

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 6- How then shall we live?

Sermon Title: Week 6: With great power comes great...

Date: 06-09-19

– **History lesson!**

- **1793, French revolution, sentence from documents of French National Convention “they must contemplate that a great responsibility is inseparable from a great power.”**
 - **In 1906 Winston Churchill said “Where there is great power there is great responsibility”**
 - **AND, in August of 1962, in the closing panel of the comic book “Amazing Fantasy #15”, we read the immortal words “And a lean silent figure slowly fades into the gathering darkness, aware at last that in this world, with great power there must also come great responsibility”- wherein Marvel comics introduced the world to your friendly neighborhood Spiderman**
- **YOU MAY NOT be able to climb a building with your bare hands, but you have a great power.**
- **We’ve been going through Romans 14, where God- through Apostle Paul- has laid out that as followers of Jesus, we have been given a great power, and with it comes a great responsibility.**

✠ **Your Great Power**

- **FREEDOM. From sin, condemnation, and free from living by LAW and religious rules. Life is no longer about measuring up and performance based acceptance. THROUGH LIFE IN CHRIST we have been given a new identity, a new source of life, and we are FREE TO LIVE without having to worry if we are GOOD ENOUGH for God. WE ARE LOVED, ACCEPTED, CHERISHED by God, because that is WHO HE IS.**
- **IN CHRIST, God has given us his spirit to guide us, convict us, so that HOW WE LIVE is increasingly a reflection of WHO HE IS- his goodness, his nature, HIS LOVE, expressed through us.**
- **BECAUSE THIS IS TRUE, The Spirit within us will prompt us- as an expression of God’s love within us- to recognize another great power we have- in fact, that every human being has-- THIS IS THE POWER TO IMPACT AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE.**
- **Paul’s message to us has been that while we are FREE from religious legalism, integral to our freedom will be a growing self-awareness of how our lives impact other people, because of our LOVE for them.**
- **Read R14:19-21 straight through from Bible. Then...**

Romans 14:19-21 *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (building each other up).²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God (God’s work in another person’s life) for the sake of food. (For the sake of your freedom- things that might be fine for you, but a problem for a weaker person). All food is clean, (no longer any such thing as ritual ‘uncleanliness’) but it is wrong for a person to eat anything (exercise own freedom) that causes someone else to stumble. (violate their own conscience)²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.*

As believers, our *responsibility of love*: To EXPRESS the truth, goodness, and Grace of God by how our CHOICES, WORDS, and ACTIONS impact and INFLUENCE other people.

- **AND NOW, as Paul starts to bring this section to a close, he comes back to...**

✠ The great importance of our CONSCIENCE- our heart of FAITH- before God.

- **KEY! These next verses are difficult to understand- great example of need to see scripture in it's context, if we always look through a microscope we can miss what is being said- SO, lets work through it.**
- **Conscience- our sense of what is good, right, best, how we are free to live- that flows from our faith relationship with God.**

Romans 14:22-23 *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.* ²³ *But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

Romans 14:22-23 *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

- **ESV and NASB: “The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.”**
- **Incredibly practical! Where we have disagreements debatable issues, rather than having this be a divisive issue, Show discretion! There are somethings I can just keep to myself and God, rather than trying to point out how you are wrong! SHOCK! OUR relationships are more important than the debatable issue we disagree on. ALSO BEHAVIOR...**
- **Doesn't mean we don't learn from each other, wrestle with issues together- but times when we let things lie, because the unity of relationship- and the hearts and lives of people we may disagree with- are PRECIOUS, because we love them.**

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.

ESV- Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

- **EXAMPLE- with people... language... topic of discussion- racist jokes- behavior I KNOW I believe is not what Good, not who I am. TEMPTATION- I want to fit in, want to belong- I can compromise my values, go along- 'approve'... and the result is that I come under guilt!**
- **OR, without passing judgment, and led by Spirit, I don't take part in that. WHEN WE MAKE THIS CHOICE, We are blessed- we have joy of a mind that is at peace, free from guilt- when we choose not to violate our conscience before God.**
- **Proverbs 4:23- above all else, guard your heart, for from it flows the spring of life.**
- **Paul takes it a step further.**

²³ *But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

- **Easy for this to lead to legalism and fear. BUT IT DOESN'T! Condemnation? What it doesn't mean...**

²³ *But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, (When we violate our conscience we experience pain-shame of condemnation) because their eating is not from faith; (because their actions are inconsistent with their faith- conscience- who they are in relationship with God) and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

- **When we choose to do things that violate our conviction of what we know to be good and right, because of our relationship with God- that is the essence of sin. KEY! SIN ISN'T JUST ABOUT A LIST OF RULES- SIN is a violation of RELATIONSHIP- IT IS WHEN WE DO NOT LIVE OUT OF LOVE.**
- **ILLUSTRATION- Trip with Lisa... around each other all the time- what would happen if I started to do something that I believed in my heart was offensive to her? It would damage**

the relationship. Remove the joy. Guilt. Shame. IN MARRIAGE- when you know you've done something that hurt relationship- it's horrible! Can't sleep!

- **WE ARE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD- BY FAITH..... and while we do fail, GOD NEVER REJECTS US. HE NEVER LOSES HOPE FOR US. God is always about redemption, restoration in our relationship with him.**
- **PAULS WORDS ARE A WISE, and practical caution to us! Your conscience, your heart, your peace in your relationship with God is a precious treasure! Don't compromise it by approving – going along with- things your believe to be wrong**

† The bottom line

Romans 15:1-3 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

² *Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.*

- **Love people. Don't judge. Be patient in disagreements. Seek what is good for the person you disagree with!**
 - **Teach, grow, move weak to strong... but as you do, LOVE! Don't judge! Be patient. Some things we just need to keep before God**

– **Then Paul gives us example of Christ...**

³ *For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."*

- **Actually quote from Psalm 69. Picture of how Christ took upon himself all of our offenses against God. Christ hasn't rejected us, but is patient, gave himself for us, because He loves us.**
- **THAT SAME SPIRIT OF CHRIST lives in us, and as we live in relationship with him- this will increasingly be our heart to those around us.**

† The honest truth! Living in true community can be HARD!

Romans 15:4-6 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

- **No accident Paul says this. In relationships, in community... we need endurance! We need to be encouraged, and to be encouragers.**

The greater reality! God has provided EVERYTHING we need.

Romans 15:4-6 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

- **Powerful statement of value of scripture- OT**
- **Why we take scripture seriously- deep well of wisdom and hope. They point us to CHRIST, and HE is source of endurance, courage, and our hope**

⁵ *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- **Think of that last statement... one mind, one voice. Who is Paul still talking to? Those who were in disagreement!**
- **When will this happen? Even though we are at different places on our journey, don't see everything the same... IF WE ARE BELIEVERS, WE ALL HAVE SPIRIT- ACCESS TO THE ATTITUDE, THE MIND, THE EYES OF CHRIST to see each other as HE sees us.**