

THE ROMAN REVEALING
Theme: The Reign of Righteousness
From the Sermon Notebook of Dr. Doyce H. Nolan

SUBJECT: RIGHT THINKING ON JUDGEMENT
SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 14:1-12

Introduction

The church is made up of individuals at every possible level of spirituality. We have in this chapter, an account of the unhappy contention which had broken out in the Christian church in Rome. There was a difference among them about the distinction of meats and days. The membership was made up of Gentiles and Jews. The Jews were trained up in the observance of the ceremonial laws regarding meats and days. The ceremonial law had been bred in their bones, and when they became Christians it was hard for some of them to be weaned from this teaching. It was hard for some of them to understand that the ceremonial law was cancelled by the death of Christ. Yet, other Christians understood themselves to be better off with their new Christian liberty.

There arose a contention among them. Those who realized and enjoyed their liberty in Jesus were constantly being judged by those who think they live too loose of a life. So, those who are strict in their application of biblical standards are constantly being criticized by those who have adopted a looser standard. One group is called liberal and compromisers, while the other group is called legalistic and harsh.

Paul seeks to find a balance in the verses of our text. You see, there are some things in life that are crystal clear! The Bible is plain when it tells us that we should not drink, use drugs, curse, commit

adultery, kill, steal, lie, etc. These things are beyond debate and people who practice such things are sinners. That is a clear statement of the Word of God. However, there are other areas of life that are not so clear. For instance, how long should a man's hair be? Should men wear beards and mustaches? Should women wear pants? Should Christians watch TV? Should believers go to the movies? You might be surprised to hear it, but these are issues that people struggle over every day of their lives.

Paul gives us some insight into handling these doubtful areas of our lives. At the very least, he helps us to know how to deal with that brother or sister in Christ who has a different opinion than ours. *We shall observe three truths concerning judgement...*

1. WE ARE TO AVOID FOOLISH JUDGMENT (1-4).
2. WE ARE TO ASPIRE TO FAITHFUL JUDGMENT (5-9).
3. WE ARE TO ANTICIPATE FUTURE JUDGMENT (10-12).

I. WE ARE TO AVOID FOOLISH JUDGMENT (1-4).

How are we to accomplish this? The bible says that we are...

1. Commanded To Recognize Our Christian Brother (2). For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. There were Gentiles who had been saved out of extreme paganism. These people had turned their backs on idolatry, and would not dare go anywhere near anything associated with that lifestyle. On the other hand, there were Jews in the early church who had been shown, through the Gospel, that they had the liberty to eat meats, even if those meats had been sacrifices to idols.

2. We Are Cautioned To Receive Our Christian Brother (1).

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. He has never come to terms with the liberty that he has in Jesus Christ. He is so afraid of getting dirty that he places standards upon his life that are more restrictive than those placed there by the Bible. As a result, he believes that everyone around him should live up to his standards. This causes problems for those who have to live with this kind of person. Paul's thought here is that we are not to turn the weaker brother away from our fellowship, but we are not to allow his self-imposed standards to dominate our lives. In other words, his restrictions should not be allowed to cause division or disunity within the church family.

3. We Are Challenged To Respect Our Christian Brother (3-4).

(4) Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. If we are not careful, we will allow our differences to drive a wedge between us. If I think you shouldn't do a certain thing and you do it anyway, I have to be big enough in the Lord to overlook it for unity's sake! These kinds of things must never be allowed to hinder the unity of the church! Paul gives us two thoughts that will help us in this area.

We Are To Respect His Principles. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Whether a professing believer agrees with us or not is not the issue!

Whatever convictions he may hold concerning some activity of life, they are his and he has every right to them. I may never agree with him or see it his way, but I am not to despise him, nor am I to judge him. I may not agree with him, but I am still to respect him, and give him room to live his life as the Lord leads him!

We Are To Respect His Position. The whole idea of this verse is that none of us is God! We didn't save this brother. We don't keep him saved. We don't lead him and he does not answer to us! If his life is not an issue to God, why should it be one to us? So, regardless of what you think about what another believer does in his or her life, ultimately, they are not accountable to you or to me!

II. WE ARE TO ASPIRE TO FAITHFUL JUDGMENT (5-9).

1. In The Matter Of Convictions. (5). One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Paul turns his attention to the matter of worship days and holy days. Some people elevate one day above another and tell us “*this is the day you are supposed to worship.*” However, Paul tells us that whatever day we choose to worship, we are not to violate our conscience. If I am bothered about doing it, I am sinning when I do it. If I can do it and can honestly do it “*as unto the Lord*”, then it is all right! We are not to violate our personal convictions!

2. In The Matter Of Consecration. (6). He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. In every issue that arises in life, I need to ask myself, “Is this something I can do to honor God? Does this honor Him? Or does it dishonor Him? Can I do this with a clear conscience? Does it even contain the even slightest hint of wrong or evil? Can I really say that this glorifies the Lord?”

3. In The Matter Of Consequences (7-9). Regardless of whether we are a weak Christian or a strong Christian, there are

consequences for the choices we make in life. Paul mentions two realms in which there are consequences to expect.

The Earthly Realm. (7). For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Not one of us is an island to himself, people are watching you. By your life, they will either be helped in their walk with God, or they will be hindered in that walk. There are certain things that it would be perfectly lawful for me to, however, to do them might result in other believers stumbling in their faith. Therefore, I must refrain from doing things that are lawful for the sake of the brethren. **1 Cor. 10:23-24. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (24) Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.** What is in view here is a life of love! The word “wealth” refers to love. The Christian who walks in the love of God for his fellow believer will always put other's needs ahead of his own.

The Eternal Realm.(8-9). For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. While the spiritual growth and life of our brother is of vast importance, there is a concern that outweighs that: above all else, our lives are to be pleasing to the Lord! The question we must ask: *“How does this fit into the plan of God for my life?”* In the final analysis, He is the only One we have to please. If we live lives that honor Him, He will take care of the rest of the situation for us.

III. WE ARE TO ANTICIPATE FUTURE JUDGMENT (10-12).

1. Judgment Is Restricted Here (10a). But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We

do not have the right to play God in the lives of our brethren and pass judgment on them. If a brother is living in open sin, and is violating clear biblical standards, then we have an obligation to speak to him about his life, **Pro. 27:5-6; Pro. 17:10; Psa. 141:5**. If we are convinced that they are in the wrong, then we are to pray for them and trust the Spirit of God to speak to their hearts. However, if the power of God is on their life, then maybe we are more concerned about that thing than God is! Therefore, let us learn to keep our self-righteous judgments to ourselves!

2. Judgment Is Rendered There. (10b-12). For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. One day that brother that we think is such a compromiser will stand before the Lord and he will give an account of his life to the Lord that saved him. Then, the accounts will be settled. Then he will be dealt with properly. There, he will either be blessed, or he will suffer the loss of reward, **1 Cor. 3:10-15**. On that day, he will get exactly what is coming to him, no more and no less! However, just as that brother will stand before the Lord, so will every single one of us! It may just be that we will find out that everything was not as we thought it was either! It will be a day of perfect reckoning and just accounting. Therefore, may the Lord help us to learn to avoid judging the brethren and concern ourselves with living the right kind of life before the Lord. One day we will answer to Him and one another!

Conclusion

With all this truth in our minds, it might be good to remember the words of Paul in **Philippians 2:12**, "*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye*

have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” If I am going to judge a life, let it be my own life! If I am going to be a blessing to my brothers in Christ, let me not seek to do it by setting myself up as their judge and jury, but rather let me love them, pray for them and live my life in such a manner that I am blessing to them and not a hindrance! Have you been guilty of imposing your standards on other believers? Have you been guilty of setting up your own little kangaroo court from which you rendered judgment on everyone else’s life? We have all done it from time to time! Sadly, some do it all the time! There is a cure for this problem and it is called repentance. The help you need to be a pleasant Christian and a blessing to the church is found in Him.