

The Sacrificial Life Involves Tolerance of Others' Opinions

Romans 14:1-12

Intro:

1. **ILL: "Friend or Frustrater!"**
2. We each grow at different rates spiritually. (Has nothing to do with how long you've been saved)
3. A Christian brother or sister may have a different understanding of an issue than you do.
 - a. They may not have developed their faith to your level.
 - b. You may have a lot of emotional attachment to an issue.
 - c. Do you have trouble accepting another person as a Christian who differs with you on that issue?
4. The sacrificial life involves not making opinion matters a test of fellowship.

I. v2-5 - You Have a Right to Your Opinion Only If the Lord Has Not Clearly Spoken on the Subject (Emphasis on "clearly")

A. v2-4 - Example # 1: **The Meat Eating Question.**

1. A Jew often abstained from certain meats sold at a Gentile marketplace.
 - a. Because he adhered to certain very strict kosher laws in the Law of Moses.
 - b. Because the meat may have been sacrificed to a pagan god & be ceremonially unclean.
2. A Gentile seldom worried about this problem.
 - a. To him, meat was meat - & sacrificial meat was the best money could buy!
 - b. When a church had people from both backgrounds - there was friction over this issue.
3. Did God speak clearly on this issue?
 - a. **Act 10** - Peter's vision on Simon's rooftop seemed to indicate Jewish food laws were obsolete.
 - b. But - the purpose of the vision was to change Peter's racially prejudiced mind.
 - c. Besides, **v2** indicates that the vegetarian may have been the weaker brother here.
4. What's the answer? This is an opinion matter - let love govern your attitudes towards one another.

B. v5 - Example # 2: **The Festival Day Question.**

1. The Jew celebrated festivals on certain days. **Lev 23:1-2** - "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. (Commanded by God)
 - a. **The Great Feasts** - **v4-8** - **Passover**: commemorating the Exodus - **v15-21** - **Pentecost**: commemorating the giving of the Law - **v33-36** - **Tabernacles**: commemorating life in the wilderness.
 - b. **The Day of Atonement** (**Lev 16:1-34**). (Also commanded by God)
 - c. **The Post Exile Festivals** - **Dedication** (**I Maccabees 4:59**): commemorating the purification of the Temple & **Purim** (**Esther 9:20-32**): commemorating saving the Jewish race from extinction.
2. The Gentile had feasts too - but didn't make a big deal out of them. Most Americans celebrate Presidents Day because it's a 3 day weekend!
3. Did God speak clearly on this issue?
 - a. Three feasts & the Day of Atonement were commanded in the Law of Moses.
 - b. But didn't the cross take care of the legal demands of the Law? (**Col 2:14**)
 - c. But to someone who had been raised with this background, this was an important issue!
4. What's the answer? This was an opinion matter - let love govern your attitudes towards one another.
 - a. **v6** - If a festival brought to mind the Lord like the Lord's Supper does for us today, do it!
 - b. If everyday was used to bring honor to the Lord, do it.

C. What are some modern issues over which church splits have occurred?

1. Historical issues:

- a. What method do you prefer to support missionaries?
 - i. Direct support or a mission agency?
 - ii. Three generations ago, this issue split our Christian Churches fellowship.
- b. Should women be allowed to preach the sermon on Sunday mornings?
- c. Do you use instruments to support congregational singing on Sundays?
 - i. Eph 5:19-20 - Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - ii. Col 3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

2. Emotionally heated issues today.

- a. Capital Punishment.
 - i. Does the government have a right to execute people?
 - ii. Is this committing murder?
- b. Abortion.
 - i. Can we kill babies if we can save lives in the process?
 - ii. What if the mom's life is at stake?
 - iii. Are you Pro Life or Pro Choice? Can Christians genuinely be on both sides?

II. v6-8 - The Lord is More Concerned About Attitude Than He is About Opinion

A. ILL: "Don't Forget to Crown Him, Daddy!" ("Praise Him, all the Little Children")

B. v6 - The 1st Question.

1. Do you use your opinion to glorify the Lord?
2. Do you use your opinion as an excuse to do what you want to do?

C. v7 - The 2nd Question.

1. Is your life centered around your own desires?
2. Is your life centered around the Master's will?

D. The answer to these questions determine where your heart is - not just your intellect!

III. v9-12 - Lord Jesus Judges Matters of Opinion - Not You!

A. v9 - Lord Jesus earned the right to be judge when He died on the cross!

B. The Bottom Line: the rest of us are all dirty rotten sinners! Is 64:6 - our righteousness is like filthy rages!

1. We all deserve to die.
2. v10-12 - We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
3. v4 - You will be saved because of His love & grace - not because your life has been so good.
4. Honest opinions will not stand in the way of that salvation.
5. So - how can a sinner pass judgment on another sinner?

Therefore - let love govern your attitude towards one another, especially towards those who disagree with you on emotionally charged issues!