

ROMANS 14:13-23

LIMITS ON JUDGEMENT

“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. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 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. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

“Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”¹

The Christian who will please God must accept responsibility for his or her own actions. This becomes evident in the use of the word “decide” in **VERSE THIRTEEN**. The text today explores relationships between believers; we each have a choice of how we will relate to others. Either we reflect the character of our Father, or we reveal our fallen roots. We cannot, as is so often attempted by contemporary Christians, dismiss our actions with a casual statement that we can’t help ourselves.

The passage before us begins with the word “therefore.” An old adage states that anytime you see a “therefore,” you should ask what it is “there for.” The co-ordinating conjunction directs our attention to the preceding verses. In those verses immediately prefacing our text, Paul asks some pointed questions that should make each Christian somewhat uneasy. In response to the questions he raises, he cites the prophecy of Isaiah in order to provide a warning for each Christian.

“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**]. Each of us will give an account before God for our own actions and for our own choices. The Apostle pointedly cautions in another missive, written to the Corinthian Christians, “We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ” [**2 CORINTHIANS 5:10**]. Ultimately, it is God’s judgement of our actions and choices that matters.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

At the outset, I am compelled to establish an essential truth that seems to confuse many Christians. Discernment and judgement are distinct concepts that must not be interchanged. The word “judgement” that Paul uses in this instance is a judicial word that speaks of “condemnation.” God alone is capable of rendering just judgement; God alone is able to condemn. No Christian may assume the role of divine judge issuing proclamations of condemnation against another individual. However, the child of God *is* responsible to be discerning. Actions that bring reproach upon the cause of Christ must be recognised and the one performing all such actions must be held accountable.

One of the premier Greek scholars of all time says this opening verse communicates the following thought; “Let us no longer have the habit of criticising one another.”² He contends that what is in view is calling into question the motives for a given action. Thus, what is proscribed is judging motives—an action for which none of us is deemed capable. Though we must not shrink from holding one another accountable to live godly, holy lives, we must not permit ourselves to question motives.

In order to understand fully the importance of this issue, and in order to equip ourselves to treat one another with proper respect, I invite you to join me in examining the teaching of the Word that sets limits on judgement for us as Christians.

GOD CALLS CHRISTIANS TO ACCEPT WILLINGLY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE ANOTHER —

Paul begins his instruction in righteousness by reminding readers that the church is a community. Western society promotes individualism as an ideal. Consequently, almost all of us come into any relationship or association with “self” as our primary focus. Our own self-centred interests drive our choices and our actions. We convince ourselves that our personal happiness is the most important value of our existence. Whatever makes us happy is good, and whatever causes unhappiness is bad.

That this is true is evident from even a cursory review of social currents. Marriage was at one time for life, despite whatever hardship that union might entail. Today, however, marriage is until the going gets rough or until a better opportunity presents itself. Neither should we expect that the situation differs greatly within the church. Christians are focused on their own happiness and not on what honours the Lord.

Does the preacher speak too long? We can fire him and hire another preacher that will do our bidding. Does the message calling us to repentance make us uncomfortable? We can compel the preacher to say what we want; we can force him to tickle our itching ears. If he refuses to obey us, we will find a preacher that says what we want to hear. Do we have conflict with a fellow church member? We can ignore that saint whom we detest and pretend that we are correct. We Christians seem categorically convinced that our opinions are infallible. If we don’t get our way, we will quit the assembly, knowing that another church will always accept us—no questions asked!

However, the teaching of the New Testament, and especially the instruction Paul provides in our text, is that we must accept responsibility for one another. We must determine that we will not deliberately trip up our fellow Christians; we must decide not to hinder others in any way. This does not mean that we must ignore sin, but it does mean that if we are mature, we will not worry about issues that ultimately are insignificant; we will learn to distinguish between what is unimportant and what is vital.

² A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume IV** (Nashville, TN, Broadman Press, 1931) 412

This teaching is not unique to this particular letter; it is a constant theme throughout Paul's letters. The Apostle says we must dedicate ourselves "to do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" [GALATIANS 6:10]. We who are Christians must be careful to avoid repaying "anyone evil for evil." Rather, as Christians we must "always seek to do good to one another" [1 THESSALONIANS 5:15].

Because they are a Community of Faith, congregational members do have an impact on one another. Though we are responsible to encourage one another and to build one another in the Faith of Christ the Lord, it is nevertheless true that we can injure one another and hinder one another in the Faith of Christ our Master. The Apostle states that **we can cause others to stumble, we can grieve others and we can even destroy others.** Other Christians—perhaps weaker than we are—are watching us, listening to what we say, observing the way we treat one another.

None of us want to think we are weak in the Faith; we believe we are strong. However, if we are "strong" we will act in love toward one another and we will accept one another. The strong Christian has spiritual knowledge; but if he does not practice love, his knowledge can hurt the weak Christian. Knowledge must be balanced by love. Little children are sometimes afraid of the dark; they imagine that there is something or someone hiding in the closet. Of course, a parent knows that the child is safe; but the parent's knowledge alone cannot assure or comfort the child. You can never argue a child into losing fear. When the mother sits at the bedside, speaking lovingly to the child and assuring her that everything is secure, then the child can go to sleep without fear.

Similarly, Paul's advice is clear: **It is our Christian duty to think of every action and of every word—not as it affects us only, but also how that word or action affects others.** Note that Paul is not saying that we must always allow our conduct to be dictated by the views of others; there are issues that are essentially matters of principle and in such instances, a man must take his own way. Nevertheless, a great many actions are neutral and indifferent; they are what theologians refer to as "adiaphora"—things neither commended nor condemned. These things are in themselves neither good nor bad; rather, such things belong to what we might call the extras of life. It is Paul's conviction that concerning such things we have no right to give offence to the more scrupulous brother by doing them ourselves, or by persuading him to do them.

Life must be guided by the principle of love; and when it is, we will think, not so much of our *right* to do as we like as of our *responsibility* to others. We have no right to distress another man's conscience in the things that do not really matter. Christian freedom must never be used as an excuse for riding roughshod over the genuine feelings of others. No pleasure is so important that it can justify bringing offence and grief, and even ruin, to others. The Puritan writer Richard Baxter spoke with wisdom when he advised, "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity."

Like the Pharisees in Jesus' day, Christians today have a way of majoring in the minor [see MATTHEW 23:23, 24]. I have seen churches divided over matters that were insignificant when compared with the vital things of the Christian faith. Churches have been split over such insignificant and meaningless issues as the location of a piano in the auditorium and the colour of carpet in the auditorium. We who are Christians must always remember that "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking" [ROMANS 14:17]. Remember, also, that "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do" [1 CORINTHIANS 8:8].

Not the externals, but the eternal must be first in our lives; and Paul identifies the eternal as **righteousness, peace and joy**. This passage—indeed, the entire chapter—focuses attention on the *mutual* relationship of Christians as a reflection of our relationship to God. God is concerned that His people reflect their common parentage and their common relationship to one another through treating one another with respect in a spirit of love. One may serve Christ either eating or abstaining, but no one can serve Him whose conduct exhibits indifference to **righteousness, peace and joy**.

Where do these precious marks come from that indelibly stamp the life of the godly person? The Holy Spirit of God is at work in our lives; and He gives these particular graces to each Christian. If each believer would yield to the Spirit and major in a godly life, we would not witness internecine fighting over minor matters. Spiritual priorities are essential to harmony in the church; and where our priorities are unspiritual or identified with this world, there can be at most, tolerance, but no harmony.

“Precisely because foods do not matter, one should be willing to forgo eating them for the sake of what does matter: preserving the unity of the body of Christ. Paul is not telling Gentiles to keep kosher; but he is telling them not to try to talk Jewish Christians out of doing so.”³ Just so, Paul is not telling us that we must lower ourselves to the lowest common denominator in our faith and practise; but he is saying that we must not exalt every questionable practise in an effort to coerce others to act as we do.

Commenting on the words, “All things are pure,” Denney says, “This is the principle of the strong, which Paul concedes; the difficulty is to get the enlightened to understand that an abstract principle can never be the rule of Christian conduct. The Christian, of course, *admits* the principle, *but* he must act from love. To know that all things are clean, does not (as is often assumed) settle what the Christian has to do in any given case. It does not define his duty, but only makes clear his responsibility. Acknowledging that principle, and looking with love at other Christians, and the effect of any given line of conduct on them, he has to define his duty for himself. All meat is clean, but not all eating.”⁴

Those actions that are not specifically identified as sinful in Scripture are neutral. Other actions are known to dishonour the Faith we proclaim. Immorality—sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, degrading our own minds and others through viewing pornography—is clearly condemned in Scripture. Drunkenness, theft, harbouring hatred toward others and nurturing bitterness are all clearly condemned through Scripture. Greed and ignoring the needy are actions that God condemns. However, our dress—as long as it is modest, the length of our hair—so long as it is not an act of deliberate rebellion, how we use eating utensils, the type of music we enjoy—so long as it is not vulgar and hateful, the version of the Bible we prefer—are all matters of indifference.

The point that is vital for us as Christians to grasp is that though we are responsible for the welfare of one another, we must not imagine that we can dictate to one another how we must act. Though we must be concerned for the welfare of our brothers and sisters, and though we must make every effort to build one another in the Faith, we must be careful to avoid destroying one another over issues of no importance.

³ Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, **The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament** (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 1993) 443

⁴ Cited by Kenneth S. Wuest, **Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader, Vol. I, Romans**, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1955) 240

I remind you that we must strike a balance. Though balance may seem impossible to maintain, we are nevertheless responsible to make every effort to balance concern for one another with the purity of the Body of Christ. Indeed, we must accept responsibility to hold each other accountable for our actions, but we must endeavour to be discerning in determining which actions are to be proscribed and which are to be ignored. We accomplish this seemingly impossible task of balancing what appear to be competing commands through loving one another deeply from the heart.

CHRISTIANS ARE TO WORK DILIGENTLY AT BUILDING OTHERS UP IN THE FAITH — “Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.” We dare not permit those who are in fact weak in the Faith to dictate faith and practise for the congregation. However, rather than simply ignoring the weaker Christians, we must determine that we will do what is necessary to build them—to say nothing of building ourselves—in this most holy Faith.

One particular Greek word is translated into English by the phrase “let us pursue.” That word is used almost exclusively by Paul in the New Testament. That word, as it would have been understood by those who first read this letter, speaks of **urgency**, of **keen eagerness**, of an **inner compulsion to pursue a course of action**. The thought conveyed is that as Christians we must make every effort to promote peace within the Body of Christ, even as we exert every effort to make our brothers and sisters stronger. This means, in the context of our text, that we must be considerate of our weaker brothers and sisters, doing everything possible to make them strong and to avoid injuring their conscience.

Paul is neither commending spiritual weakness nor affirming it as desirable. One of the most important points in the text is something that is *not* said: ***that the weak in faith must change their view***. The Apostle is clear that he does not agree with those whom he labels “weak,” and by labelling them “weak” he implies that they have room to grow on these matters. Nevertheless, he does not tell them to change their mind; he does not berate them for being “immature”; he does not tell them to “get with the program.”

Immature Christians need the kind of fellowship that will protect them and encourage them to grow; ***but we cannot treat them like babies all their lives!*** The more mature Christians within the assembly must exercise love and patience, and they must be careful not to cause the weaker saints to stumble. The younger Christians, however, must “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” [2 PETER 3:18]. As they mature in the faith, these maturing saints would logically be expected to help other believers to grow. To gear the ministry of a Bible study or of a congregation only to the baby Christians is to hinder their growth as well as hamper the ministry of the mature saints. The weak must learn from the strong, and the strong must love the weak. The result in such an environment will be peace and maturity to the glory of God.

We have arrived at a day in which many churches appear increasingly infantile. “Self” is central to the practise of many contemporary congregations. Discipline, when it is administered, or even when it is required, is vigorously resisted. Those challenged by leaders to reconsider their actions, or those who are in need of discipline, too frequently display immaturity by petulantly withdrawing from fellowship and asserting that they are above such requirements; and those who ***should*** support disciplinary action don’t want to hurt the feelings of recalcitrant believers. Consequently, churches are weakened and the cause of Christ is harmed because we do not want to be disturbed.

Perhaps it should not be surprising that “self” predominates in the practise of the churches since much of modern preaching often fosters the idea that satisfying the “self” is the *summum bonum* of the Christian life. Thus, we strive to be “self-fulfilled” and “self-aware,” even as we exalt our “self-esteem.” The result of this “self-actualisation” is that Christians become “self-centred,” “self-indulgent,” and “self-righteous.”

The response of too many saints, when called to labour for the cause of the Master is, “What’s in it for me?” We will participate in the life of the church—*if* it is convenient or *if* we have no better offer; but make no mistake, *our* recreation and *our* amusement are of first importance. Christians need to heed the divine call that calls us to act with humility as we “count others more significant than [ourselves]” [PHILIPPIANS 2:3]. What if the congregations of our Lord were to endeavour to “outdo one another in showing honour” [ROMANS 12:10]? Should the churches of our Lord actually embrace the instruction of the Word to [submit] “to one another out of reverence for Christ” [EPHESIANS 5:21], our witness would be transformed. Christ would be glorified, sinners would be convicted and the churches would be victorious in every endeavour.

The tragedy of the exaltation of the “self” is that peace and unity are destroyed. Because each worshipper within the Body is pursuing his or her own interests, there are multiple interests exalted within the congregation. Consequently, Christ is displaced as Head of the Body, or at best given only a cursory role within the life of the Body. Instead of building one another, self-seeking saints are led on a futile search for what makes them feel good. In the process of seeking our own good, we injure the weaker believers among us and ultimately weaken ourselves. Instead of being teachers of righteousness, or even learners at the feet of the Master, we become religious dilettantes.

WE MUST BALANCE FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS —
“Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”

In this latter portion of the text, Paul makes a third significant point in his instruction concerning Christian relationships. He has taught us that we must accept responsibility for one another as believers—we must always seek the welfare of our fellow saints. He has reminded us that we must endeavour to build one another up in this Holy Faith—we must seek mutual benefit in the Faith. Now, he speaks of the need to be godly in our conduct, especially as it affects our relationship with fellow Christians.

Once again, I draw attention to the fact that Paul stands with the strong, just as he does in **1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-13**. He is not commending the weak for their scruples. However, just because he stands with the strong does not mean that he is a libertine.⁵ The liberty Paul enjoys in the matter of foods, just as our liberty in all matters that are *adiaphora*, is regulated by our common life in the Lord. Paul is *not* saying that we must refrain from activity with which another believer may disagree. He is urging us to avoid causing spiritual harm to a fellow believer. How could we harm another believer?

⁵ see Robertson, op. cit., 414

Douglas Moo suggests that engaging in a spiritual activity that another thinks wrong may encourage them to wound their own conscience through participating in the activity even though they think it wrong. He envisions a kind of spiritual peer pressure that coerces the conscience of a weaker brother. Therefore, the stronger believers must be sensitive to the weaker believers among us. The other way Moo sees as potentially harmful is through ostentatious flaunting of liberty. This is potentially harmful because it may create a sense of disgust and turn a weaker believer away from serving Christ.⁶

Personal freedom is not the issue; we do have freedom in matters that fall into the category of *adiaphora*. No one can take that freedom away from us. “Conceding to the one side that food does not defile, Paul nevertheless restates an earlier test, whether an action violates or reverses ‘the work of God.’ It is wrong for one to eat when one really believes one should not, and right to abstain when not to do so would strike at the sensibilities of others. The foundation of right action in every case is a right relationship to God, of trust. Paul pronounces a blessing on the person whose standing before God is not itself at stake in decisions about right and wrong, for whom that anxiety-producing link between diet and salvation has been subordinated to secure trust in God.”⁷

Food is made by the Lord, and is to be received as His gift; it is hallowed through His giving that food as a gift. Writing in his first missive to Timothy, Paul affirms that “everything is created by God and is good” [1 TIMOTHY 4:4]. The text gives an exception to the issue of food, however; the exception is introduced with the word “but.” I consider the Christian Standard Bible to be clearer still in presenting this exception, “**Still**, to someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean” [VERSE 14b].⁸

The exception, then, lies not in the nature of the food, but in one’s view of that food. The principle is, “When in doubt, don’t.” Christians are to walk by faith, not by rules. Though conscience is strengthened by knowledge, knowledge must be balanced by love; otherwise, it tears down instead of building up. The knowledge that all foods are clean [see ROMANS 14:14, 20] will not of itself make a Christian grow. When this truth is taught in an atmosphere of love, however, then younger Christian can grow and develop a strong conscience. Believers may hold different convictions about many matters, but they must hold them in love.⁹

Tragically, in too many cases it is little, unimportant things that disturb the peace of the church—matters of law and procedure and precedent and prestige. The Word calls us to remember that our rights are far less important than our obligations. It calls us to remember that while we possess Christian liberty, it is always an offence to use it as if it conferred upon us the right to grieve the heart and conscience of another.

Paul advises the man who is weak in the faith, the man with the over-scrupulous conscience, that he may disobey or silence his scruples. He may sometimes do something because everyone else is doing it and he does not wish to be different. He may do it because he does not wish to court ridicule or unpopularity. However, Paul teaches that if a man defies his conscience he is guilty of sin. If a man believes a thing to be wrong, then, if he does it, for him it is sin.

⁶ see Douglas J. Moo, **NIV Application Commentary: Romans** (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 2000) 468

⁷ James Luther Mays, **Harper's Bible Commentary** (Harper & Row, San Francisco, CA 1988), Logos electronic edition

⁸ **Holman Christian Standard Bible** (HCSB)(Holman, Nashville, TN 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003)

⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, **The Bible Exposition Commentary** (Victor Books, Wheaton, IL 1989) 561

“A neutral thing becomes a right thing only when it is done out of the real, reasoned conviction that it is right. No man is the keeper of another man’s conscience, and each man’s conscience, in things indifferent, must be the arbiter for him of what is right or wrong.”¹⁰ While freedom is a right, it must not become a guide for conduct; love serves that purpose. Rights are to be laid aside in the interest of love. In the immediate context of the text, Christians must remember that all food is declared ceremonially clean [see **TITUS 1:15**], but it is wrong to eat if by that act others are encouraged to act against their conscience. The right course of action is to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine or doing anything else that will cause another believer to fall.

The Greek word for “faith” in **VERSE 22** means almost the same as “conviction,” for our convictions are born of faith in God’s Word. **VERSES 22 and 23** lay down the principle that the way in which one lives the Christian life is between that believer and his Lord; therefore the believer must always be sure he is right with the Lord. If there are doubts about some of his practices, he cannot have joy and peace. In this context, neither must those who do not agree with a particular practise coerce the conscience of another.

“The final clause of **VERSE 23** (“whatever does not proceed from faith is sin”) is applicable on a much wider scale than the immediate context. Whatever is done without the conviction that God has approved it is by definition sin. God has called us to a life of faith. Trust is the willingness to put all of life before God for his approval. Any doubt concerning an action automatically removes that action from the category of that which is acceptable. This principle will be of special help to the Christian in what is sometimes called the ‘grey area.’ If it is grey to you, it is wrong—not in itself necessarily but for the one who is considering it.”¹¹

There is an interesting insight in the **22nd VERSE**. Your convictions in debatable issues are not to be broadcast. Keep your opinions between you and God. The tendency is for us to try to “convert” others to our point of view. The church, however, is not a debating society in which we score points as we change opinions through argument.

The issues for us are not about what foods we may eat, nor even what days we must worship. I do not want you to imagine that I am concerned about what you eat. Neither am I particularly concerned that your actions may cause someone who has a susceptibility to a particular vice to stumble into a life of degradation if they see you exercise your freedom. What is in view is not a propensity to sinful behaviour for weaker Christians, but rather, spiritual weakness is Paul’s concern.

Spiritual weakness perhaps speaks of a biblical interpretation, of a religious practise, or of a spiritual freedom. By refusing to be specific, Paul avoids making the application so narrow as to permit it to be circumvented. Though some may wish to restrict his words to drinking alcohol or a particular style of dress or a particular hairstyle, Paul’s vision is greater than that. Perhaps concerns that a fellow believer will be led into becoming a drunk if we exercise our freedom to drink wine with a meal will prove valid, but that is not what Paul has in view in this passage. Paul’s concern is that weak Christians will act to violate their conscience, even when their faith is telling them not to act in a given manner.

¹⁰ William Barclay (ed.), **The Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans, Rev. ed.** (Westminster, Philadelphia, PA 1975), 189.

¹¹ Robert H. Mounce, **The New American Commentary, vol. 27, Romans** (Broadman & Holman, Nashville, TN 1995), 255.

The key principle in this chapter is the need to limit the expression of our liberty out of love for God and fellow believers. Our culture exalts rights; and it is distressingly easy for Christians to bring that attitude into the church. But the spiritual health of the body is far more important than our rights. Moo is correct in summarising this passage by stating, “The freedom God has purchased for us through his Son is a precious gift, but it is a freedom to live as God wants, not as we want. Luther put it well in his famous comment on Christian liberty: ‘A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.’”¹²

A true Baptist will never violate the conscience of another individual in matters of faith and practise; yet, a true Baptist will hold definite convictions concerning faith toward God. Are you a Christian? Do you have faith in the Risen Son of God? Do you realise that you are free in Christ Jesus the Lord, and that others share in that freedom through the Lord who gives liberty? Are you walking in liberty and seeking to make your fellow saints strong in their faith?

If you are a Christian, you are now called to strengthen your fellow Christians. However, if you are unable to strengthen your fellow saints because you have never believed the message of life, you need to hear this one truth. Christ Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice because of your sin. He died, taking your punishment upon Himself. Then, He rose to life again, conquering death, Hades and the grave so that you can be declared righteous and free of all guilt.

To receive the forgiveness of sin and to enter into the life offered in Christ Jesus the Lord, one need but believe that He died because of our sin and that He rose from the dead for our justification. This is the Word of God. God invites us to life with the promise, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” The promise of God is that “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13].

Our plea is that each one listening will believe the message of life and be saved. Then, our sincere prayer is that each Christian will be encouraged to make every effort to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” [2 PETER 3:18]. As you seek to grow strong in the Faith, labour to build up others in this most Holy Faith. Above all else, let Christ the Lord be glorified among His holy people. Amen.

¹² Moo, op. cit., 469