

## Romans 14 & 15: The One Where the Food Fight Breaks Out

Suzy Bates

November 19, 2023

### Reflection & Discussion Questions

#### **Paul is watching the peoples' attempts at sharing a meal together tear the family apart**

We have to adjust at times to stay in relationship with others.

\*What is an example of a 'food fight' in our current Christian context?

\*How does the adjustment feel like a loss or infringement on us?

#### **Jesus is the way to God for everyone**

Read and discuss Romans 14:1-9 (NIV)

*14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 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. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*

*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. 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. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 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. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

\*What kind of answer does Paul have for these disputes?

\*What do you make of the 'weak faith' description? Where do you find yourself right now; as a weaker believer or a stronger believer?

#### **Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of disputes**

Read and discuss Romans 14:13-23

*13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.*

*19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.*

*22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

\*What do these verses tell us about judgement? About how we live with one another in these disputes?

\*What does Paul call out as 'sin' in verse 23? What does this mean of our attempts for purity?

### **Jesus is our model for handling disputes in this family of believers**

Read and discuss Romans 15:1-7

*15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." <sup>4</sup> For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

*<sup>5</sup> May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, <sup>6</sup> so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>7</sup> Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

\*What does this passage say about our character in disputes?

\*How can we help one another in these tensions? What would it look like to bear with or build someone up in our modern day 'food fights'?

\*How is the Spirit leading you to resist the food fights? What is He saying to you about the family of God?