

## Discipleship 101      Chapter 09      Faith

Opening prayer and insights from last week.

Romans 13:1-4 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Matthew 8:5-10 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord", he said, "My servant lies at home, paralyzed, and in terrible suffering." Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one 'Go', and he goes; and that one, 'Come', and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this', and he does it." When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."

Why do you believe God has put in place an institution of governing authorities? Are we not to live in a society of peace and order? In Israel it was kings. Sometimes they were corrupt and didn't do what was right. Is God responsible for wrongdoing in government? If we were to persist in prayer for the corrupt activities in government, would God not act to rectify it, since it's his institution? If you get on a plane do you have faith it will arrive at it's destination safely? Why? Discuss the above.

Romans 14:2-4 One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Romans 14:5, 6 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers everyday alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

In Jesus' time here on earth, he declared all foods clean. What is said about the person who feels they can only eat certain foods in faith. Is it because that's what God's will is? God gives grace to both who act in faith in the broader bounds of God's will. Don't judge the other. What do you say to the person who says it's sin against God not to be in church Sunday because it's his day set aside to worship? What do you say to those who say the true Sabbath is on Saturday? What about those who say that you must celebrate the special feasts of the old testament as well? What would judgemental be in this situation?

1 Corinthians 8:4-9 So then, about eating foods sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called 'gods', whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. But not everyone knows this, some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

There are a couple of different dimensions of strengthening your faith and increasing your walk with God. They are; character and fruit of the Spirit – full of grace and truth and love; another is being able to trust God in the natural things in life for almost anything; another is following the leading of the Spirit in works of service in everyday life. All of these areas will strengthen your walk with the Lord. The gods and lords spoken of above are powers in the air that are over those who worship something other than the one God. Why is it that we don't need to worry about affects from these idols? There is a saying; "Behind every idol there is a demon". Darkness cannot exist in the Light. Comment on concepts shown.

Romans 12:3-8 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

John 16:8-11 (Jesus) When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement: In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgement, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

We are a part of a Spiritual kingdom and are called to serve in harmony within it – as we are able. What is teaching according to your faith? If the body served according to it's faith, would it be so fragmented? What part does 'conviction of righteousness' play in our service of faith? What is the importance in your life of the conviction of judgement on the powers of darkness?

God gives you faith as you move forward in his will. When the trials are difficult you must know that we win and the powers of darkness have already been beaten by Christ.