

# The SALVATION Series

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Part 21 - Acceptance



# Introduction..

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- After the foundational and theological truths of chapters 1-11, the last pages of Paul's epistles are devoted to practical Christian living and principles.
- Chapter 14 is one of the best passages to help believers in dealing with accepting or relating with differences of worldview or opinions.
- What we are about to unpack has divided many churches, movements and even marriages.



# Introduction...

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- One of the fundamental flaws of us human beings is that we try to change others.
- We somehow cannot accept certain differences in the other person, and we therefore get triggered!
- This was happening on a number of matters in the Early Church and Paul addresses this by the Holy Spirit.
- Our understanding and revelation on this crucial principle will help us tremendously.



# Background...

- Many early Christians were Jewish converts who still felt bound to the Old Testament food laws:
- Avoiding pork and certain animals (Lev. 11). Eating only animals slaughtered and prepared in kosher ways.
- Some felt it was spiritually safer to avoid all meat rather than risk eating something unclean.
- Gentile believers, without Jewish backgrounds, felt free to eat anything:
- They believed Christ declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19) and that idols were nothing.
- So, this was a tension between two opposing worldviews.



# Bible Reading...

- *Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.*
- *<sup>2</sup> For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.*
- *<sup>3</sup> Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.*
- *<sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*

- *<sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*
- *<sup>6</sup> He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.*
- *He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks*  
Romans 14:1-6

# Receive...

- *Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things*
- The key word here is RECEIVE.
- It means to accept, embrace, accommodate, be a friend...
- We are not to be divided over things that are not fundamental to faith, like the cross, resurrection and salvation in Christ alone.
- Wearing of scarfs, jeans, braided hair, loud or soft music, hymns or songs etc are DEBATABLES.



# Belief...

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- <sup>2</sup> For **one believes** he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.
- The challenge many times is of BELIEF. Some are like hard rocks!
- Some hold their beliefs at such a nonnegotiable level such that things become very difficult.
- Paul is saying that the more 'religious' you are about these debatable beliefs, then you are the 'weaker' believer.
- Most in this category would consider themselves the **STRONGER!**



# Despise..

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- *<sup>3</sup> Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.*
- Some Christians can be very judgmental and critical.
- Paul is urging us to do neither.
- God is on both sides, so we are to accept those whom God has embraced.
- This is an ATTITUDE of the heart which is able to welcome anyone despite their appearance, behavior or current worldview.



# Judging...?

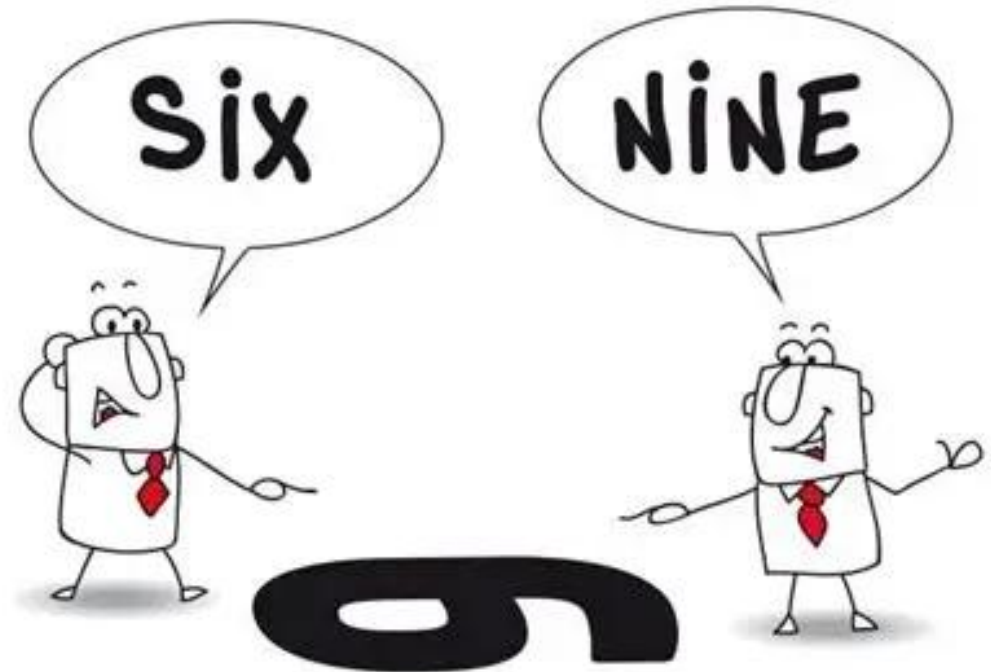
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- *<sup>4</sup>Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*
- Interestingly, we sometimes cannot believe that God would choose to use certain people.
- The Bible calls these people, God's servants!
- We need to allow God to touch and use any and everyone who believes in Christ even if they don't behave or look like us!
- This tolerance and accepting Love for the Brethren will help the Church grow faster , wider and deeper.
- Our discernment of those who are Friends of God will help us in our attitudes.



# Outlook...

- <sup>5</sup> *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*
- There is room in the Kingdom for different approaches to God.
- Hold your view well but don't hold it against another believer!
- It is amazing how God is able to accommodate us all who believe in Christ.
- You can both be looking at the same matter from different angles and both views can be right!



# To the Lord...

- *6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord, he does not observe it.*
- Isn't it incredible that two opposing views can both be right!
- The Lord sees these actions as honouring Him.
- To God, intent is more important than performance.
- To God, the heart of the matter, is the matter of the heart.



# Bible Reading...

- *7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.*
- *8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*
- *9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.*
- *10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*
- *11 For it is written:*
- *“As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.”*
- *12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*
- *13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore,*
- *but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

# The Message...

- *10-12 So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse.*
- *Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God.*
- *Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:*
- *“As I live and breathe,” God says,  
“every knee will bow before me;  
Every tongue will tell the honest truth  
that I and only I am God.”*
- *So mind your own business. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.*
- *Forget about deciding what's right for each other.*
- *Here's what you need to be concerned about: that you don't get in the way of someone else, making life more difficult than it already is.*
- *I'm convinced—Jesus convinced me!—that everything as it is in itself is holy. We, of course, by the way we treat it or talk about it, can contaminate it.*

# Points...

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- We are all accountable to God
- We are going to be judged by Christ.
- Stop trying to do God's job!
- We can hinder someone's journey by criticism
- Focus on yourself and how you are going to be judged.
- You are not God and nobody belongs to you!



# Bible Reading...

- *14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*
- *15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.*
- *16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;*
- *17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*
- *18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.*  
Romans 14:14-18

# Bible Reading...

- <sup>19</sup>Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another.
- <sup>20</sup>Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with <sup>l</sup>offense.
- <sup>21</sup>*It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.
- <sup>22</sup><sup>l</sup>Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.
- <sup>23</sup>But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is <sup>l</sup>sin.

- ROMANS  
14: 19-23

# The Message...

- *15-16 If you confuse others by making a big issue over what they eat or don't eat, you're no longer a companion with them in love, are you?*
- *These, remember, are persons for whom Christ died. Would you risk sending them to hell over an item in their diet?*
- *Don't you dare let a piece of God-blessed food become an occasion of soul-poisoning!*
- *17-18 God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach, for goodness' sake.*
- *It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy.*
- *Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ. Do that and you'll kill two birds with one stone: pleasing the God above you and proving your worth to the people around you.*

# The Message...

- *19-21 So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other.*
  - *Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault.*
  - *You're certainly not going to permit an argument over what is served or not served at supper to wreck God's work among you, are you? I said it before, and I'll say it again*
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- *All food is good, but it can turn bad if you use it badly, if you use it to trip others up and send them sprawling.*
  - *When you sit down to a meal, your primary concern should not be to feed your own face but to share the life of Jesus.*
  - *So be sensitive and courteous to the others who are eating. Don't eat or say or do things that might interfere with the free exchange of love.*

# The Message

- *22-23 Cultivate your own relationship with God, but don't impose it on others.*
  - *You're fortunate if your behaviour and your belief are coherent.*
  - *But if you're not sure, if you notice that you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe—*
  - *some days trying to impose your opinions on others, other days just trying to please them—*
  - *then you know that you're out of line. If the way you live isn't consistent with what you believe, then it's wrong*
- **Romans 14:22-23**

# Reflections...

- What are some of the modern issues representing – meat, veg, holy days etc?
- In disputable matters, don't judge. Act in love. Let each be convinced in his own mind.
- What's the difference between godly confrontation and judging?
- Romans 14 is not about tolerating clear sin or false teaching
- Goal is not to win arguments but to edify, love others whilst maintaining true unity.

