** – Do not judge one another!
      1. **In what matters?** – **Matters of indifference** in which one remains in the Lord, where ***“God is able to make him stand.”***
      2. *God requires us to make judgments in other situations. E.g.:*
         1. Withdrawing from disorderly brethren.
         2. Restoring brethren overtaken in trespasses. (Determining how to handle the situation with regard to the brother in sin, and judging that they are indeed in sin.)
         3. Etc.
   5. ***If we are not to judge, then what should be resolve to do? 🡪***
9. Our Love **(vv. 13b-23)**
10. Do Not Place Stumbling Blocks, But Walk In Love **(vv. 13b-18).**
    1. **Stumbling block** – cause to fall (something that would cause a brother to stumble spiritually)
    2. **(v. 14)** – All things are clean, unless it is considered unclean by one (**conscience**).
    3. **(v. 15a)** – grieved (**spiritually** – loss of relationship with Christ) 🡪
    4. **(v. 15b)** – spiritually (Christ died for him, and you are going to cause him to lose his soul over this?)
    5. **(v. 16)** – good – liberty – spoken of as evil.
    6. **(vv. 17-18**) – Things concerning the kingdom.
       1. **Righteousness** – actions toward fellow man, brethren – right, just.
       2. **Peace** – between brethren.
       3. **Joy** – in the unity promoted by the HS.
       4. **GOD ACCEPTS MEN ON THESE TERMS, NOT EATING AND DRINKING.**
11. Pursue Peace **(vv. 19-23).**
    1. (**v. 19)** – peace between brethren (no condemnation, or despising)
       1. **Edify** – build up spiritually.
       2. Compare – **(v. 20a)** – build up, don’t destroy.
    2. **(v. 20)** – ***“work of God”*** – ***“created in Christ Jesus for good works” (cf. Ephesians 2:10).***
    3. **(v. 20b-21)** – offense – cause for stumbling spiritually.
    4. **(v. 22)** – don’t abuse others with your conviction – have it to yourself.
    5. **(v. 23)** – ***“Let each be fully convinced in his own mind” (v. 5b).***
       1. If you are not, you cannot be pleasing to God.
       2. **God will not make you stand if you violate your conscience.**

**Conclusion**

1. When matters of indifference are considered in the church, and among brethren, unity and peace must be sustained.
2. Ultimately, we must act as Christ acted – **not to please ourselves, but to help others** **(cf. 15:1-6).**