

Ladies Bible Study

Week 22

(Week 21 in your lessons)



March 17, 2026

Romans 14:9 – For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

The _____ purpose of Christ's death and resurrection unto life, as stated in this verse, is that "he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." The Greek verb translated "might be Lord" means that He might have mastery over or reign over. Since the death of Christ is the payment made for our sin, and as a result He owns us, it follows that as our owner, He has the right to exercise lordship over us (1 Cor. 7:23; 2 Peter 2:1).

Our life is dependent upon the fact that Christ lives - this is the reason He had to live again. Even as apart from His death He would not own us, likewise, apart from His living He would have no life to share with us (John 6:57; 1 John 5:11-12). Both His death and life were imperative for total lordship over His own. 1 Thessalonians 5:10 says, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Seeing, then, that we live and die "unto the Lord," verses 10-12 follow naturally:

Romans 14:10,11 – But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, AS I LIVE, SAITH THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD.



Searching questions are those of Ver. 10 - for those on both sides of the subject of Christian liberty. "Why do you judge your brother?" he asks the one, and "Why do you set your brother at nought?" he asks the other - and both in the light of the fact that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

Some _____ teach that believers will not be called upon to give an account of themselves before God since, they argue, "there is ... no more condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The Apostle refutes this teaching in verses 11 and 12 with the words "every knee ... every tongue" and "every one of us." Rom. 8:1 has to do with judgment for sin (which our Lord bore for us). From this believers are blessedly exempt. But we shall give an account of our service and conduct as Christians. Thus Paul exhorts us in I Cor. 4:5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. "

The thought in the last phrase of this verse is not that the Lord will simply praise all who appear before Him. I Cor. 3:15 alone would deny this. The thought is rather that each will then receive his due praise, or whatever praise is due him.

WALKING IN LOVE

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.



Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemned] if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." - Rom. 14:13-23

The words "any more," in Ver. 13, show how prone we are to criticize each other, for they have the sense of "let us not keep criticizing," or "let us stop criticizing." "But judge this rather," says the Apostle, "that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." We can cause offense by having our own way, but we may _____ this by being thoughtful of our brethren.

Paul emphasizes that, as far as he himself is concerned, that he both knows and has been persuaded that not a single thing is "unclean" – common, defiled, or impure in its essence of self. Furthermore, he affirms that this is true for everyone except to "him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean."

This means that whether a thing is clean or unclean, ceremonially speaking, depends upon one's attitude toward it. If one's conscience dictates that something is unclean, to that person, it is unclean, for we must not violate our conscience.



We believe that he says this, not only in defense of the weaker brother, but also as a warning to the brother who thinks he is strong, lest he indulge in practices which in his heart he considers wrong, and so stand condemned. And then, still reasoning with the "stronger" brother, he says:

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably [i.e., in eating it]. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

It is a solemn thought that things in which I may _____ may "destroy" a brother so far as his spiritual experience is concerned, and Paul indicates how reprehensible such unthoughtfulness is as he uses the words, "thy meat," over against the words, "Christ died."

Where the welfare of your brother is concerned, he says, do not value your food more than Christ valued His life. What a disgrace to God if the liberty in which you rejoice is "evil spoken of" (Gr., blasphemeo, to blaspheme) because of some small pleasure in which you insist on indulging yourself.

In dealing with this issue, we must keep in mind that Paul looked at those affiliating themselves with a local assembly as elect ones. In other words, he considered that they were saved. But, although he refers to them as saints, he never went so far as to vouch for their salvation. Even though they manifested the outward sign of assembling together, of listening to the Word of God, etc., Paul always left room for the "if" clause (1 Cor. 15:2, Col. 1:23).

"The kingdom of God" he declares, "is not meat and drink" (almost contemptuously!), "but righteousness [rightness], and peace [How this would be enhanced if we were all thoughtful of each other!], and joy in the Holy Ghost [the natural result of the peace that results from thoughtfulness of each other!]" (Ver. 17).



Paul is not speaking about a kingdom which operates on the physical plane, but on the _____ plane. Its main characteristics are provided by God through the Holy Spirit, namely, righteousness, peace, and joy. This positively identifies it with the Body of Christ, the Church, God's only program through which He relates to men during this Dispensation of Grace (Eph. 3:2).

Jesus Christ, in His person, is the embodiment of the righteousness of God which He shares with those believing on Him. God the Father is commonly credited with giving peace to men, which He does in Jesus Christ. Again, we observe that God is the source of true joy, that which He imparts to believers, via the Holy Spirit.

How naturally Vers. 18,19 follow:

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Do not misunderstand. The Apostle is still referring to the proper use of Christian liberty among each other as believers. Surely Paul would not exhort us to "follow after," or pursue, "the things which make for peace," in our stand for the Word of God or our testimony for Christ. Rather he urges us to "put on the whole armor of God" and to stand our ground as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ, where these are concerned (Eph. 6:10-20; II Tim. 2:3). Too many disloyal Christian leaders have excused their unfaithfulness with the words: "Follow after the things which make for peace" - taken out of their context! Thank God it is not so easy to pervert the second part of this verse! It is not by "exercising my rights," but by "yielding my rights" that God will use me to "edify," or build up, my weaker brother.



Where doctrine is concerned, Paul's Spirit-inspired words are clear: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [i.e., the substance] is of Christ" (Col. 2:16,17).

But with respect to our liberty, in matters not specifically dealt with in Scripture, it must be said that the Apostle urges ----- rather than a refusal to be "judged." Dr. Harry Bultema, a generation ago, declared: "We have no right to give up our dearly-bought liberty, but we do have the liberty to give up our rights."

But there is something even more reprehensible than to "destroy" my brother by insisting on having my own way. In Ver. 15 the Apostle says, "Destroy not him," but in Ver. 20 he says, "Destroy not the work of God," and it is possible to do this with a little self-indulgence and self-will. Thus he says again, almost impatiently, "All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence." In a similar forceful manner he writes to the carnal Corinthian believers:

"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (I Cor. 8:9).

Ver. 21 introduces us to one reason why some Christians of Paul's day, converted from paganism, became vegetarians. For the first time we come to the word "flesh" (Gr., *kreas*). The word "meat," used in the earlier part of the chapter, is an old English word for solid food of any kind (See Luke 3:11; 9:13).



We now use the word meat for animal flesh. Much of the meat sold at the "shambles," or meat markets, of Paul's day was first offered in sacrifice to idols. Quite naturally, therefore, some believers felt it would be dishonoring to God to partake of it.

In I Cor. 8:4 Paul declares that "an idol is nothing," since "there is none other God but one." However, in Ver. 7 he qualifies this with a "Howbeit": "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." It is not difficult to appreciate their feelings in this matter.

Thus the Apostle rightly says in Rom. 14:21: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Note the words "whereby ... stumbleth," i.e., by his following me against his conscience, thus impeding his progress; "offended," i.e., embarrassed, or put into a difficult position; "made weak," shaken, and rendered less stable in his opinions or conduct. From these we can see how easy it is to disrupt the spiritual life of a young or weak believer, even by our example. Thus the Apostle declares in I Cor. 8:13:

"Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Believers have been _____ delivered from the bondage of childhood and given the liberty of full grown sons (Gal. 3:24; 4:1-7), but this advance from infancy to maturity in itself implies the acquisition of a sense of responsibility. Hence the Apostle's repeated exhortations to stronger saints to feel responsible for the welfare of their weaker brethren.



In verses 22 and 23, he goes even farther in defense of those who cannot conscientiously partake of certain foods: "Hast thou faith?" he asks the "stronger" brother: "have it to thyself before God." Don't flaunt your "strong" faith before others and-can you pass this test? - "Have it ... before God."

Strangely we confess far more on our knees before God than we do standing before our brethren. How strong, then, is our faith in His sight? And, probing even deeper, he says:

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemned] if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (22,23).

Obviously this is not directed to the weaker brother, but to the brother who feels himself to be the stronger. The Apostle warns against confusing liberty with license for, he says, if we condemn ourselves in that which we allow, we also stand condemned in it before God because we have not acted in faith but in self-will. Christian liberty does not consist in merely being _____ to do what we wish. It is more objective than this.

Thus Paul's exhortation to the Galatian believers - and to us: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER" (Gal. 5:13).

