

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE AIBI

Number: 613

Verses: Romans 14:5-8

Topic: Living To The Lord

Date: 29th January 2007

Romans 14:5-8 HCSB *One person considers one day to be above another day. Someone else considers every day to be the same. Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind. (6) Whoever observes the day, observes it to the Lord. Whoever eats, eats to the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is to the Lord that he does not eat, yet he thanks God. (7) For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. (8) If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

In verse 5 Paul tackles the question of the Sabbath:

One person considers one day to be above another day. Someone else considers every day to be the same. Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind.

According to Paul the Sunday Sabbath, Saturday Sabbath and non-Sabbath folk are all equally correct – as long as they hold their view “as unto the Lord”. The fact that they are living for God is the main thing – and this makes each differing view correct!

This is hard for us Westerners with our “if A is right then B must be wrong” view of reality, to grasp. That three different views of the same thing can be equally acceptable to God seems puzzling. Perhaps there is small truth, middle truth and big truth.

Small truth is something like “it is better to open a boiled egg at the pointy end”. In Jonathan Swift's work “Gulliver's Travels” the inhabitants of Lilliput were always at war between the Big-Endians and the Little Endians – those who opened their boiled eggs at the big end, and those who opened their boiled eggs at the little end! The furious debates between Mac users and PC users fit in this category for me – as do disputes over hymn books, where the organ should be placed in the church and the minor legalisms in church life.

Middle truth would be what we learn at school - the facts of geometry and chemistry and history. Important and worth debating, but not worth physically fighting over. Debates over eschatology or exegetical interpretations of Scripture would fit here.

Big truth is the “stuff worth dying for” - love, justice, mercy, compassion, conscience, human dignity, salvation, freedom, loyalty to Christ and the glory of God.

Thus if someone is demonstrating their loyalty to Christ by worshiping on Saturday, Sunday or even Wednesday – then leave them alone! They are serving God with their conscience and that is a good and a very important thing.

Do we see any examples of this in Scripture? I think we do in Mark chapter 2:

Mark 2:23-28 HCSB *On the Sabbath He was going through the grainfields, and His disciples began to make their way picking some heads of grain. (24) The Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" (25) He said to them, "Have you never read what David and those who were with him did when he was in need and hungry-- (26) how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the sacred bread--which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests--and also gave some to his companions?" (27) Then He told them, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. (28) Therefore the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."*

Here Jesus says the "small truth" of who could eat the sacred bread, was less important than satisfying the desperate hunger of David's men. Jesus then goes on to say "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" and furthermore says that He, the Son of Man is "Lord of the Sabbath".

Jesus was very anti-nitpicking. He frequently upbraided the Pharisees for emphasizing the "small stuff" at the expense of the larger picture:

Matthew 12:7,8 *If you had known what this means: **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**, you would not have condemned the innocent. (8) For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."*

Matthew 9:11-13 HCSB *When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (12) But when He heard this, He said, "Those who are well don't need a doctor, but the sick do. (13) Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**. For I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Matthew 23:23-24 HCSB *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy, and faith. These things should have been done without neglecting the others. (24) Blind guides! You strain out a gnat, yet gulp down a camel!"*

Mark 7:6-13 HCSB *He answered them, "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: **These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.** (7) **They worship Me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men.** (8) Disregarding the command of God, you keep the tradition of men." (9) He also said to them, "You completely invalidate God's command in order to maintain your tradition! (10) For Moses said: **Honor your father and your mother; and, Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.** (11) But you say, 'If a man tells his father or mother: Whatever benefit you might have received from me is Corban'" (that is, a gift committed to the temple), (12) "you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. (13) You revoke God's word by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other similar things."*

Thus "living unto the Lord" first of all involves practice of the 'weightier' matters of the Law" - justice, mercy and compassion, and minor matters of religious practice are not to take precedence over these things.

We are to live tolerantly with people who worship on different days of the week, or who

have different dietary customs, or who raise their hands in worship, or who do not do so, or who like contemporary Christian music, or who prefer hymns and so on and so forth. As long as they do so "unto the Lord" with sincerity and gladness of heart, then we are to leave them well alone.

The bitterness and acrimony over bible versions, Christian music and the like is a sign of spiritual immaturity. (Now that is not to say that we should use the Watchtower Bible or any other gross mistranslation by cult groups). Division is far more harmful than "transgression" in such minor matters. Christians no longer go to war over the correct mode of baptism (as they did on the 16th century) and that is a very good thing. So with the Sabbath – according to Paul everyone is right - as long as they are fully convinced in their own mind and observe their tradition "as unto the Lord"! We call this the freedom of the Christian conscience.

Blessings,

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