

# Do not pass judgement

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Preacher: Daniel Ralph

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, we're in Romans 14. As you're turning there, I just want to say a few words before we read Romans 14. This is not to colour your reading. Rather, it's to give you a clear line of sight.

The reason I say that is because Romans 14 speaks about things that aren't necessarily applicable to us in terms of, for instance, the food laws, the Jewish food laws.

I don't imagine too many of us struggle over that when we go to the supermarket. You know, it's not really an issue. I also don't imagine for the men that circumcision is going to be a problem for any of you.

I think you're quite happy to leave that one alone and to move on. However, there are issues that I'm not going to be bringing out in the sermon because though they're in the text implicitly, I want to try and stick to the text, rightly so.

But in my seven years, over seven years of being in this church, there are issues which are difference, issues of differences within this church. I'll just lay out a couple so that you know what your pastor is up against.

[ 1 : 1 4 ] So I had a conversation with a student from Moreland Bible College just the other day who's looking to go into the pastorate. And I said to him, look, you need to be prepared that when you go into a church, that you're not going into a denomination.

Because if you go into a church of England now, there's only going to be a portion that are Anglican. You're going to have some Methodists. You're going to have some Catholics. You're going to have some Baptists. You're going to have some, I don't know what I am, but I know I'm a Christian.

Okay, that's the type of Christians we want. Okay. And it's very unlikely you're going to be able to go to any church now where people are died hard, you know, Anglican or Methodist or Baptist.

You get a few, you get a few, but generally speaking, that churches that call themselves Methodists aren't actual that Methodist. Churches that call themselves Baptists don't always have Baptists in them.

The same with Presbyterians and the like. When I came here, I assumed certain things to be true about marriage and drinking alcohol and baptism and communion.

[ 2 : 3 0 ] I was pulled up once saying that I have no right to serve communion because I don't serve it using real wine. This person thought that it was such an issue that it was a biblical issue, not just an issue of conscience.

It was a biblical issue. And stripped me down, very politely, might I add. It was a very polite stripping down. I can't say that I enjoyed it, but I took it as a pastor.

And most of you are completely unaware. Is that an issue of biblical mandate or is it an issue of conscience? Is it an issue of pragmatism?

Why do we do what we do? Baptism as well. I thought baptism was a fairly simple, straightforward one until I came across a couple who believe that some believers are not allowed to be baptized.

Well, you've got to understand this is a struggle for me. They're allowed to be baptized at some point. They're just not allowed to be baptized at other points. Now, you think, I'm confused.

[ 3 : 32 ] Yeah. Okay. I'm confused also. Some issues, I think, are clear. Some issues are a matter of conscience. Some issues are a matter of clear biblical teaching.

So with that in mind, we're about to read Romans 14, where Paul is reading this to a church that have clear, clear differences. And those differences are causing quarrels in the church and causing people to pass judgment.

So as you listen, listen with your own differences in mind, whatever they may be. Romans chapter 14. Now hear God's word.

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

One person believes that he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats.

[ 4 : 43 ] For God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls, and he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day observes it in honor of the Lord, and the one who eats eats in honor of the Lord.

Since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains abstains in honor of the Lord, and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

If we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and of the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God, for it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

[ 6 : 16 ] So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

I know I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it is unclean.

For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you should know you are no longer walking in love by what you eat. Do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.

So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil, for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Whoever thus serves Christ, is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then, let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building.

[ 7 : 25 ] Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God. If I can just interject, do not for the sake of any matter of your conscience destroy the work of God.

Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine.

It is not good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

Well, may God bless his word to us, and it is a lot to take in, but may God bless it to us.

[ 8 : 42 ] So, last week, in Romans chapter 13, we learnt how Christians are meant to live in the world under a government.

Now, that government is a blessing, not a curse. It is a good thing. It is not an evil. But there is a distinction to be made between the government itself, as in a governing authority, and the people that make up that government.

You can have a corrupt judge, but that doesn't mean that the whole justice system is corrupt. Okay? You can have a corrupt judge, you can have a corrupt policeman, but it doesn't mean that the whole police force is therefore corrupt.

A distinction can be made between the civil authority as an authority, and the people in that authority. So, governing authorities are good.

Their laws may not be, but the authority is good, and they are there for our good. It should be seen as a blessing from God, even though there are exceptions.

[ 9 : 51 ] There are exceptions to everything, the paying of taxes, there's exceptions to obeying the police, obeying the government. There are exceptions all along the way. So, Romans 13 is how you are to live in the world under authority.

Romans 14 is how you are to live with each other in the church. Okay? Which do you think is easier? Okay?

The answer, the answer is actually to live in the world. Okay? And the reason it's easier to live in the world as a Christian than it is sometimes to live in the church, very simply put, is for this.

That when I step out into the world, generally speaking, I know that I believe something in what they do. So, I know where I stand, I know where they stand, and if they know me, they know where I stand and they know where they stand.

Trouble is, when you're in a church, the assumption is we all believe the same thing. The reality is we don't. Okay? The assumption is we believe the same thing, but the reality is that we don't.

[ 10 : 56 ] And that reality is what causes judgments and what causes quarrels and what causes people to move around from one church to the next, almost for no good reason.

for no good reason. It doesn't make any sense at all, but people can always come up with reasons. Okay? I'm not saying that people don't have reasons.

I'm simply saying that the reasons people have are ones that are often justified simply by their own doing, as Romans 14 points out.

And that's an issue. I mean, that's a big issue because it means that a person's life is no longer then governed by the word of God, it's governed by their own sense of conscience.

The person who lives by their conscience, Paul says, is the weak brother, and the person who lives by the word is the strong brother. However, we must be careful here because if people decide to live by their own standards like they do in the world, then they'll just make up their own standards.

[ 12 : 04 ] Atheists love to borrow God's standards and then pretend that they didn't get them from him. So, I know a lot of atheists love to borrow the standard of thou shall not murder.

Okay? Thou shall not murder. They love that one. They like to borrow it, but then they modify it. Okay? So, as I said last week, Christians, we believe that thou shall not murder means thou shall not murder anyone at any time, but atheists modify that law and say, oh no, it's okay if babies are in the womb under a certain amount of weeks.

Okay? It's a modified version of thou shall not murder. So, if people are going to live in this world and live to their own set of standards and rules, then who knows what those standards and rules will be.

It all depends on the type of person. Okay? It all depends on the type of person. Paul then, here in Romans 14, is getting it what type of person are you?

What type of person are you? Are you one that quarrels over doctrine? Okay? It's good to quarrel over doctrine, but not to the point of division.

[ 13 : 18 ] Okay? Or are you one who passes judgment on another out of conscience? In other words, you can't find a Bible verse to support your argument, but this is what I really, really believe.

Okay? What sort of person are you? Paul recognizes, as does Jesus, that we live in a world where people are more than willing to call evil good and good evil.

That's how messed up things are. So however much someone in the world rallies against God, rallies against God's commands, even the commands that they modify, all of them are there for their blessing.

Okay? The command that says, thou shalt not murder to the mother who's just about to have an abortion, is not only there for the child's blessing, but it's there for her blessing as well, even though she's rallying against God.

Okay? The very commandment that protects her life is the commandment that should be protecting her child's life. But when you start messing around and modifying the law of God, then there's problems.

[ 14 : 28 ] Okay? This is why that if you're going to speak on these matters, which I have no choice but to speak on these matters, you need to be fully convinced in your own mind.

But your own mind must be fully convinced or made convicted by the word of God. So, Paul's saying here in Romans 14, it is harder in many ways to live in a church because Christians have their differences.

They believe them and they even practice them. Okay? The weak Christian believes that everything's black and white. Okay? The trouble is is that the strong Christian also believes that everything is black and white.

So, what's the problem? Well, the problem is is they can't agree on what is black and white. Okay? Some things go over here, some other things go over there.

The issue is is that it's clear to me, okay, the issue is it's not clear to the other person. So, the church is full of challenges and in these challenges we are to do one thing.

[ 15 : 37 ] Pursue peace. that's what we're to do. Paul's saying, look, this quarrels in the church are normal. Passing judgment in the church seems to be normal but it shouldn't be.

It shouldn't be. What happens then if we're to pursue peace for the mutual upbuilding of each other but we're to pursue peace in an environment where everybody believes different things and everybody practices different things?

What are we supposed to do then? Are we not supposed to argue about it and sort it out? Well, says Paul, no. That's exactly what you're not meant to do.

Okay? Some things in the church just have to be left. Okay? Now, this grates against me because I like black and white things.

I like things to be yes or things to be no and I can point to Bible verses that support that. That you're yes be yes and you're no be no. But then I get here to Jesus and I have good friends in the Presbyterian church and good friends in the Pentecostal church and good friends in the Methodist church and they don't see things as I see them and my temptation is thinking why don't we go out together and I'll convince you.

[ 16 : 53 ] Now, I know that if we go out together they're thinking exactly the same thing. Right? The reality is the danger is that we can win our argument and then lose the fellowship.

Okay? We can be proven right in our argument and then lose our friend. Okay? And that is both a temptation and a weakness to win the argument and lose your man.

Some things have to be fought for and some things will be fought for to the point where you will lose the other person. That happened with Jesus. Jesus took a congregation of over 5,000 people down to a handful of people with one sermon.

One sermon. Jesus knows how to empty a church and he did it with one sermon. So that thing does happen but generally speaking in a church where Christ died for every single one of us, okay, every single one of us Christ died for, don't win your argument at the expense of losing your brother or sister in the faith.

Don't damage them in this way. So the issue is well what am I supposed to believe? What am I supposed to do? Well Paul has already said that the standard is the word of God.

[ 18 : 16 ] The word of God has been spoken to us but there are differences and here are some of the differences that are more modern. such as Christians are allowed to drink alcohol.

I don't drink alcohol. Okay? I don't drink alcohol not because I believe it's biblically wrong. I don't drink alcohol because as a minister I choose not to and think it's probably the best practice.

Am I free to drink alcohol? Absolutely. But I'm also free not to drink it. Okay? Okay? The Christian freedom means that I can go out to the pub and have a pint if I want to.

But my Christian freedom also allows me to not go out to the pub and have a pint if I don't want to. Now you may look at me and go well you're not enjoying the Christian freedom that God has given you to be able to drink alcohol.

I know. Okay? But I'm fully convinced in my own mind that for me not to drink alcohol is a good thing. Okay? You might want to quarrel over me that I'm not really enjoying the type of freedoms that I'm allowed to.

[ 19 : 19 ] Okay? And I might just want to pass judgment on you for drinking too much. Now we're both wrong. We're both wrong. You're wrong with trying to quarrel with me over the issue and I'm wrong with passing judgment on you.

Okay? That's what it can get to and that's what it shouldn't get to Paul says. The Christian who drinks and doesn't get drunk does not offend God.

And the Christian who doesn't drink does not offend God. Okay? So the Christian who drinks and the Christian who doesn't drink neither of them offend God.

And that's the issue. That's the importance. And that's what we in the church need to remember. When it comes to how this works out in practice I'll give you an example.

So last year I was on my sabbatical. I had a meal in a pastor's house. He didn't know me from Adam. I had to send over a sort of a life statement of who I was what my beliefs and what my convictions were before he would allow me in the congregation.

[ 20 : 32 ] I had to tell him what I believed on different issues and where I stood before I could step in an elders meeting and any of that. But you know this relationship built up. He invited me around his house for tea.

First time I'd met his wife. First time all his children had grown up and left home but the grandchildren were there. Some of them were old enough to drink alcohol. His wife came to the table we were just about to sit down and she offered me a glass of wine.

And I thought well you know away from home. You know no I didn't think that. Okay. I thought no thank you water will be fine. Water will be absolutely fine.

And the pastor turned it down. He drinks. Okay. I know that he drinks. And he drunk after that. But on that very first night where we sat down for the very first time he chose not to.

Why? Because he didn't want to cause his brother in the Lord to stumble if it would cause him to stumble. He made a conscious decision to not use his freedom in front of me just in case it caused me to stumble in the faith.

[ 21 : 44 ] And this is what Paul is saying here in the church. The temptation that people have is to just flaunt their freedom anywhere they like. But to flaunt your freedom anywhere you like could actually cause your brother or sister in the faith to stumble.

Okay. You're going to write you're going to invite someone around for a meal and you would normally drink with that meal. Okay. Do they? No. Will it probably be best practice Paul says to not get a bottle of wine out.

Not because you're not free to drink it but because it could it could cause your brother or your sister whoever it is that you've invited around to stumble.

Okay. The issue here is not the freedom the issue here is the want to. Okay. The issue is not the freedom the issue is the want to.

What do you want to do? Do you want to use your freedom to cause your brother to stumble potentially or do you want to use your freedom to not cause your brother to stumble in the faith?

[ 22 : 50 ] These are the issues that Paul is getting at. Now the one who doesn't drink shouldn't come to the party where people are drinking and then pass judgment on them.

Okay. Okay. The one who doesn't drink shouldn't come into the table fellowship where everybody sat down enjoying a nice glass of wine and look around with sort of this look on their face and shame on you.

That shouldn't happen. Why is it the case that the stronger brother wants to argue the other brother into the truth and yet the weaker brother just passes judgment?

Okay. Neither should happen but the temptation is in the church they can both happen. So something very very important is being said here.

Something very important and this is what it is. In the church there are objective truths things to be believed and things to be done. But there are also subjective convictions and Paul says both need to be taken account of in the church.

[ 23 : 58 ] Okay. Here's an objective truth and I'll stick with the alcohol one because it's probably the most obvious one in a church. The objective truth is this that Christians are allowed to drink alcohol.

They're not allowed to get drunk but they are allowed to drink. The subjective truth or conviction is they don't have to. They don't have to. And Paul is saying here that the subjective conviction of one brother has the same amount of standing in the fellowship as the objective truth that the other brother is holding to.

This means that you go out of your way not to cause your other brother to stumble because what both people are doing they're doing in faith. They're doing it to honour the Lord.

Okay. I think that I'm free to do this and therefore I honour the Lord. I think I'm free not to do it and so I honour the Lord. So here's three quick things to take into consideration.

Judgements without judging. Okay. Judgements without judging. The church needs to have judgments. It desperately needs to have judgments and Paul is not ruling that out.

[ 25 : 18 ] What Paul is ruling out is passing judgment on each other. Okay. We're supposed to have judgments but we're not supposed to pass judgment. To pass judgment is for you to take on board the standing of the final authority on the matter.

It's basically to say that my judgment is the right one and when I pass judgment on you I'm in the right and you're in the wrong. That's to pass judgment. But to have a judgment would be that drinking is okay but drunkenness is not.

Okay. Drinking is okay but to get drunk is wrong. Okay. That's a good judgment. That's a biblical judgment and that's not passing judgment. Okay.

If someone is drunk as a Christian then you might need to go to them and say hey come on where's the repentance and belief. Okay. And bring them back in to line.

And you think well they might go you're judging me. Well no. I'm making a judgment. I'm making a biblical judgment. I'm not passing judgment as though I'm the final authority. I'm simply holding your life and my life up to the word of God.

[ 26 : 31 ] Here in this church Jews had food laws and Gentiles had none. Jews were not allowed to eat certain meat and Gentiles were allowed to eat anything that they liked.

When Jesus came along he changed this Mark 7 Acts 10 and now all meat is clean. Jews are allowed to eat the same type of meat as the Gentile Christians do.

So I want you to imagine this just for a moment in the context of table fellowship. Okay. Jews and Gentiles Galatians chapter 2 sat around the same table.

What do you eat? What do you drink? And what day do you do it on? suddenly you can see the issues around the table.

If the issues of table fellowship involve issues regarding food and drink then what do you eat and what do you drink? Especially when you come from two different backgrounds and Paul says if you want to eat pork you eat pork and if you don't want to eat pork you don't have to.

[ 27 : 35 ] And this is why Peter was stripped down by Paul publicly in Galatians because he swapped tables. Do you remember? He was eating with one party and then he swapped to the other party because the Jews turned up.

Okay. That there is a dishonouring of the gospel. It is an undermining of what the gospel actually achieved. The gospel achieves in the context here where a Jew and a Gentile can both sit down at the same table and eat different food and drink different drink and do it to the honour of the Lord.

That would be the ideal. The reality here is is that these little things become issues where they're now falling out with each other. Now we can either sort this mess out or Paul says we can leave it just as it is.

And that's what he's saying. You leave it as it is. Think again as an act of table fellowship. The Jews are arguing over the Gentiles when should we meet.

Then they're arguing over the food what shall we eat. Then they're arguing over the drink what should we drink. Okay the issues are basic. One person gets his Bible out just before they're about to eat the meal and says you know this pig on the table is allowed to be there because the Bible says so.

[ 29 : 03 ] And the Jews said yeah but it also says that it shouldn't be there because of the weaker brothers sat around the table. This is where discernment kicks in.

Paul is expecting us to be able to tell the difference and he says verse 19 that in all of this all of this confusion all of this tension between objective truth and subjective conscience we are to pursue what makes for peace.

Okay and what that means is this that you live your Christian life in light of the conscience of your fellow Christian. Let me say that again. You live your Christian life in light of the conscience of your fellow Christian.

That means you go out of your way not to cause them to stumble over issues which for them are an issue of conscience.

So judgments are important. They help us to explain what the freedoms are and they also help us to explain what the Lord condemns. They help us to tell the difference.

[ 30 : 20 ] The Lord does condemn one thing here in verse 23. He condemns the one who doubts. the one who doubts is condemned because what he does he does without any faith.

I'll give you an example. Prayerless praying is carnal praying. Being baptized because your friend is baptized rather than exercising faith in God is a carnal baptism.

taking communion simply because you feel the peer pressure of everybody else around you taking communion again is to take it carnally.

In other words you're doing exactly the same as everybody else sat around you but you're not doing it in the same way as everybody sat around you. You're participating in the bread and the wine but you're participating in the bread and the wine carnally.

You're participating in baptism but you're participating in it carnally. Even in prayer James says in James chapter 1 that the one who prays ought to pray without doubting because the one who doubts shouldn't expect to receive anything.

[ 31 : 37 ] Why? Because doubt is motivated by sin and anything it says here in verse 23 for whatever rather that does not proceed from faith is sin.

Now you can't reverse that and I'll give you an example of a reversal. So if I don't drink and I don't drink because I believe that it's wrong then I have nothing more than a carnal reason.

That's sin. That's a big sin. But I can't flip that on its head and go well if I drink in faith and get drunk it's okay because I did it in faith.

That's not okay either. So faith doesn't change what you're doing. Okay? As though if I do it in faith and everything becomes all right okay everything becomes all right as long as I do it in faith.

No that's not what Paul is saying. What Paul is saying here is that whatever we do we are to do in faith but we do it in the context of our fellow brother or sister in the faith.

[ 32 : 59 ] We're to do it verse five fully convinced in our own mind but our mind must be made up by the word of God. Paul Romans 12 you remember a few weeks ago expects us to be able to tell the difference.

He gives us the gift or we're to grow in our gift of discernment. We're to be able to tell the difference between judgments and passing judgment. We're to be able to tell the difference between what is permissible and what is not permissible.

We should be able to tell the difference between the type of freedoms we have and the things that are not freedoms but actually forms of vices that we've fallen into.

The other thing he says here most importantly which we've covered a little bit I just want to cover a couple more and that is the question of not causing your brother or sister to stumble because Christ died for them.

Okay not causing your brother or sister to stumble because Christ died for them. This doesn't happen too much with adults though it does happen with adults but I have seen it happen time and time again with children who are Christians.



[ 34 : 14 ] I'll give you an example. Several years ago someone in this church who's actually moved away so no longer here and in our general conversation he was telling me the story about his mum and the relationship that he had with his mum and this was told to a number of us so I'm not breaking any confidences here and he had this to say it was very sort of sort of striking for me because I've heard this type of story time and time again and I've seen it time and time again he grew up always believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and he's even a Christian to this day okay he can't remember when he actually came to faith he doesn't remember the moment as such and there's plenty of people with that kind of testimony it should be taken seriously Alistair we heard came to faith at four years old you know these type of things should be taken seriously but then he said the most damaging thing happened out of a good conscience okay the most damaging thing happened out of a good conscience his mum would constantly say to him are you sure are you sure are you sure he said that by the time he got to the 15 he left the church because now he wasn't all that sure but he had been convinced as to whether or not he was sure or not okay

I know that I go on about this a little bit and probably a little bit too much but I don't want to overemphasize the importance I want to overemphasize the importance of it we can cause children to stumble and Jesus says we ought not to and we cause young Christians to stumble by saying things like well you're a believer but you're not the idea that somebody can be a believer but not allowed to be them being brought into baptism because they're not of the age of baptism whatever age that is somebody please tell me I've read this a few times and I'm and I'm struggling but I don't want to now make the mistake that Paul's makes of quarreling with you of quarreling over the issue same with communion okay these issues are important because not because they're worth quarreling over but because people's faith matter we are not to cause the person for whom Christ died to stumble okay let me say that again we are not to cause the person for whom Christ died if you read it carefully verse 15 to stumble that's the issue that's the issue well what if we got it wrong what if we baptize them and they're not saved okay we're not the final authority what if we gave them communion and they're not saved we're not the final authority and how many people have been baptized who now live no life following

Christ whatsoever hundreds hundreds someone got it wrong but no one's willing to put their hand up to it now the issue is is that we're to live in a church and practice godly things in a way so as not to cause a person for whom Christ died to stumble I'll give you another example in Psalm 73 the man in Psalm 73 is having a hard time his feet is almost slipping he's going into an area of spiritual depression he envies the wicked he doesn't understand how the wicked cannot take any notice of God and yet have all the nice cars and all the nice houses and all the money to go with it he just doesn't understand he says then he takes the head on God saying look I know it's not right I know that you don't favour the wicked but when I look out in the world it sure looks like that God it sure looks like you bless the wicked rather than the righteous tell me I'm wrong tell me I've got it wrong he then comes to the conclusion that he's not been to church for a while but when he goes to church he shouldn't say anything he shouldn't be allowed to speak in the Bible study he shouldn't be allowed to speak in the congregation why not because he says out of his own heart if I did if I start spouting off my mouth about my feelings

I might just cause others to stumble in the faith okay the reason he keeps his mouth stung and shut is for the benefit of others who just might be on the verge of slipping themselves okay he knew what was true but couldn't convince himself of that truth of that truth okay he knew God was righteous and God did bless the righteous but he couldn't he couldn't bring himself to believe it fully but he knew that if he said anything it would cause his fellow brothers and sisters to stumble keep quiet he says that's his advice to us keep quiet God in Exodus tells us that God did not lead his people the way of the Philistines after he brought them out of Egypt lest they see war and return to Egypt in other words God takes into consideration the strength and will the character of his people and says I can't take you this way you won't be able to handle it so I will take you this way instead okay here's God of all people who has the power to get anybody through anything and he decides he decides to not take the people one way but rather another because of what their heart could handle at the time at the time so God goes out of his way not to cause us to stumble and we are to go out of our way not to cause each other to stumble for the one whom Christ has died finally then whatever does not proceed from faith is a sin okay whatever does not proceed from faith is a sin

Christians are allowed to live by their own personal convictions as long as those personal convictions have been made up by the word of God again they're not led to get in to determine what is right and wrong for themselves and modify it like atheists do the person who is convinced must be verse 5 fully convinced in his own mind but that mind must be convinced by the word of God so whatever we do then that does not proceed from faith is a sin if it doesn't proceed from faith then it is motivated by something else other than faith if we're convinced in our own minds that's one thing if we pass judgment on a brother it is to take a higher authority than him and we're not better than anybody else we may be right and the other person may be wrong but we're not we don't have a higher authority okay we may be right and the other person may be wrong but they're still our brother they're still whom Christ has died for so Paul says you are always to remember to take the other person into consideration as you live together in the church as you invite people around your homes as you go out for meals you are to do so with the other person in mind as you take a part in bible studies as you take part in communion as you take part in baptism as you see the witness of other people taking part you're always to take into consideration the faith of the other person for whom Christ has also died just like he died for you and Paul says this and right at the middle he has this to say verse 12 as I live says the Lord every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God let me summarize this as we finish the judgment account that you have to give is for every what and every why now I'll put it really simply when you meet

[ 42 : 57 ]    God face to face and you face the judgment the judgment is going to be made up of all the what's and all the why's what have you done and why did you do it what have you not done and why did you not do it so if you don't know what the what's and why's are now and if you think well I don't actually know by the time I get to God what the what's and why's are if you don't know what they're going to be then then that means you don't know what they are now okay if you don't know what the what's and why's are you know you're like this sort of person sort of scratching for answers just before you go into the interview room or scratching for you know answers just before you have to face the teacher or the headmaster well this is god we're speaking about who knows everything and he knows everything and still wants us to give an account okay think about that he knows everything and yet he wants us to give an account why because he wants to know whether or not we know all the what's and the why's for what we have done and why we have believed what we have believed so as you live in the church remember this every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to god all the what's and all the why's amen well as we close then let us uh so we sing it twice through please susan okay uh or hail the lamb let's stand together as we sing o hail the lamb and throne from high oh hail the lamb and throne from high oh hail the lamb and throne from high his praise shall be his praise shall be a man of pride he reigns victorious he reigns victorious forever glorious his name is Jesus he is the Lord o hail the gleichfalls o hail o hail the lamb and throne of high and throne of high greatuu

His name is Jesus He is Lord Father God, please in Christ, make us ready to stand before you on that great day. Amen.