

“FOLLOW AFTER PEACE”

Romans 14:13-21

Message 1895

It is not necessary for me to tell you that the world is full of conflict. There seems to be conflict in hundreds of places today. People against people. Underneath there is another conflict going on. It is Satan against Christ. That is why we have so much conflict everywhere.

Yet many people long for peace. I believe I can say everyone longs for peace. Yet even among Christians there is conflict. We lament this fact. It is very sad, but it has been a problem from early days. The reason is we are all human and we need a special anointing of God's grace and Spirit so we can live in peace.

Peace rests on righteousness and none of us are righteous apart from Christ. He is our peace. But how can we FOLLOW AFTER PEACE? Paul taught the believers at Rome how to do that in Romans 14:13-21.

9. *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.*

10. *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

11. *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*

12. *Let not then your good be evil spoken of:*

13. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

14. *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

15. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

16. *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

17. *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

When we follow the WAYS Paul marks out for us we will be able to follow after peace.

WE NEED PROPER INFORMATION is the first way we must follow to achieve peace. We are not to judge. We are not to exercise ourselves as judges. “Let us therefore not judge one another any more.” And be careful that you don't put a stumblingblock in the way of your brother. Think about yourself, rather than thinking always about that other person. We are not to judge our brother's conviction about food or about any other item of conscience. We are to walk carefully. We must be careful not to cause him to fall.

We need some proper information on this. “Nothing,” the Apostle says “is unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” So we must be properly informed so that we do not act as judge over someone else's conscience and do it wrongfully.

WE NEED PRACTICAL APPLICATION is the second way to follow to achieve peace. Avoid impractical ideas. If your brother is grieved because of the food you eat then don't eat it. Walk charitably and do not destroy him just because you insist on having your own way. Think about that and follow after peace. Do not let your food be evil spoken of. Acknowledge the realities that are in life. Put Christ's purpose first. See to it and understand that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but rather it is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Put God's ministry first. Put Christ's interests first. Acknowledge the reality of the conflict. And then you will have God's acceptance and man's approval, as the Apostle teaches us.

Now that is quite a practical application. You realize that the kingdom of God is a different kingdom than just to eat and drink. That does not mean to say that the kingdom of God has no power of application. Of course, it does. We live in this world and we are to walk as children of God. Let us be careful to apply our faith in practical ways. We need practical application to follow after peace.

WE NEED PURPOSEFUL CONSIDERATION is the third way to follow to achieve peace. The Apostle Paul instructs here that we are to seek to build up. We should seek to build up or edify in the 19th verse: "Wherewith one may edify another." That means to establish or to put a foundation under or to ground. Peace does not destroy. Peace builds. We should be careful in all our dealings and undertakings to help people build up their faith, not tear it down. The Apostle warns us and guides us in this purposeful consideration that we do not tear down another's faith. "For meat destroy not the work of God," he says.

Purity is in the attitude of the heart more than anywhere else. Paul says, "All things are pure but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence." In other words make sure you understand that material things become moral only when a moral creature uses them. So do not tear down. Ponder especially the last part of verse 20. "It is evil for that man who eateth with offence." We should abstain from anything which hinders our brother. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

We need purposeful consideration to help to build up and not tear down, and not hinder our brother's or sister's walk with the Lord. Let us be considerate of our brothers and sisters to build them up in Christ. That is to follow after peace.

These are sure ways to follow after peace: the proper information, not to judge or put a stumblingblock in the way of another; the practical application, that is to put Christ first; and the purposeful consideration to build up our brothers and sisters in Christ. These ways of righteousness lead to peace.