

# ROMANS 52 – IF NOT FAITH; THEN SIN

DR. LEON L. SANDERS

ROMANS 14:13-23

## PROLOGUE: GOD'S VERSUS MAN'S WAYS

- FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATION OF PERSPECTIVE BASED ON A SINGLE SHEET OF WHITE PAPER
  - PAPER ILLUSTRATES GOD'S KNOWLEDGE (FINITE PAPER REQUIRED; OUR FINITE UNDERSTANDING)
  - USE A PENCIL TO PLACE A SINGLE DOT ON THE PAPER REPRESENTING MAN'S TOTAL KNOWLEDGE
  - USING THE ATOMIC THEORY, A SINGLE ATOM WOULD REPRESENT ONE PERSON'S KNOWLEDGE AND A SINGLE MOLECULE OF PAPER WOULD REPRESENT A CULTURE'S KNOWLEDGE
- THIS DEMONSTRATES THE UNKNOWABLENESS OF GOD'S WAYS FROM MAN'S WAYS (JES 55:4)
  - LOST DO NOT, CANNOT, UNDERSTAND GOD (JO 1:18-23; 1CO 2:14)
  - BELIEVERS OFTEN CRITICIZE GOD AS THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND HIS WAYS (JOB 1:13-17; MT 16:21-28)

## PROLOGUE: LAW OF IDENTITY

- DEFINITION OF TERMS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON
  - DIVERSITY - CONDITION OF HAVING OR BEING COMPOSED OF DIFFERING ELEMENTS, ESPECIALLY THE INCLUSION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE (SUCH AS PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RACES OR CULTURES) IN A GROUP OR ORGANIZATION ([GRIFFIN WEBSTER DICTIONARY](#))
  - UNITY - COMBINATION OR ORDERING OF PARTS ... THAT CONSTITUTES A WHOLE OR PROMOTES AN UNDIVIDED TOTAL EFFECT TO ACHIEVE HARMONY (OAGCS WINE) ([GRIFFIN WEBSTER DICTIONARY](#))
- NOTICE THAT DIVERSITY IMPLIES UNITY AND UNITY IMPLIES DIVERSITY
  - HARMONY BRINGS DIVERSE ELEMENTS TOGETHER ACHIEVING UNITY
  - CHAOS, COMPLETE CONFUSION; DIVERSE ELEMENTS REFUSING HARMONY ([GRIFFIN WEBSTER DICTIONARY](#))

## PROLOGUE: SATAN IS CHAOS

- SATAN, AND THUS SIN, ARE HARBINGERS OF CHAOS WHILE PREACHING UNITY VIA DIVERSITY
  - THIS CREATION'S BEGINNING ILLUSTRATED THE CHAOS OF SIN ALREADY PRESENT (GE 1:2-5)
  - SATAN NOT ONLY IS THE FATHER OF LIES AND MURDER, HIS WAYS ARE VIOLENT (2E 26:15-18; JO 8:44)
  - VISIBLE CREATION FROM THE INVISIBLE BASED ON GOD'S WORD (HE 11:3)
  - ALL WHO ARE SINNERS, EVERYONE INCLUDING SATAN, TOTALLY REJECT GOD AND HIS TRUTH; THUS, THEIR PERSPECTIVE OF REALITY IS LIMITED TO THE EMPIRICAL, PRONE TO ERROR (RO 1:18-20)
  - SATAN SEEKS TO ACHIEVE AN UNNATURAL UNITY BASED ON GOVERNMENTAL FORCE THAT ONLY BENEFITS HIMSELF, AND THOSE HE USES (2E 6:1-8; AT 48:10; 2TH 2:8-12)
  - FALSE TEACHERS SPREAD HIS LIE OF UNITY VIA DIVERSITY EVEN INTO CHURCHES (2PE 2:12-19; ABE 10:13)

## DICHOTOMY OF TWO – EXPONENTIALLY

- PAUL USES A MATURING BELIEVER AND AN IMMATURE BELIEVER, IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER; HOWEVER, THE MATURING BELIEVER MAY BE PERCEIVED AS IMMATURE WHEN COMPARED TO A MORE MATURING BELIEVER SINCE ALL ARE IN A STATE OF MATURING IN CHRIST (1CO 13:12)
  - IN THIS INSTANCE THE MATURING BELIEVER IS CALLED TO A CERTAIN ACTION BASED ON FAITH
  - IN ANOTHER INSTANCE THIS SAME BELIEVER MAY BE IMMATURE IN OTHER AREAS WHEN COMPARED TO ANOTHER BELIEVER AND THE GOAL OF CHRIST-LIKENESS (COL 1:12-20; 2CO 3:12-18)
  - READER SHOULD NOT MISTAKENLY ASSUME HE, OR SHE, IS THE MATURE BELIEVER; EACH MATURES IN SOME AREAS AND STRUGGLES IN OTHERS; KNOWLEDGE-BASED FAITH DETERMINES OF MATURITY
  - THUS THE PASSAGE APPLIES TO EVERYONE IN ALL INSTANCES

## SATAN – GOD OF DIVISION

- REMEMBER, SATAN, SIN, PRODUCES CHAOS; EXEMPLIFIED IN CREATION
  - THIS IS SEEN IN NATURE AS THE LAW OF ENTROPY MAN'S LABEL; NATURE, CURSED BY SIN, MOVES FROM ORDER TO DISORDER WHEN LEFT UNINTENDED BY MAN (GE 2:16, 19-20; 3:17-19; 48:12; RO 8:18-22)
  - THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THESE LATTER DAYS IN THE CHURCHES; SPIRIT BRINGS UNITY OUT OF SIN'S DISUNITY WHILE SATAN, FLESH, ENTICES BELIEVERS, TO REMAIN IN DISUNITY BY CAUSING DIVISIONS; I.E., CORINTHIAN CHURCH (1CO 3:1-18; 12:12-26; 2CO 4:3-7; EP 4:1-7; 11:14)
  - SATAN SEEKS TO REPLACE GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS BY FEAR OF HIS JUDGMENT THAT LEADS TO JUDGING OF THE BRETHREN TO DIVISION THEN CHAOS (RO 3:1-11; 5:3-5; 1CO 4:17-19; RE 3:9)
  - AS SIN PRODUCES DISORDER; FAITH IN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCES ORDER AND PEACE (COL 3:12-15)

## LOVE REMOVES CHAOS

- HEREIN IS HOW ONE KNOWS ONE IS MATURING IN GOD'S LOVE; CHAOS IS BEING REDUCED IN ONE'S PERSONAL LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS
  - PAUL LAID THE FOUNDATION OF LOVE PREVIOUSLY IN ROMANS (RD 12:9-13, 18, 21)
  - THIS INCLUDES AGAPE, HIERARCHICAL LOVE, AND PHILIA (PHILADELPHIA), LATERAL LOVE
  - PAUL SHOWS US HOW THIS PHILIA, TOWARD THE BRETHREN, WORKS IN LIFE (RD 13:8-18, 1CO 5:11-13)
  - PAUL USES CONTROVERSIES OF HIS DAY TO ILLUSTRATE GOD'S TRUTH OF LOVE; BUT THESE ISSUES CAN BE REPLACED BY CONTROVERSIES OF OUR DAY, MESSAGE IS THE SAME: BEHAVIOR VIA FAITH
  - ISSUE IS NOT SELF FREEDOM, BUT OF AGAPE FOR CHRIST AND PHILIA TOWARD HIS BODY (1CO 3:14-23)

## MORALITY IS SATAN'S SUBSTITUTE FOR UNITY

- LAW OF IDENTITY: MORALITY – CODE OF BEHAVIOR GOVERNING MEMBERS OF THE WHOLE WHETHER THAT IS CHURCH, SOCIETY, ETC. ([LAW OF IDENTITY: MORALITY GOVERNING MEMBERS OF THE WHOLE](#))
  - MORALITY IS IMPOSED BY FORMAL, GOVERNMENT, OR INFORMAL, SOCIAL, FORCE
  - MORALITY FORCES OUTWARD BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS UPON MEMBERS SUPPRESSING INDIVIDUALITY; WITH REJECTION OF THOSE WHO DO NOT ADHERE TO MORALITY; NOT LOVE
  - THUS, MORALITY IMPOSES ONE STANDARD ON ALL MEMBERS TO ACHIEVE A FALSE UNITY AT THE EXPENSE OF DIVERSITY CAUSING DISHARMONY; I.E., SATAN'S METHODOLOGY
  - CHRIST EMBRACES THE DIVERSITY OF INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE UNITY OF THE BODY BASED ON LOVE, AGAPE AND PHILIA; NOT BY FORCE BUT VIA A CHANGED NATURE: GOD'S NATURE (1D 17:12-21)

## MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

- IN PAUL'S WORLD, MOST MEAT WAS FIRST SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, THEN UNUSED PORTIONS WERE SOLD IN THE AGORA (MARKETPLACE)
  - PEOPLE EATING THE MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS WERE WORSHIPPING THE GOD(S) VIA THE MEAT
  - OBVIOUSLY, WORSHIPPING IDOLS IS SIN, AGAINST ONE'S NEW NATURE; HOWEVER, THE MORE MATURING BELIEVER KNEW THAT EATING THE MEAT WAS NOT WORSHIPPING THE IDOL
  - THE IMMATURE BELIEVER DID NOT YET HAVE THIS BELIEF; IT WAS STILL A FORM OF WORSHIP
- THE IMMATURE BELIEVER SEEING THE MORE MATURING BELIEVER EATING THE MEAT WOULD ASSUME IT WAS OK TO WORSHIP THE IDOL AND THUS BE UNINTENTIONALLY LED TO SIN

## TO MORAL OR NOT TO MORAL

- IF THE GROUP WERE DOMINATED BY IMMATURE OR **WEAK** (ἄγενεῖ ἀσθeneῖ) BELIEVERS, THEN THOSE WHO ATE WOULD BE CONSIDERED SINNERS AND THRUST FROM THE GROUP
- IF THE GROUP WERE DOMINATED BY MATURING BELIEVERS, NOT WEAK IN THIS AREA, THEN ALL WHO OPPOSED EATING THE MEAT WOULD BE THRUST FROM THE GROUP AS SINNERS
- IN EITHER INSTANCE, DIVISION WOULD REENTER THE GROUP REINTRODUCING CHAOS BY FITTING ONE GROUP AGAINST THE OTHER, THIS IS NOT LOVE BUT SELF-GRATIFICATION
- THIS IS ACTING FLESHLY AND NOT AS CHRIST WHO TOOK ON THE FORM OF A SLAVE TO DIE FOR ALL WHO WERE NOT WORTHY, HIS BEHAVIOR IS OUR EXAMPLE (1PE 2:25-28)

## MORALITY – BASIS OF RELIGION

- MORALITY IS THE BASIS OF RELIGION (WORKS-BASED) ENFORCING A FALSE UNIFY THAT DIVIDES ALL WHO OPPOSE, THIS EMPOWERS THE FLESH, AND SIN (COL 2:20-23)
  - JUDAISM FELL INTO THIS TRAP, ADHERENCE TO THE LAW, WHICH REQUIRED THE SEPARATION OF ALL WHO HELD OPPOSING BELIEFS, BY FORCE OR DEATH IF NECESSARY (AC 7:51-60)
  - CHURCH HISTORY ALSO GUILTY OF FORCED MORALITY CAUSED DIVISIONS, DENOMINATIONS, WITH WARS AND JOINING OF GOVERNMENTS TO FORCE ONE'S MORALITY ON OTHERS
  - AMERICAN POLITICS DIVIDED INTO TWO MORALITY-BASED GROUPS RESULTING IN A WAR AND CONTINUAL COMPETITION TO FORCE THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONE RELIGIOUS-POLITICAL GROUP OVER THE OTHER WITH UNCOMPROMISING FERVOR ([THE PROTESTANT ETHIC, MORALITY, AND CAPITALISM](#))

## LOVE: BASIS OF SACRIFICE

- PAUL'S THESIS IS NOT "FREEDOM" BUT ON SACRIFICE IN LOVE TO KEEP THE WEAKER PERSON FROM SINNING, FOOD, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT WILL PASS (1CO 8:13-13)
  - CHRIST GAVE US THIS EXAMPLE AND PAUL SHOWS HOW THIS WORKS IN LIFE
  - THE MATURING BELIEVER HAS FREEDOM TO EAT THE MEAT SINCE HIS, HER, CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR
  - HOWEVER, IF IT CAUSES THE IMMATURE BELIEVER TO EAT BELIEVING IT IS A FORM WORSHIP THEN THE MATURING BELIEVER IS GUILTY OF PROMOTING SIN
  - THE MATURING BELIEVER SHOULD ABSTAIN OPENLY TO PROTECT THE WEAKER MEMBER FROM SIN
  - DEMANDING ONE'S FREEDOM, OR RIGHTS, PROMOTES ONE'S FLESH AND DIVISION IN THE BODY, THIS IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE LOVE CHRIST DEMONSTRATED TOWARD US (1H 2:3-8, 1H 2:14-18)

## ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL BUT NOT HELPFUL

- PAUL ADMITS THAT ALL FOOD IS CLEAN, JUST AS GOD SHOWED PETER; THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT FOOD OR DRINK, IT IS ABOUT LOVING OTHERS BASED ON FAITH (AC 1:29-34)
- FAITH IS BETWEEN GOD AND THE BELIEVER FLOWING THROUGH EVERY PART OF LIFE
- GOD'S LOVE DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY; IT ENDURES ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED (1CO 13:4-7, 1PE 3:18-19)
- LOVE IS THE BASIS FOR BEARING EACH OTHER'S BURDEN, HELPING EACH OTHER MATURE (2CO 6:1-13)
- YET, EACH PERSON WILL HAVE TO BEAR THEIR OWN BURDEN, THEIR SIN, BEFORE CHRIST AT THE BEMA; THE MATURING FOR ENCOURAGING SIN; IMMATURE FOR COMMITTING SIN (1PT 1:12-20, 3CO 3:18)

## DEFINITION OF SIN – WITHOUT FAITH

- PAUL GIVES ONE OF THE THREE DEFINITIONS OF SIN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (2A 4:17, 1JO 3:7)
- **WHATEVER IS NOT FROM FAITH IS SIN**
  - THE WEAKER PERSON IN FAITH WHO FOLLOWS YOUR LIBERTY BUT WITHOUT FAITH- BASED KNOWLEDGE CONDEMNS THEMSELVES, THEIR CONSCIOUS TESTIFYING AGAINST THEM: GUILT
  - PAUL MAKES A SIMILAR POINT WHEN HE WRITES THAT THOSE WHO MEASURE THEMSELVES AMONG THEMSELVES, ARE NOT WISE (2CO 10:12)
  - ANY THOUGHT, WORD OR DEED THAT DOES NOT FLOW FROM YOUR FAITH, YOUR MATURATION IN CHRIST, IS SIN; THUS, SINFUL ACTIONS AND BELIEFS CAN VARY AMONG PERSONS IN THE GROUP BASED ON THEIR MATURITY; MY SIN OR UNBELIEF MAY NOT BE YOUR SIN IN THE SAME PRACTICE

## ACT ONLY OUT OF FAITH

- AGAIN PAUL TIES THE READER BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF HIS APOLOGIA: "THE JUST, OR RIGHTEOUS, SHALL LIVE OUT OF THEIR **FAITH**" FOR TO DO OTHERWISE IS **SIN** (RO 1:17)
  - FAITH CANNOT BE FORCED; IT GROWS BY LEARNING OF CHRIST VIA THE SPIRIT IN THE SCRIPTURES (RO 8:9-10, 1CO 3:14, COL 3:6-17)
  - EACH IS A SEPARATE, DISTINCT PERSON IN THE BODY AND GROWTH IS REGULATED BY THE SPIRIT JUST AS THE GROWTH OF YOUR CELLS ARE REGULATED BY ONE'S GROWTH HORMONE
  - SPIRIT WILL GROW YOUR FAITH AS YOU ARE READY; THUS, EACH OF US MATURES AT DIFFERENT RATES IN DIFFERENT AREAS AS DETERMINED BY CHRIST
  - CELLS THAT SEEK TO GROW AT THEIR OWN RATE ARE CANCEROUS; ARE YOU CANCEROUS TO CHRIST'S BODY BECAUSE YOU SEEK YOUR OWN PLEASURE AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS?

## APPEARS AS A RELATIVE DEFINITION OF SIN

- THIS DEFINITION OF SIN MAY APPEAR TO SUPPORT A RELATIVE APPROACH TO SIN, BUT IT DOES NOT STAND ALONE; THERE ARE TWO OTHER DEFINITIONS OF SIN
- "FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD—THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND THE DESIRES OF THE EYES AND PRIDE OF LIFE—IS NOT FROM THE FATHER BUT IS FROM THE WORLD." (1 JO 2:15-16)
  - HENCE, ANYTHING OF THE WORLD IS SIN BECAUSE IT IS AGAINST GOD
- "SO WHOEVER KNOWS THE RIGHT THING TO DO AND FAILS TO DO IT, FOR HIM IT IS SIN." (JA 4:17)
  - THERE ARE VERY SPECIFIC SINS GIVEN THAT APPLY TO EVERYONE REJECTION OF GOD; IMMORALITY; LYING; STEALING; COVETOUSNESS – GOD'S MORAL LAW (EX 20:1-17)

## LOVE DOES NOT TOLERATE ERROR

- IMMATURE BELIEVERS, AND LOST, EQUATE LOVE TO SIN TOLERANCE; WORLDLY DISTINCTION BETWEEN OLD (INTOLERANCE OF SIN) AND NEW (JESUS' APPARENT TOLERANCE OF SIN) TESTAMENTS
  - IT IS THE SAME GOD IN BOTH TESTAMENTS (ANGEL OF THE LORD USUALLY IS JESUS)
  - JESUS DID NOT TEACH TOLERANCE OF SIN, BUT HE DID TEACH THAT NO ONE APART FROM GOD HAS THE ABILITY TO JUDGE, PASS SENTENCE ON OTHERS (MT 7:1-5, 23)
  - JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE OF NOT CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN; AS GOD'S SON HE WAS FREE TO DO MANY THINGS, BUT HE CHOOSE TO COME AS A HUMBLE SLAVE AND DIE FOR SINFUL PEOPLE TO SAVE SOME (PH 2:3-8)

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## APPLIES TO ALL RELATIONSHIPS

- THIS TOLERANCE FOR THE WEAKER MEMBER APPLIES NOT JUST TO BELIEVERS AND THE CHURCH BUT ALL RELATIONSHIPS
  - HUSBANDS ARE TO LOVE THEIR WIVES AND NOT BRING THEM TO SIN
  - WIVES ARE TO SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS AND SO NOT BRING THEM TO SIN
  - BELIEVERS ARE NOT TO RETURN EVIL FOR EVIL BUT LOVE THEIR ENEMIES LETTING GOD JUDGE THEM
- THE REAL QUESTION THAT WAS ASKED LONG AGO STILL ECHOES TODAY, "AM I, MATURE BELIEVER, MY BROTHER'S, WEAK BELIEVER, KEEPER OR PROTECTOR?" (2K 4:15)
  - YES, THAT IS WHY WE ARE TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS, IT FULFILLS THE MORAL LAW (2CO 13:8,10)
  - DO YOU LOVE, MEET NEEDS OF OTHERS, OR DO YOU HAVE A MORALITY OF DIVISIVE FREEDOM?