

Do Not Judge

The Apostle Paul is teaching the believers of the Roman church because there were problems. Jewish believers kept the Law, but Gentile believers did not keep the Law of Israel, so there was no unity. They argued about food prepared for idols (Rom. 14:2-3), circumcision (Rom. 2:25-29), Sabbath (Rom. 14:5-6). Why did the apostle Paul write the book of Romans? The purpose was to resolve the divisions in the Roman church.

Verse 1: Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.

Verse 2: One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.

Those who think it is okay to eat anything are Gentile Greeks who do not have the Old Testament law, and those who eat only vegetables are Jewish believers who follow the law.

Verse 3: The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.

God has saved both Jews and Gentiles with the gospel, so we should not despise one another. [Rom. 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.](#)

There is the episode of Peter and Cornelius. You will find more details in Acts about God's delight in the salvation of the Gentiles. I encourage everyone to read Acts chapter 10. In [Acts 10](#), there is an episode in which Peter evangelized a Gentile named Cornelius.

Cornelius who was a Gentile and a centurion called the "Italian Legion" was living in Caesarea. Cornelius was a man of great faith, and his whole family feared God, giving alms to the people and praying to God earnestly. One day, an angel appeared to Cornelius around 3:00 p.m. and said, "[Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a named Simon who is called Peter.](#)" Cornelius did as the angel told him and sent his soldiers of faith to Jaffa, where Peter was.

When they arrived the next day, it was about midday. Peter went to the kitchen to prepare lunch as usual. However, Peter suddenly fell into trance and saw the heavens open. [From the heavens, a large sheet like container was being let down to the earth. And in it were animals, reptiles on the earth, and birds.](#) I imagine that Peter would have lost all appetite and be about to vomit. Imagine this, everyone. What would you do if suddenly rats, pigs, snakes, frogs, and birds appeared in front of you? I think I would scream at the sight of a snake and jump up and down and run away.

By the way, Peter heard a voice that said, "[Get up, Peter! Kill and eat.](#)" Of course, Peter's reaction is just as we imagine. He replied, "[Surely not Lord ! I have never eaten anything](#)

impure or unclean.” Because Peter knew in an instant that the animals in the sheet were all things the law forbade him to eat, he stubbornly refused to eat them. The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out and stopped at the gate. At that time, the Holy Spirit told Peter that he had sent the men. He immediately understood that the meaning of the vision was about evangelizing the Gentiles, so he followed the Holy Spirit and went to Cornelius' house.

Peter went to Cornelius' house and said, “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So, when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. Now I realized how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.” While the gospel was being preached in this way, the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on those who were circumcised or uncircumcised. Not only that, but tongues, a gift of the Holy Spirit, was given to them. Peter was convinced that God would accept them and baptized them. The event in Acts chapter 10 was a major historical event that opened the way for Gentile evangelism. Without this event, we would not have had a chance to hear the gospel.

Next, Paul uses an example to illustrate the relationship between a servant and the Lord. Verse 4: Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand for all. They will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

This is a parable about Jewish and Gentile Christians who are the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the Lord, is the one who stands and he is able to make each Christian stand. Even there are Christians who have a different opinion around us, Jesus becomes their Lord and is involved in their life.

Verse 5: One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.

Verse 6: Whoever regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

There was controversy over the Sabbath. The Jewish Christians went to the temple on the Sabbath. The Greek Christians had worship and sacraments around the day of Jesus' resurrection. And, there were those who agreed with both views. The Apostle Paul teaches that each person should decide according to the conviction of their own heart. Each should be responsible for their own decisions. The specific days mean the Sabbath and the feasts. Even though they have different opinions about keeping these specific days, they all have great

motives for doing so, because they each have faith and are thankful to the Lord Jesus, revealing glory to Him. Even though the controversies occur in our churches today, in fact we have great motives for loving the Lord Jesus and our church.

Paul teaches that if the motive is pure, each person should decide based on the conviction of their own heart. What is this “conviction of the heart”? This is the “conscience or faith” given by God. Simply, we follow the conscience of our own heart when making ethical decisions, right? For example, on the way home from Tokyo Baptist Church in Tokyo, my church’s members seem like feel always a hesitation at the cross road, when there is a red signal light at a small intersection with no people or cars. Do you cross the street? Or do you wait? This is always a question of faith and conscience as an adult and even a Christian. There are two choices. Some will cross even though the red light and some will not. At this time, we must decide with our conscience and faith, and decide with gratitude.

Verse 7: For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone.

Verse 8: If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

None of a Christian life for themselves. This emphasizes the strong bond of the church, which is tied by the love of Christ, who lives and dies with us. [Acts 2:44-47: All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.](#) They all are sharing all things, selling their possessions and belongings, and all sharing in it according to their own needs. The life of the churches at that time was not a happy one, but a life of crisis, where death was always imminent. They were exiled as apostates from the Jewish synagogues and were also persecuted by the Roman Empire as an anti-social crowd. Because of this, they could not engage in economic activities. For the Christians of that time, the church was a community directly connected to their life.

This is the testimony of a young man who fled an Islamic country in Africa and applied for refugee status in Japan. His family disowned him shortly after he became a Christian. However, he was called by God to translate the Bible, and he translated the Hebrew Bible into Arabic. When his activities were discovered by the government, he was tortured and his life was threatened, so he applied for refugee status in Japan six months ago. He showed me a picture of him worshipping in secret in his hometown. A Christian family had opened his house and about 50 people had gathered. All the windows were closed with thick curtains to prevent the light from leaking in. There are churches in the world today that live and die together like the Roman Christians' churches.

Because the church is united by the love of Jesus Christ, it can transcend blood, ethnic differences, customs, and laws. Our purpose and meaning of life are found in Jesus Christ. Christians have a clear meaning of life and death, so it is not right to fight over small things.

We should be able to overcome the various rules and denominational differences of churches that believe in Jesus Christ.

Verse 9: For this very reason, Christ died and return to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Jesus Christ, by His death on the cross and by His resurrection, became Lord both to those who are dead and to us who are alive. The word "Lord" means the Absolute Authority, the One to be obeyed, and the Judge.

Verse 10: You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

The time will come when each human being will stand before the Lord to be judged.

John 3:18: Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Verse 11: It is written: "As surely as live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." This was quoted from Isaiah 45:23.

Verse 12: So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

When God will judge us at the day, we all will be condemned by words we spoke.

Matthew 12:36-37: But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." What are the words we have to speak?

I would like to give you conclusion of my message today. Verse 1: Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. Saved by the cross of Jesus Christ, we can love one another. Do not judge each other of small things. We who believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior must be one in order to victory over the world. We Christians who have been called should be one and walk in unity. Let's pray together.