

ISSUE

21.32

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 11,  
2019

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Jeff Nunn

## Deacons:

Steve Dixon  
Ryan Ferguson  
Ben Hight  
Blake McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Sam Nunn  
Lance Purcell  
Justin Smiley  
Kevin Wise  
Trevor Yontz

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



## Issues of Conscience in Context

By Kyle Pope

What do Christians do when disagreement arises over God's word? This is an important question that is not easily answered. Given the fact that the Bible condemns fellowship with error (Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11) the Christian faces the dilemma of having to determine for himself when differences must result in separation and when they can be endured.

The apostle Paul in two of his epistles addressed situations in which the conscience of one believer led him in one direction while the conscience of another led him in a



different direction. The two situations are dealt with in Romans 14:1-23 and 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-33. Both deal with the matter of the eating of meats, yet from two different perspectives.

***The Problem in Rome.*** We have no scriptural record of how the church in Rome was established, yet it is very clear that it was comprised of a membership largely converted from Judaism. We see this from the emphasis placed upon

the issue of circumcision (Romans 2:25-29); the definition offered of a true Jew (2:29); the appeal to Abraham as an example of righteousness by faith (4:1-4); the explanation of the Old Law's condemning influence (7:1-25); and the discussion of Israel's condition before God (9:1-11:36).

The question the Jewish Christian faced was this: *Were Mosaic dietary laws still binding?* The clear answer was no (Acts 10:15; 1 Timothy 4:4,5), but how were those who realized this to deal with new converts who still felt conscientiously obligated to follow Old Testament restrictions?

***The Problem in Corinth.*** The situation in Corinth was somewhat different. Though some Jews were a part of its membership (Acts 18:8), the Jews of Corinth in large part had opposed Paul's teaching (Acts 18:12). This led Paul to turn his focus to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). Both of his epistles address issues that the Gentile convert would struggle with more than the Jew (true wisdom vs. worldly wisdom—1 Cor. 1:18-31; speaking in tongues—1 Cor. 14:1-40; the resurrection—1 Cor. 15:1-58).

The Gentile convert faced this question: *Would eating meat that had been sacrificed to an idol constitute worshipping an idol?* Apparently in that day animals that were sacrificed in pagan temples would later be sold in the meat market for food (1 Cor. 10:25). Gentiles viewed the eating of meat sacrificed to a false pagan god as worship of the god. While the Gentile Christian might understand that an idol was



(Romans 14:1-23) **The Eating of Meats** (1 Cor. 8:1-13 & 10:23-33)

**Rome**

**Corinth**

**The Focus:**

Jewish Christians

Gentile Christians

**The Question:**

“Are Mosaic Dietary Laws Still Binding?”

“Is Eating Meat That Was Sacrificed To an Idol Worship of an Idol?”

nothing (1 Cor. 9:4) it could be that the new convert who saw another Christian eating such meat would imagine that it was being eaten as worship to the idol (1 Cor. 8:10).

**The Remedy.** Although the problems were different the solutions were very similar. Paul says simply (to paraphrase)—*Don't let a matter of liberty cause a brother to stumble!* The Christian must be willing to sacrifice personal liberties for the good of a brother or sister in Christ. Don't eat if it causes offense (Rom. 14:21-23; 1 Cor. 10:24-33).

How is this to be applied to disagreements we face? A few points seem to be clear about the teachings of both Romans and First Corinthians:

**1. We must never try to compel someone to violate his conscience.** While it is clear that a person's conscience can be misdirected (Acts 23:1) it is always a sin for one to violate his or her conscience (Rom. 14:23). Teaching and study are proper, but not compulsion.

**2. We can not accept what is unlawful.** Paul was dealing with matters that had been clearly authorized as lawful. Repentance demands putting away those things that are unlawful. Paul isn't suggesting here that if a new convert felt conscientiously that he could engage in sin, the mature Christian was simply to respect the conscience of the person and overlook the sin. He is dealing with liberties that can be surrendered.

**3. Patience must be exercised toward the immature.** While Paul teaches patience towards the young convert who might struggle with what



he should or shouldn't do, he assumes a different posture towards the one who would teach and bind the same kind of issues on others (Gal. 2:1-21).

The Bible authorizes a softer approach towards the immature Christian than it does the teacher in error (Jude 22-23; Rom. 15:1-2).

**4. *Collective matters demand greater uniformity than personal convictions.*** When it comes to what a church practices and teaches Paul always takes the position that congregations should be the same (1 Cor. 1:10; 4:17). Yet, the issues discussed here demonstrate that in terms of personal convictions on matters that don't demand working together as a church, there is some room for diversity. The goal must still be to understand and apply God's word uniformly. Yet, as Christians work towards that goal we can bear with one another's convictions so long as they do not call upon us to violate our own.



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# *Welcome Visitors*

**We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.**

**● Let us know if you have any questions.**