

Romans 14 (Conrad Bowman) (September 10, 2008)

... this Book is just opening up for us; how it – how it fits into what Paul was saying and what he was preparing the Church to face; we thank You for it, because it – what he taught then is still pertinent today. It hasn't changed a bit. We pray You'd lead us through it now as we go into this next chapter; and just fill us up with what You have for us; for it's in Christ's name that we ask it; and in His name we trust. Amen.

Class. Amen.

Conrad Bowman. Alright. Romans chapter 14. One thing I want you to grasp as we go through here. We're doing that Revelation series on Sunday morning, and that's working out real good because what God started in Genesis, and He laid down in Genesis as His provision for man to make it across time and to deal with His enemy – Satan himself – all the way across there; and He laid down some conditions back in Genesis; He put some agreements in place that were irrevocable agreements; and He put some agreements in place that required man to respond appropriately. Otherwise, they couldn't gain the blessings from those agreements. So those are two types of covenants. One was a conditional covenant, where it required man's to response in order to gain the blessing. The other is an unconditional covenant where God made some commitments to man; to Israel; to Abraham; to families. He made some commitments, and it did not require rightness on the part of man in order for those conditions to be inherited by man. God would take care of making them suitable to take those blessings and use them. That was His option, and we would hold that; and He would finally render man or the recipient of those blessings – He would render them suitable for – for inheriting those blessings. Sometimes it's painful, and sometimes it's not. Now, that's covenant relationship with God. We don't have a covenant relationship with God. That's not the relationship that He established with us. That seemed like it was a surprise to a couple of you people. Well, we don't have a covenant relationship with God. He operates with us on the basis of a family relationship. We're in His family secured there as his children. And the price of entry into that family was – was the price that Christ paid. We're not here because God promised us? We're here because of what Christ did to open that door. And – and that's a different kind of relationship altogether. Now, we've studied covenant relationships as we went back and dipped back into Genesis and dipped back into some of these Old Testament books that kind of explained what that is. For instance, Leviticus is a whole book dedicated to telling you what the Covenant of Law was all about. How to exist in it. How to

get along with it. He explained what the Levitical offerings meant; how they fit into that Covenant, and what they secured for the people that practiced it, and held to it, and believed in it. Now, those rules were given to Moses. So we get over to John, and John says, by Moses came the Law, and by the Law, the Covenants with the Law. But by Jesus Christ came – two things; and what were they? Grace and Truth. Grace and Truth. Peace is incidental to it, and certainly came in. But by Moses came the Law, but Grace and Truth came by Christ; and that's the essential distinction between Israel and their relationship to God; and the Church, the Body of Christ, and our relationship to God. Our relationship to God is on the basis of grace, one. God did not wait on us to become believers in order – [Phone goes off] – boy isn't that embarrassing when that blooming phone goes off?

[Class chatter].

Conrad Bowman. We can wait, if you want to take that call? [Laughter]. That's sand in the wound.

John Young. It's on the tape.

Conrad Bowman. John's going to do the transcript, and it'll be right there in the middle of it.

Alright. You see the way that works? Grace and Truth. Grace and Truth formed the basis of our relationship. That's why we don't use the Law as a standard for righteousness. [Phone goes off again]. Persistent they are.

You see, Grace – Grace and Truth, when they form the basis of our relationship with Christ, you can't go back to Law and find that there, because it's not in the Law. Okay? The Law itself was based on God's true character. But the Law itself was founded as a standard of obedience. Christ was obedient to the Law. That's why in Hebrews it says, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and thereby He became the author and finisher of our faith." Our faith then leads us to His grace, which put Him on the cross when we were yet against Him. He didn't wait until we got all weepy-eyed, and wanted the salvation He was offering. He put Himself on the cross while we were yet enemies of His. That's what grace is. Grace doesn't wait for Him to respond to you. Grace says, I'll do whatever John needs before he's even aware that he needs it; and I've already done it. That's what Grace is. That's exactly what Grace is. You see – that's what Grace – Grace tells Norma she doesn't have

to wait until I'm worthy of her love. She – she has to love me anyway. Now I like that. [Laughter]. Adam?

Adam Sun. Can you explain how truth is not part of the Law?

Conrad Bowman. How truth is not part of the Law? Absolutely. Absolutely. The Law doesn't look for truth. The Law looks for obedience. That's where it is. The Law lays down a standard and says, here's where you have to walk. Here's where you have to sit. Here's how much you have to give. Here's the way you ought to give. Here's the sacrifice you have to make. Here's where the blood has to be put. That's Law. See the Law sets down all of these set rules.

Evelyn Wamble. So we have to do something for the Law. But we don't have to do anything under Grace.

Conrad Bowman. You cannot, can you? Why?

Mary Chambliss. Shall I assume that Grace might abound then?

Conrad Bowman. You can. If you do, Grace will certainly abound. Where's the blessing in that?

Mary Chambliss. Well, that sounds pretty good.

Conrad Bowman. It does sound good, doesn't it? [Laughter]. It depends on how much – it depends on how much you like sin.

Evelyn Wamble. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. You know. It depends on how much you like sin. You've got to like sin a whole lot to run that risk. See? That's not the way it works, is it? No ma'am. He's already laid down the whole thing for us. That's what Ephesians 2:10 says. Created in Christ Jesus. Right? For the purpose of good works. That we should walk in them prepared from before the foundation of the world for us. It's already done. All we have to do is walk in them. We don't do them. We walk in them. Okay? Now, those are verses we keep coming back to over and over again, all the way through this study. We keep coming back to those touchstone verses. And we just touch on them and nail them down again; and touch on them and nail them down again. It's like a spider in a web. We keep touching those same key verses. Okay? First Corinthians 5:21 is another one. "He who

knew no sin was made to be sin for us, in order that we might made to be the righteousness of God in Him." There's another one of those little touch verses. Okay? It's like kids playing outside playing tag; and you have to touch this one; and you touch this one; as long as you touch that, you're safe. And you touch this one. And you touch this one, as you run around the yard. You – you haven't done that since you were about seven, but – but that's the way to be. That's the way the game was played. You see. First Corinthians 4 – I mean 1st Thes. 4:11 is another one of those touch verses. "Make it your ambition to live a quiet life; tend to your own business; work with your hands, so that you might fulfill all your needs, and live at peace with all men." That's another one of those touch verses.

Alright now, as we go through Romans, we're going to go through Romans 14 tonight; and I don't want to waste any more time. But – but I wanted you to understand the method that's being used here. It's to identify these little touch verses, these touchstones in the Christian life, and to see what Paul is doing. Because what Paul is doing is preparing the Church for this long haul until Christ comes again and accepts His Bride to Himself – the Rapture of the Church. When He gathers us together and takes us with Him back to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; and – and Paul was preparing us for that; and that's what Romans is all about; to make sure everybody sees that and understands it. God is in authority over all. That's chapter 14, verses 1 through 12. It's really necessary for each one of us to recognize that God is the ultimate authority in our life. It doesn't matter how old you are in the Lord. Whether you're a new believer; a middle age believer; or one that's been hanging around for fifty years. God – the same God is in authority over each one of us; which means, we can expect the same results. When we see what He says, and we obey that in faith, we get the same result. It doesn't matter whether you're a grandfather or just a kid having fun with this thing. It's all the same thing. Okay? You don't have to wait fifteen or twenty years. The one strong in faith has an extra obligation, because we are to bear up the uninstructed and to feed them constantly what God has already given us so that they can navigate their own life with greater ease than we did. That's what Galatians 6 is all about. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Because that is the law of Christ. Lift your brother up. Lift your sister up. Don't leave her in a hard place. Help her out of that. The illustration of that is the – is the Good Samaritan. You know; and the Good Samaritan was led by Law. But the – the same thing applies to us. In verse – in chapter 14, verse 1, it says,

1. Accept the one who's faith is weak, without passing judgment on matters that may be in dispute.

The burden is on you who know the difference, not on the one who's weak in faith. The one who's weak in faith can be expected to be shaken by something that he or she sees. But the one who understands this, and understands Biblical principle, the burden of bearing is – is – falls on that one's shoulders; and then it uses – and we started to talk about this a bit – uses the term, one man's faith allows him to eat everything. Now where did we get that? Where did we get that liberty? Just to eat everything. We can eat anything.

Gentleman. It's grace. It's grace.

Conrad Bowman. It's grace. But specifically in Scripture, where did we get that? We can eat bugs.

Lady. Oh God. Wasn't that what ...

Conrad Bowman. You know.

Lady. ... Peter was told?

Conrad Bowman. After the Flood – after the Flood, the Ark landed on Ararat; and Noah got out, and God said, I'm giving every living thing on earth to you for food. Just as I gave you the green growing plants and seeds, so I give you every living thing; and you can eat it all; for food. That's snakes. You know. In Louisiana, we had less trouble with that. Mud bugs. You could – you could eat crawfish crawling up out of the slimy ole ditches. You know. In the summer, you could see them; with long poles on a stick; got a net out there raking it in the ditches on the side of the road; and then we'd take it home and eat it. If I ever brought that home to Norma [laughter], that would have been the end of me.

Lady. Well we eat rattle snakes.

Conrad Bowman. We eat rattle snake out here, don't we?

Lady. Oh yeah.

[Proofed To This Point]

Conrad Bowman. And it's good. Shaking her head back there. Dyed-in-the-wool Texan. See, God gave us – God gave us everything for food, just as He gave us the – the nuts and the grass and the green things; which is what everybody ate until the Flood. Man was a total vegetarian until after the Flood. Surprise again, huh? Read it; first chapter of Genesis, He said, what did He say I'd give you for food? Every green thing, every leaf, every tree bearing nuts and fruit with seeds in it. I'll give you these things for food; and everybody was a vegetarian. That's why they lived so long. Well that and a couple of other things; but – but up until the Flood, man was a vegetarian. Now, see, this – this is a marvelous book of discovery. Just get into it. It's good for you. What _____ heart disease? Now we eat eggs and other things that they wouldn't even offer on the altar. And – boy, Obama, sure wishes he _____. [Laughter].

Lady. You're sorry about that?

Conrad Bowman. I'm sorry about that. I really am. I'm sorry about that. _____. Won't bring that up again. _____. Well, you just never know. You might get another chance; you might not. So ...

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. They – animals were used for sacrifice.

Lady. That day?

Conrad Bowman. Yes. It was Cain and Abel.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. They used them for skins. They made a lot of sacrifices. But animals were used for sacrifice. They weren't used for food. You didn't eat them. It wasn't allowed to go after the blood.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Lady. But they didn't eat it.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. It was for sacrifice. It was a prescribed sacrifice.

Mary Chambliss. Why did they add meat to it?

Conrad Bowman. Why He added meat to it?

Mary Chambliss. Yeah. You know I know you know the answer, so tell us. [Laughter]. You know the answer.

Evelyn Wamble.

Conrad Bowman. Man's whole life changed after the Flood. You know, leading up to the Flood, you had the angelic infiltration, and that sort of thing; and after the Flood, man's life broadened, because up until the Flood – now this is not just my opinion. But – because – you know, I've got a book shelf this big with it, but it works like this.

[Conrad goes to the Board. Conrad dropped the board marker]. Woops. Let me get mine. I've got one right there. I bring my set, just in case.

Okay. Here – here – here was the way this went.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. There's the earth; and there was the water around the earth. So then there was the expanse in the water. And so there was expanse right there. And then there was more water out here. So you had earth here, and you had seas – actually, there was one great sea; and then you had a very misty atmosphere; and then you had cloud cover. Now, this is what existed up until the Flood. So you had sunlight out here, because when God made the sun and the moon, and you had sunlight coming down, and sunlight would come down and hit this cloud cover, and it would be diffused. _____ all the way in this atmosphere, and it says, in Genesis 1, there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the ground continually; See, in chapter 1; and it watered the whole face of the ground. So, that sunlight produced convection current; and the water rose to the clouds and it misted and just fell back on the ground. When God declared that the water should gather themselves together and dry land

should appear, He just – He punched up some land up through here; and then you had like islands and seas; and the land was watered by the mist; so that it was all like a giant hothouse. That's why you find tropical plants and tropical animal fossils at the Poles – frozen. Because they've been preserved for a long, long period of time. And the best book I know on this is Don Patten, *The Biblical Flood and The Ice Epoch*. And there've been a dozen others. Henry Marsh has written a number of books on it, and what-have-you. And we are so far away from Romans right now I can't believe it. [Laughter].

Gentleman .

[Class chatter].

Conrad Bowman. Alright, so – so – here – this is the way things were in the beginning. Now, if this is the earth on which Eden was placed, to move back to where we were going, and – and Adam and Eve lived on this earth, this earth existed until the Great Flood. So all the rebellion of the angels and everything in Genesis 6, was all within this context. There was light, and there was less light, and that made up a day. The sun was out here; the moon was over here; and the light was diffused; and it was brilliant at the equator; and it was less brilliant at the Poles. But the Poles were not frozen. The great frozen North and the great frozen South Pole until this ice – until that canopy was broken up. Now there are some that believe that the moon spun out of the Pacific depression; right outside of where we have the Mediterranean Sea; and all of that was the result of the moon spinning out of the earth and taking the place in the heavens. There are others that believe that that was just a shuffle and the Continental plates were formed, but that that magic displacement caused, it said in Genesis, the mountains of the great deep to break up – which is what all this is. And this broke up. The earth is spinning. It probably was associated with a shift in the magnetic poles caused this canopy to break up. And when this canopy broke up, great huge earthquakes out – a chaotic upheaval came along and just blew segments of the earth skyward, and these things folded back on one another. And everywhere where these tropical forests folded back on themselves, you had that deep embedment of green vegetation that rotted under a lot of pressure producing what we now pump in our gas tanks on a regular basis. Okay? And as that happened, the Flood came, because all of this water up here flowed down and mixed with the seas, and the water covered everything; and then as the – as the mountains rose, the giant uplifts, the water settled in the seas, into pretty much what we know now. Archeology and geology does not allow for a complete covering of water, or ice, as some believe; but that broke up when the

Flood came. And what we have now is cumulus clouds in this layer and atmosphere, and seas gathered together, and land beginning to show itself. Now when that happened, man's relationship to God changed. And God allowed man to begin to eat everything on earth to subdue it, and treat it all as his commodity; and that's when man begin to eat meat; because he was allowed to. There was only one restriction. There was only one thing he couldn't hunt for food, and that was men. He could not hunt another man for food; which is where Nimrod got in trouble. Because Nimrod, it says, became a mighty hunter in defiance of God. And that's what he did. He hunted the only thing that was forbidden to him. Now what you see is you see the nature of man beginning to exert himself; and God beginning to subdue him; and as man learned his lessons, he had to learn harder and harder lessons along the way. Now, that starts over here in Genesis, and it follows through all the way to what Paul is dealing with in the Gentile Church and in the Jewish community in the Pauline epistles and in the Book of Romans. Paul is dealing with man in that raw nature that God gave him in Genesis, and it's tracked all the way across the Old Testament with him. And now here we are in the New Testament looking at the way Paul is unfolding this to the New Testament Church which is primarily the Gentiles. But he makes some, he makes some interesting comments, and I want you to watch these as we go along, because there're going to fold right back into what I was telling you here. So, man who is a – you see there's always this issue about vegetarians; and it says here that one man goes down and you remember when we talked about this, about a man going down to the shambles and he's buying him a steak and he's eating down there; and other man only eats vegetables. And Romans right here in chapter 14, the one who understands that God has allowed all things as food, and that goes back to right after the Flood, should not judge the one who dies not have that understanding.

2. One man's faith ...

Romans 14:2 says.

2. ... allows him to eat everything ...

Because he understands that the earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof.

2. ... but another man whose faith is weak is a vegetarian.

He only eats vegetables. He's gone back to that rule that – that only vegetables and nuts and seeds is good for you; and that's all he'll eat.

3. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who doesn't, and the who does not eat everything must not condemn the man ...

Who likes a good steak.

3. ... for God has accepted them both.

And that's the important thing. God has allowed the steak, on the one hand, and has shown over a system of generations that eating vegetables is good for you. Okay? So there we are. God allows both, and chooses not to look down morally on a man who makes either choice. Now, does that seem right to you?

Gentleman.

Lady. Amen.

Conrad Bowman. I knew you were getting there. Alright. Now that's the issue in Romans 14. We should not take our personal preferences and impose them on our view of our brother or our sister. To assume a position of judge over someone else is to establish a hierarchy that's not Biblical; because God doesn't establish that. Okay. So, in Romans 14:4,

4. and who are you to judge someone else's servant?

Considering they were both servants of God. Okay. And who are we to condemn God's servant, if both are following an instruction from Him. When He gave us meat for food, He didn't say you ought to stop eating rabbit, even though some would choose to do that. Now, another application of this principle, says Paul, is the observance of special days set aside for worship. Now, we're getting real close to Catholicism here because there used to be a time when – when the Catholics wouldn't eat meat on – on Friday. They would eat fish. Right? Huh? Oh, that was a – that was a – a rule within the Catholic Church – yeah – there was a practice of – it was a practice of – of limited self-indulgence. Okay? Just to train us in obedience. So that's why that was done, and that's not a bad idea. There're many in the Protestant church who will tell you ...

Joyce Wood. ... when God said, you know, I am giving you

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Joyce Wood. ...

Conrad Bowman. No.

Joyce Wood.

Conrad Bowman. No.

Joyce Wood.

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. See – see there're many Protestants that are within the Evangelical community who believe that fasting is a good idea, because it trains the body ...

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. It did?

Lady. Yes it is.

Conrad Bowman. I'm not going to say no because it says I cannot. I'm not supposed to look down

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. I _____. It was clear that that was what . You see, fasting – fasting is a good idea; especially if you're carrying what I'm carrying, it would be an excellent idea. I ought to fast every other day, and it would be good. Remember what a fast is? A fast is not denial of food. That's not a fast. A fast is setting the time aside that you would ordinarily spend just ____ of the food in order to concentrate on worship of God; or prayer for a specific purpose. That's what fasting is all about. The important thing about fasting is not the food you miss; it's the prayer you gain. Okay? The audience with God. That's what fasting is all about. Okay?

Mike Donaldson.

Lady. Yeah, I

Conrad Bowman. That reminder. That's a good reminder. You keep on praying, when things go whoosh. That reminds you – you nodded off. You should have been praying. That's it. That's absolutely right. That should be – that should call us to prayer. That growling belly ought to be a call to prayer. Pray more earnestly. Pray more steadfastly. Now, with regard to days – verses 5 and 6. It says,

5. One person considers one day more sacred than another, another man considers every day the same. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

6. He who regards one day as special, does so for the Lord, he whom eats meat, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so for the Lord and gives thanks to God for the opportunity to abstain.

You see the way that works? Doesn't that take us back to 1st Thes. 4:11? So Paul would say, "Make it your ambition to live a quiet life; tend to your own business." Is what it says. "Work with your own hands, so that you might not be in need; and live at peace with all men." I – I just love – I love what we're going, because as we go through and touch this verse in Romans; you touch this verse in Galatians; you touch this verse in Thessalonians; and you find yourself building that matrix; just like a spider in a web; and it keeps getting tighter, and tighter, and tighter. Doesn't it? And in the end it holds us up. It just holds us up. Boom. That's the way Scripture is supposed to work. Okay? So, we're in – we're in verse – we're in verse 7. So in verses 7 through 9, another way to look at it is this. When we were dead in our sins, Christ died for us. He didn't wait for us to become worthy of being saved. While we were yet spiritually dead, He began a work of faith in us. That's the amazing – that's the grace part; and on the evidence of that faith, the Holy Spirit joined us to Christ in His death. So the faith, it says in Ephesians, by grace he is saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. The faith didn't come from you. It was a gift of God. Not of work, lest any man should boast. Okay? So right here in that first chapter of Ephesians, it lays that down and nails that door shut. It's by grace, that we were saved through faith – faith was a gift of God. It was given to us. So the faith that we actually find in Christ, is a faith that came to us as a package gift; and we gave it back to Him. And there we are. Hmmm?

6. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord; he who eats does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not for the Lord, he does not eat; and he gives thanks to God.

7. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one of us dies for himself;

We die on behalf of God.

8. for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we belong to Him.

We are the Lord's – regardless. It just doesn't matter. So in our living, we glorify God. We do exactly what the Spirit does. As we go through life – alive – we point to the God who gave us life; and with joy we declare that the source of our life is Him. And on our deathbed as we're dying, we point to the Lord; because that's where we're going, and we just go with joy. Because He reached down in life to save us, and now He's drawing us to Himself. So whether we're living or whether we're dying, we declare that we're His; and it just brings Him the glory. And He gives it all to His Father. And the Spirit, when He finds it is us, gives it all to the Son. You see the way that works? Nobody is out there trying to snatch glory. Everybody's giving it up to the other person.

How could we then judge a brother? Because he's a brother in Christ. Since Christ died for me and my brother, and He rose; and when He rose, He took both of us with Him in His resurrection. Is there any basis then for my judging his standing before God? No. But I put my arm around him and tell him I love him, and try to find out how much of his load I can take onto myself, regardless of my circumstance. And that's the way we ought to be with one another. Okay? And that's the way it ought to be. And it can last for years; and years and years; and endure. Now I sent out a letter I received this last week, and – and I hope most of you got it. It was from Lori in – Lori Jackson in California. And – and I've been working with Lori from the day we moved out there, and we moved into an Evangelical little church – little? It was quite a big church. And – and I met she and her husband at the time, and we were just kind of drawn together like this; and – and I've been just feeding this stuff to her for years. It's been thirty years now; and I got a note from her this week; and – and it so touched me, that I sent it out on the transcript list; and if you haven't got it, get your transcript list and read it, because Lori had developed a relationship – intimate relationship with her Lord that's absolutely the envy of anybody who can read it and read into it what it says. It's absolutely remarkable, because He has become her sustainer.

You know, when Mackintosh wrote a book called, *The All Sufficiency of Jesus*; and she and I share a lot of Mackintosh back and forth; and she said that's what Mackintosh – that's what Christ has become to her. Her all-sufficient One; as she wades through marital troubles and difficulty with her girls, and personal things and another; and it's been an interesting trip. And she wrote me this letter telling me how much she appreciated it and how much she's looking for – and still looking after thirty years – for that one woman that she could sit down over coffee with and just sit and enjoy pursuit of their relationship to Christ. That's still what she's looking for. And that's thirty years – she still hasn't had patience in the search. And though it's been thirty years, God has constantly built up in her a sense of His sufficiency to fulfill those needs in her life; and through it, she's gained this intimacy. It's a gorgeous, gorgeous story; and I've been trying to get her to write that down – to put that on paper in a narrative form. She hasn't been able to do it yet. She starts to do it, and then it just pulls her off, and she starts pursuing this and pursuing this and pursuing this; very much like I do. [Laughter]. I hope I didn't train her to do that, but it was like I did. So, you're on your own. Alright, I'm telling you, it's a – at the end of it, it's worth – it's worth the trip.

9. ... How could we then judge a brother, since Christ died for me and my brother?

10. You then who judge your brother, or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all – we all will stand before God's judgment seat.

11. It's written,
"AS SURELY AS I LIVE,

Do not mistake that as God's – seeks a harsh judgment. This is the Bema Seat of Christ. The Seat of Rewards for the believer. God's Judgment Seat – the Seat of Rewards.

11. As it is written,

"AS SURELY AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE IS
GOING TO BOW TO ME,
AND EVERY TONGUE IS GOING TO CONFESS TO GOD."

12. So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

But understand, when we give an account of ourselves, as John and I talk about often, every work in our life that we have anything to do with goes up in smoke. Pooff. It's gone; it's gone. It's just a smell of charred stuff behind. And then we discover God's work in us. It's our work that burned up. It's His work that endures, because His is the only work made out of gold. God's gold. The things that He uses as paving materials. It endures. It's durable. And when we discover His work in us, then we look up and find He's bringing us a crown made out of that same gold that He puts on our head as a reward for not messing with His work, but simply walking in it; and that's what Ephesians 2:10 tells us. "We're His masterpiece, created for the purpose of good works." Okay? Not that we should do them, but that "we should walk in those that have been prepared for us since before the foundation of the world." We're to walk in them. That's it. And the first one of those is – is righteousness, which He clothes us in, and we're to walk in righteousness. And we're to walk in those works of His that reach out to other people through our life, and He lets us be on site when that happens. So, how can we judge a brother? Or how can we look down on him, for we all stand before God's judgment seat; and we stand there, and our work goes up in smoke, and His work endures, and we have the rewards of His work on our head, and

11. ... EVERY KNEE IS WILL BOW BEFORE ME,
AND EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS TO GOD."

12. and each of us will give an account of himself to God.

And our account of ourselves to God is, I am completely worthless. That He is worth everything, and then in my life, this is what He has rewarded me for that He has done in my circumstance. But – introduces a contrast. It always does.

13. But let us stop passing judgment on one another.

But, judge this rather.

13. ... not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

We do not want to be a stumbling block, but rather a stepping stone. And that's what God intends for us. Now let's go to verse 14. Okay, in verse 14, the issue is food. Paul says it again.

14. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in and of itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

So what it says is this. The minute you decide that you can't trust God for what you're going to eat, it's unclean for you. You better not eat it. The minute you decide that something that you're getting ready to do, is not something that you ought to be doing, that if you do it, you've sinned. Now this is tough. Because here's where you can take something that's absolutely legal before God that you can do, and convert it to a forbidden fruit just by virtue of your attitude to it. If you decide that something that you're getting ready to do is not going to please God, you can bet it won't. that's guilt by association, isn't it? It is. So God listens to you. He takes you on the basis of what you know, because with knowledge comes accountability. He takes you on the basis of what you know. And if on the basis of what you know, you declare it's wrong to smoke, and you think, it is; if you do, it's a sin. If Mike says, yeah, I like a good cigar. You know. It's okay with him. Don't you look down your nose at him. Okay? If it's okay with him, it's okay with God. Is that tough? That's hard.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. _____ fit in there, doesn't it?

Lady. Where does it fit?

Conrad Bowman. It fits in there when you decide that something – you see God takes you at your word. If you say to Him, I believe it's okay chew tobacco. That seems like a very unlikely thing for you. But if you decide it is, and you do, there's no penalty in that. Nasty ole tissue. You know. But spiritually, there's not condemnation to it. You see. There's not. Discernment says, well it's a nasty habit. I'm not going to do that. You know. I don't believe it will please God for me to do that, then you can bet it's off limits to you. Now what that says is, if you meet somebody that has no condition about it whatsoever, don't make it a rule for them just because it's a rule for you. God cut them a little slack; until they decide that it's not something that ought to be done, then that's a matter between them and the Lord. Yes ma'am?

Lady. What if somebody is smuggling

Conrad Bowman. Uh huh.

Lady. _____

Conrad Bowman. Hummm. That's a good question. You know. Then I would pull that – I would pull that brother or sister aside and – and teach this very lesson; and say if your under a conviction that you need to quit, and that this is something that is not a risk to your physical health, then you're under an obligation to quit.

Lady.

Conrad Bowman. _____. [Inaudible]. Especially that _____. That's bad. That's bad. Driving too fast. I had a lady – I had a lady in Jackson that told me you had to worship with your foot. _____. You know what I'm saying? It wasn't a problem for her? _____. That'll cost me another two hours a week. Covering Mississippi driving at her speeds. Besides, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. I had that verse and it didn't work. [Laughter]. Well we rationalize, don't we? We do rationalize. We do bring these things home and then we want to rationalize and set them aside – yes sir?

Gentleman. These two verses

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Gentleman.

Conrad Bowman.

Gentleman. Yeah, and we

Conrad Bowman. They have a problem.

Gentleman.

Conrad Bowman. That's an absolute – that's a decent application of it

Gentleman.

Conrad Bowman. That's an absolute decent application of it right there. You – you exercise your liberty to forgo your pleasure in order not to offend a brother.

Gentleman. To me that first verse _____ is very important

Conrad Bowman. Sure.

Gentleman.

Conrad Bowman. Sure.

Gentleman. You know, I've often wondered though Conrad if you're in a restaurant having a glass of wine, and then this couple walks in that you know are so legalistic. What should you do in such a case?

Conrad Bowman. Drink it real quick. [Laughter].

[Class chatter].

Conrad Bowman. That it – it's funny but that is the issue right here. He said, what if – what if a weaker brother sees you and me in the – in the shambles where they have meat offered to idols? So what if the weaker brother – so it says, take it into consideration before you go. If like ____ don't do that. Don't do it. We – we in Jackson, I taught once a week, most weeks, for a long time, at the alcohol rehab center. It was there that our church supported. And – and it was hardly anywhere I could go in Jackson where I wouldn't run across one of those guys. And – and this was especially true – we'd been in California and lived there for a while and what-have-you, and – and I didn't mind a glass of wine; but I could not in Jackson. I couldn't do it, because you never knew where one of these guys was going to pop up. Not only – you know – not only was he taught differently, but he had a problem; and I was an elder in his church; and – and it would just present too many conflicts. So you don't do that. You exercise your liberty to control your behavior so as to not run the risk of offending a brother. Okay? And so it leaves the door open there; and that's true regardless what the issue is. Regardless of what the issue is. Ray?

Ray Johnson.

Conrad Bowman. Sure.

Ray Johnson.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Ray Johnson.

Conrad Bowman. What?

Chatter.

Conrad Bowman. I know. I know. We were out here right across 45 in Post Oak Village when we ran across that same thing. We had a ball park. A soft ball field attached to the church, and we could use that six days a week. But on Sunday afternoon, when it was logical, we couldn't play out there; and it was a big issue because the kids in the neighborhood from the subdivision use to, you know, get pick-up ball games out there and they wanted to play out there and it was, you know, it was kind of – it was kind of dicey. You see, the Christian life is just – we pursue it to our own narrow ends, don't we? Don't we? And everybody's trying to gain control of the crowd next to you. When _____ from Scripture keeps coming back to – pay attention to your own self. Pay attention to what you're doing. Be responsible, because with knowledge comes responsibility; and God holds us accountable for every act that we engage in. We're a Christian liberty in the belief of slavery to Christ. We can take it anyway you want to take it, but our position relative to God is one of a slave to a master; and we complain too much for slaves. Alright? In Iraq society, all those complaints would get you hoisted up a stake and beat to a pulp; and that doesn't happen to us often enough. It's been a long time since we've had to be in hiding. So we've forgotten what that's like. But the Lord would have us constantly looking to Him and promoting His good and not our own. We're not here to be in position, because "here" is going up in smoke, in a relatively short period of time. You know. So we need to be looking past this to the Wedding Ceremony, because that's where we're going to find ourselves. Now, I'm going to finish Romans 14 next week, and we'll get into Romans 15 at the same time because we've just got the tail end of this chapter to finish. Alright. Questions on tonight?

Evelyn Wamble. What verse are we stopping?

Conrad Bowman. Oh, it's kind of immaterial. Let's see.

Evelyn Wamble. Fourteen?

Conrad Bowman. Fourteen, 15, and 18.

Evelyn Wamble. Yeah.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. We'll start with 14 and 15; and – and go from there. The next week. Okay? Now, any questions on tonight?

[Class chatter regarding the situation before the Flood; vegetarians; the fact that people had never seen rain; etc.]

Conrad Bowman. Let's have a word of prayer. Let's have a word of prayer before I close this up, okay? Alright? That's where we started when we got here.

Thank You Father – thank You Father for the time You for the time You gave us tonight, and just for the – for the time of the Word and how it opens up to us; and we just pray Father that it continues to stimulate us to more and more growth; and more and more time in our own personal studies, as we wait until the expected return for us. And we thank You for it all, in Christ's name and for His sake. Amen.