

“The Romans Road Rebooted”—Part 18

AUGUST 17, 2014

Everything we will hear today is in light of LOVE for others in Christ:

- **ROMANS 13:8-10 (ESV)**

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1. The greatest and only debt we are to have is to love, because the Lord FIRST LOVED US.

- **ROMANS 5:6-8 (ESV)**

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- **1 JOHN 3:16-18 (ESV)**

¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

2. The greatest and only debt we are to have is to love, because it PROVES we BELONG to Christ.

- **JOHN 13:34-35 (ESV)**

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- **1 JOHN 4:7-21 (ESV)**

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

This love that we have received MOTIVATES us:

- **ROMANS 13:11-14 (ESV)**

¹¹Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

1. Love motivates us to WAKE UP!

- **ISAIAH 52:1-7 (ESV)**

Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. ² Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

³ For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money." ⁴ For thus says the Lord God: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. ⁵ Now therefore what have I here," declares the LORD, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the LORD, "and continually all the day my name is despised. ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am."

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

- **REVELATION 3:1-3 (ESV)**

"I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you."

2. Love motivates us to live as SONS of GOD and not children of DARKNESS.

- **MATTHEW 5:13-16 (ESV)**

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

When it comes to the CHURCH, we are to be EVIDENCE of what we have received:

1. We are to have an attitude of WELCOME and ACCEPTANCE to the weaker brethren since Christ has done the same for us.

- **ROMANS 14:1 (ESV)**

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

- **1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31 (ESV)**

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2. We ought not quarrel with the weaker brethren over LEGALISTIC BONDAGE, for these are not ESSENTIALS of the Gospel.

- **ROMANS 14:1 (ESV)**

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

- **2 TIMOTHY 2:14, 22-26 (ESV)**

¹⁴ *Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers...*

²² *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* ²³ *Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.* ²⁴ *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,* ²⁵ *correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,* ²⁶ *and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

3. The tendency of the “strong” or who understand the Gospel more fully, is to be IMPATIENT with the “weak” and the tendency of the “weak” is to CONDEMN the “strong” for what seems like LAWLESS conduct.

- **ROMANS 14:2-4 (ESV)**

² *One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.* ³ *Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.* ⁴ *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.*

✚ **Believers, whether weak or strong, are both God’s servants which Christ died for and each are accountable to God.**

- **1 PETER 2:13-17 (ESV)**

¹³ *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,* ¹⁴ *or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.* ¹⁵ *For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.* ¹⁶ *Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.* ¹⁷ *Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

- **ROMANS 14:11-12 (ESV)**

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 will give an account of himself to God.*

4. Both the “weak” and the “strong” BELONG to God and desire to HONOR Him. Therefore we must keep minor DIVISIONS in perspective.

- **ROMANS 14:5-9 (ESV)**

⁵ *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.* ⁶ *The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. 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.* ⁷ *For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.* ⁸ *For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.* ⁹ *For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

- **JAMES 4:1-3 (ESV)**

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² *You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.* ³ *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions*

5. Christ ALONE is both LORD and JUDGE of His people.

- **ROMANS 14:10-12 (ESV)**

¹⁰ 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; 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 will give an account of himself to God.

✚ **The cost to Christ of this privilege exposes the inappropriateness of Believers judging and despising their brothers.**

✚ **We will give an account, as those being judged, not as those who judge.**

- **JAMES 4:11-12 (ESV)**

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

6. We, like Paul, although our consciences have been LIBERATED by the teaching of Christ, must recognize that not all Believers have come to enjoy such FREEDOM.

- **ROMANS 14:13-18 (ESV)**

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

✚ **Not all Believers are in the same place in their walk, but they are placed right where they belong.**

- **ROMANS 12:3-5 (ESV)**

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31 (ESV)**

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

- ✚ In the context of the Jewish ideology, the word destroy, meant to cut off from the covenant community.
- ✚ To despise the “weaker” brethren or to encourage the “weaker” brethren to go against their conscience is a dangerous act.
- ✚ For in doing so, we would be intentionally cutting them off from the covenant community for reasons contrary to the Law of God.
- ✚ When we do so, we trample on the grace and latitude that we have received from God.
- ✚ We, as the “strong” however, are not to let our convictions be spoken of as evil.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 16:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done in love.

- **COLOSSIANS 2:6-10, 16-23 (ESV)**

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:27-28 (ESV)**

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

- ✚ We must also weigh what we do in our liberty against whether our freedom is causing division in the Church or bringing a bad reputation to the Church, Kingdom of God and His grace which we have received.

- ✚ We must understand that our freedom is not taken away by refraining at certain times.

7. The Believer’s responsibility is to promote the UPBUILDING of the body of Christ.

- **ROMANS 14:19-23 (ESV)**

¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. ²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. ²² 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. ²³ 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.

- ✚ Therefore, we should do nothing consciously that would cause division in the body or discredit the work Christ has done.
- ✚ This means maintaining fellowship with the weak while encouraging them to understand the liberty that is found in Christ.
- ✚ The well-being of our brother in Christ takes precedence.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-22 (ESV)**

¹⁷ But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. ²¹ For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

8. We have an OBLIGATION to BEAR with the weaker brethren.

- **ROMANS 15:1-7 (ESV)**

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- ✚ **We have an obligation and not a suggestion to bear the burden of our weaker brethren. Paul says we have no other response.**
- ✚ **When we speak of bearing, this means that we all who are strong are to have great patience and diligence in teaching and training them.**
- ✚ **We are not just bearing with the weaker brethren, but also in their failings and struggles in their walk with Christ.**
- ✚ **We cannot just give up on them, just as Christ has not given up on us...for He is our example.**
- ✚ **We are not just to please ourselves, but we are to build up and strengthen the entire body.**
- ✚ **They are called our neighbors. Therefore, let us not forget the parable of the Good Samaritan.**
- ✚ **This also means that our weaker brethren must remain teachable and not obstinate; welcoming correction in the Word of God, which is the ultimate truth.**
- ✚ **The purpose in bearing with the weaker brethren is not that there be divisions and factions in the Church, but that we might declare the Gospel and glorify God. That is our purpose...to build the Kingdom of God...together.**