**PP** **Love Like Jesus**

**Part 14-Rom 14:10-19 (page 949 in pew Bible) *Let us not pass judgment on one another* 9/2,3**

According to researcher Simon Makin in *New Scientist* magazine, we judge a person’s character

on sight in a tenth of a second, a blink of an eye

Other studies show that 3 year old children judge a person’s character from just pictures

When I was a youth pastor, we were told you have 28 seconds before teens make up their minds

whether they like you or not

We all judge others, it is so ever present that most of us are not even aware we are doing it

Many years ago I lost 50 pounds, misplaced them temporarily, and a sweet lady whom I love

came up to me and congratulated me for slimming down

Then she leaned in, lowered her voice and said, *‘I don’t think a fat pastor is a good example.’*

Today the Apostle Paul in Romans 14 is going to expose this tendence in us to judge

**PP** Read **Romans 14:10-19**

**PP 1-Judgmentalism has no place in the church**

**PP *“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother?”***

**14:10**

This can be a bit confusing at first glance because Jesus has told us in **PP John 7:24,** ***“Do not***

***judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”***

Paul elsewhere instructed, **PP *“For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those***

***inside the church whom you are to judge?”* 1 Corinthians 5:12**

But here we are commanded to **PP *“not pass judgment on one another”* Romans 14:13**

The meaning of the word ***‘judgment’*** is influenced by the connotation

**PP *‘judgment’*** comes from a Greek word that can mean critical, condescending or discerning

Sometimes the word is about being *judgmental,* other times *Use your best judgment*

In fact, both meanings are in **PP Romans 14:13 *“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.”***

Paul commands us to stop being judgmental of others and start judging, discerning yourself

I read of a husband who believed his wife was growing deaf and went to prove it to her so

when her back was to him, he very quietly whispered, *‘Can you hear me?’* There was no

response. Moving a little closer, he asked again, *‘Can you hear me now?’* but still no

reply. Quietly he edged closer and whispered the same words, but still no answer.

Finally, right behind her chair, he said, *‘Can you hear me now?’* With irritation in her

voice, she replied, *‘For the fourth time, yes!’*

You see, when we are *‘passing judgment’*, being judgmental, overly critical of others, hyper

attuned to the faults we see in them, we aren’t seeing our own faults clearly

The reality is that being judgmental is claiming the high ground, elevating ourselves above the

other person just like a judge does up on his or her bench

We have taken the bench, grabbed the gavel, and pounded it in a self-righteous ruling

Paul hints at this in our passage: **PP *“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; for***

***it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue***

***shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”***

**Romans 14:10-12**

Now listen brothers and sisters to what I am about to say

Judgmentalism, hyper criticality, condemning others is a god-like act of power and authority and

the motivation in your heart is pride, and the problem with pride is its undetectable to self

About 20 years ago, Denise and I were talking and she was mentioning people in the church that

we needed to pray for, and each person she mentioned, I had something critical to say

about them

She finally looked at me and said, *You have gotten so arrogant!* to which I replied, *No, I haven’t,*

*I’m just being honest and I know these people better than you*

The next morning however, I woke up with her words echoing in my mind, and they continuing

while I was trying to pray, over and over, until finally, the Holy Spirit broke through my

blindness and I realized that she was right, I was filled with pride!

When you and I are judgmental, it is pride moving you up on the throne to rule like God and

always, always, you look better than the guilty person on the courtroom below

This is disastrous to Christian community and some of us desperately need it revealed in us

Judgmental people put **PP “*a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.”* 14:13**

It has no place in the people of God for it only brings harm, so what is the answer?

**PP 2-Love is to have central place in the church**

It is always important to understand the context and I can illustrate why with this example

What is the answer to this math question…**PP 1 + 1 = ?**

2 right…unless we are talking about, for example, 2 drops of water

Take an eyedropper add 1 drop of water onto another and you don’t get 2 drops but 1 bigger drop

You see, context is important, and when we study the bible, we need to understand it

Look back a page or so to **PP Romans 13:10, *“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore***

***love is the fulfilling of the law.”***

The context is loving one another, and so he addresses in Romans 14:3 two groups of Christians

**PP *“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.”* Romans 14:3**

One group was judging the other, while the other group looking down their nose at the other

Love was missing, and Paul calls it out directly in our passage: **PP *“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.”* Romans 14:15**

There were two issues in the church at Rome causing this love-less division: food and holy days

The church was made up of Jews and Gentiles, and the Jewish people since Leviticus 11 had

strict, what is called Kosher, food laws

There were foods God allowed them to eat and some He didn’t, and methods of cooking where

God gave strict directions of how He wanted them to prepare their food

He also gave them days that were holy, set apart for them to observe like the sabbath, and the

Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened bread and others

God gave food laws and holy days to set His people apart from the nations around them, to make

them distinct so they would not assimilate to the immoral ways of other nations

These rules were part of the Ceremonial law of God

You couldn’t come before Holy God unless you were clean and keeping these laws reminded

Israel that God wanted them to be holy as He is holy, not like the people of the world

They pointed to, prepared Israel for the coming of Jesus Christ, Whose death would cleanse all

believers from their sin and make them holy and able to have fellowship, peace with God

Jesus declared in Mark 7 that all foods were clean, permissible to eat, for He is the one that

makes people clean before God, sinners right with God should they believe on Him

It is **PP *“by grace you have saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift***

***of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9**

But here was the problem the church at Rome was experiencing

In the Roman 1st Century world, there scores of temples to false gods, with hundreds of priests

and priestesses serving these demons masquerading as deities

People would take an animals to the temple to sacrifice, some of it was burned on the altar, some

of it the priest would take, and the worshiper would take the rest home and hold a feast

and invite friends and family to celebrate the blessings of their god

The division in the church was can you go if invited and eat that meat?

Even more, the surplus meat given to the priests was sold in the public markets each day

Jews would likely not find kosher meat at the market, just meat sacrificed to pagan gods, so

many of them chose to eat only vegetables and were offended at those who ate the meat

That is spiritually tainted meat they would say, and you should not eat it the weak in faith said

While those strong in the faith said that is ridiculous, and sneer and condemn the weak

The strong clung lovelessly to their rights and freedoms, the weak judged gracelessly the

liberties of the strong

Neither group was loving each other, neither cared to **PP *“pursue what makes for peace and for***

***mutual upbuilding.”* Romans 14:19**

This church at Rome could hardly have been filled with more differences with Jews, Gentiles,

rich, wealthy, masters, slaves, educated and uneducated

Those differences were nonstop material for overly critical hearts to judge and be proud

On our staff team, we have African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, in my case, Chalk-casian

Pastor Tony, Marc Jefferson, Pastor Jonny have all shared with some of the comments that have

been directed toward them from a few in our church, comments fraught with racism

I can tell you that they handled them with grace, in fact I get angrier than they do

We are a church that is seeing God bring more and more diversity to us and we didn’t need a

 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer to force it…we have Jesus!

I’m convinced when we love like Jesus, all barriers collapse and the Kingdom of God is seen

In the Community Group I am part of, we have a person from Haiti, one from Mexico, one from

India, most diverse of all, two from Missouri…crazy!

We have 3 interracial couples, we have people in their 70s and in their 20s, married, single,

people with grown kids, some having babies and some with no children

We are learning and eager to do what Pastor Tony preached last week, **PP *“Welcome one***

***another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God”* Romans 15:7**

As I close, I’ll share a time I had to learn this lesson, and it was in Haiti on a mission trip 1989

While there, my group leader came to me privately and told me that many of the Haitians were

sharing the gospel with were offended by me because my hair was long at that time,

which they considered immoral

He asked me to allow one of our team members to cut it

I was angry, knowing that there was nothing morally wrong with having long hair and refused

He so patiently shared **Romans 14** with me and simply asked me to pray about it

I did, wrestling with it for about 4 hours until God showed me my pride, and gave me a

willingness to **PP *“pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”* 14:19**

I gave up my right to have long hair and had it cut and the Haitians came around me with hugs

Are you judgmental of other Christians those of you weak in faith, not yet mature?

Are you unwilling to give up your Christian rights, strong in faith, looking down at the weak?

Are differences leading to division in your life, in our church?

Look at Christ Who welcomed you and made you clean, forgiving you of your sins

Look at Jesus Who ate with sinners, Who loved even prostitutes, drunkards, swindlers

No one has ever been stronger in their faith, no one has ever had more right to judge, yet He gave

grace, He loved, He welcomed, He pursued peace and building others up

Let us look to Him and be transformed from one degree of glory to another to become like Him,

and love like Jesus!

Pray