

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org
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Romans 14: 13-23

1. When the Lord asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" Cain replied, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? Genesis 4:9
2. Cain should have been his brother's keeper, but instead he became his brother's killer.
3. Jesus taught that we are responsible to God related to our influence and example. Matt 18:1-7

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 **"Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!"**

NOTE: Jesus pronounced woe upon this world because of its stumbling blocks, and woe upon those through whom the stumbling block comes.

4. From a Christian perspective a stumbling block is anything that causes another person to stumble, to go astray, to violate their conscience, to disobey God's Word, or to act contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
5. We will leave the world and its stumbling blocks for the Lord to deal with and focus on those that manifest themselves in the lives of Christians.
 - a. Professed believers whose lives deny the Lord that bought them.
 - b. Christian parents who fail their children by living a substandard Christian life.
 - c. Church leaders who do not live a consistent Christian life.
 - d. Pastors who try to please people rather than God.
 - e. Churches that do not fulfill God's intent.
 - f. Individual Christians whose influence and example are not what they ought to be.
6. The passage we are focusing on today deals with our obligation to our brothers and sisters in Christ; an obligation that every true believer shares.

I. Our focus. 13-15

- A. Verse 13 must be understood in the context we are dealing with.
- B. The early church was made up of Jews and Gentiles who had differing opinions and convictions related to dietary laws and special days; both of which have been done away with.

NOTE: What we call the Lord's Day has significance only because it is the day when the early church chose and most churches choose to gather for corporate activities.

- C. There are many issues that unnecessarily divide churches and Christians today, just like there were in the first century.
- D. When Paul wrote, "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore," he was referring to non-essential, personal convictions and opinions, and not to issues related to morality, doctrine, and inappropriate personal behavior.
- E. We are not to nitpick one another, rather we are to focus on our own behavior and its impact upon others.
- F. We are to consider others when it comes to exercising our freedom in Christ.
- G. We are to walk according to love.

II. Our path. 16-18

- A. If possible, we are to accommodate others so that what is a good thing in our sight is not spoken of as evil.
- B. The kingdom of God is not about us exercising our personal preferences and promoting our personal opinions--again related to non-essentials.
- C. What the kingdom of God is about is our living righteous lives, promoting peace, and manifesting joy **in the Holy Spirit**.
- D. Those who serve Christ in the Holy Spirit will be acceptable to God and approved by men.
- E. Too many people are ruled by the human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit.
 1. Rom 8:14
For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
 2. Gal 5:16-17
But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
 3. Eph 5:18
And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.
- F. If the above are realities in our lives we will manifest the fruit of the Spirit and live according to the dictates and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Gal 5:22-26
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 **If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.** 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

III. Our pursuit. 19-23

- A. We are to be promoters of peace and God's instruments in the lives of others.
- B. Verse 19 is sometimes translated, "So then, **let us** pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another." Heb 10:19-25
Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us** draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 **Let us** hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and **let us** consider how to stimulate one another to

love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

C. Do not tear down the work of God...or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

NOTE: There are many weak and immature Christians who are no longer in church because of the behavior and attitudes of other believers.

D. Live your life based on your own convictions and conscience, but also consider the convictions and consciences of other believers.

E. Violating one's convictions or conscience amounts to sin.

APPLICATION

1. As Christians we are "individually members one of another" (Romans 12:5) and should live accordingly.
2. A failure to do so puts us outside the will of God and separates us from the means through which God works in us and through us.
3. As members one of another we are interdependent just like our physical body is interdependent.
4. My prayer is that Pacolet Hills Baptist Church will be a reflection of God's intent rather than man's ingenuity and inventiveness.
5. And by the way, you are your brothers keeper.