

# Whatever Does Not Proceed from Faith is Sin

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have a copy of the Scriptures with you, then I'd like you to open up to Romans chapter 14, where we have been for the last few weeks.

If you didn't bring your own Bible, that's alright, because we have some Bibles that are scattered around in the chairs, some small black Bibles. And if you grab one of those, you just need to turn to page 949, and right there you will find Romans chapter 14.

Now, for those of you who've not been with us, we have been walking through the book of Romans for a little over two years. I think, actually, two and a half years, almost three years this summer. We've been walking through Romans for quite a while.

And we have been, for the last few months, accepting a break for Christmas, we have been looking at these last few chapters here. We are moving toward the end of Romans.

Not as rapidly as some of you might like, but it feels to me that we're moving to the end of Romans fairly rapidly. And these chapters toward the end, particularly chapters 12 through 15, are instructions from the Apostle Paul about how to live the Christian life.

[ 1 : 12 ] Or, to put it another way, how to be the kind of person, how to be a holy person, after the image of our Redeemer and our Savior. How can we live Christ-like lives?

How can we be made holy by God? Or, in the biblical terminology, how can we be sanctified? And these three chapters are devoted to mostly practical instruction about how to live the Christian life. And so here, as we're in the middle of chapter 14, we're going to jump in at verse 13 this morning and move all the way down to the end in verse 23. And we're going to spend this morning and next week looking at this half of Romans chapter 14 before we move into chapter 15.

But I'd like you all to stand to your feet as we read these verses together this morning. In verse 13 we begin, Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.

[ 2 : 28 ] By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Do not for the sake of the food destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith.

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Thank you, Father, for this word. Instruct us and lead us and open our eyes to the truth this morning.

[ 3 : 31 ] We ask in Christ's name. Amen. You guys take a seat. Holiness is a community project. In other words, our pursuit of holiness, our desire to be made holy by God and our desire to be sanctified is not something that we can accomplish on our own.

It is not something that we can even accomplish really fully the way that God intends on our own, even with the help of the Holy Spirit. Because it is not God's desire that we live the Christian life alone and apart from other believers in Christ.

A part of what it means to be holy is, in fact, to have that holiness expressed within the relationships that we share with others in the body of Christ. So holiness is not an individual effort alone.

It is a community project. Now, that can be somewhat difficult for us to really fully embrace that concept of laboring together for our own and others' holiness.

And I think that's because we have a very individualistic mindset in the Western world, that is, in American and European backgrounds, we have a very individualistic mindset.

[ 4 : 42 ] Everything about our culture is very much focused upon the individual and what the individual is able to accomplish on their own by their willpower or by their effort.

And in fact, if you look at our sort of national heroes, you'll notice that most of them are held up in popular mythology as these great, bold individuals who are able to accomplish great things because they possessed a grit and a character that made them stand out above everyone else.

And so you can look back to, for instance, to the Revolutionary War and who stands out there?

Well, George Washington. And we have this picture of him as this lone individual who was better than everyone else, who were not for his leadership, everything would have been for naught, and the revolution would have failed.

You don't have to look simply, though, at those sorts of historical heroes. You can look at the heroes in the American psyche that we have from literature or from movies.

Watch any old Western with John Wayne, and he stands above everyone else, and he doesn't need anyone's help, and he can take out all of the bad guys by himself. We have in our minds these images of these types, these heroes that are able to go it alone and do it by themselves, but they don't reflect reality.

[ 6 : 04 ] Real historical individuals, quite apart from the myths that we sometimes create around them, they are able to do what they do because of the people that surround them, because of the relationships they have, because of the impact of others around them, and that's no less true in the church as it is in the world at large.

We desperately need one another if we are going to live the kinds of lives that God desires for us to live.

When you go back to the beginning of this section, to Romans 12, verse 1, where Paul commands us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, and he goes on to say that that's going to require that our minds be transformed, that we no longer be conformed to this world.

We need to understand that those things, the offering up of ourselves as a sacrifice, the transforming of our minds, the being made different from the world around us, those are not things that we can accomplish on our own.

We need one another. And there is probably no better chapter, at least in the book of Romans, maybe in the New Testament, that illustrates this reality that we need to pursue holiness together.

[ 7 : 17 ] And that, in fact, our pursuit of holiness is going to be very much reflected in how we interact with one another in the body of Christ.

Of course, we've seen in this chapter that the concern here, the particular concern among the relationships of the believers in the church at Rome is between two categories of people that Paul calls the strong and the weak.

Some of you have heard this summary a number of times, but I've got to give it to you each week. That is, that the strong are those who recognize and believe that they have been set free through Christ from the regulations of the Old Covenant.

And so they don't feel bound to follow the food laws of the Old Covenant. They don't feel bound to celebrate all the national Jewish days and feasts. They recognize, they realize that they have been set free from all of those things because Christ has come and indeed fulfilled all of those things.

But there's another group in the church at Rome who though they believe that their salvation has been won by Christ, though they believe that they are made right with God or justified by God on the basis of faith alone and not through their obedience to the law, nevertheless, they are convicted.

[ 8 : 29 ] They have a genuine belief and conviction that for them to live holy lives before the Lord requires that they do continue to submit to some of those laws, to the food laws, to the recognition of certain days and feasts.

And so you have these groups within the church that are at odds with one another. And if we were to predict on the basis of what we see happening in a lot of churches today, what would be the course for that church, we would predict it was got to be a church split.

I mean, you can't reconcile these two views. You can't bring these kinds of groups together into one church, into one body. And yet, Paul never considers that.

It never enters into his mind. In fact, he labors throughout this chapter, especially in this second half of the chapter, to instruct those who he puts in the category of the strong, who live out of the freedom that they have in Christ.

The group with which he happens to agree, the group whose view he affirms, he labors to show them and teach them that though they are in the right on this theological issue and on this matter of what's required of a Christian in living the Christian life, they themselves are to go out of their way to welcome and help those who are in the category of the weak.

[ 9 : 46 ] They are not to flaunt their freedom before them. They are not to pressure them to violate their own conscience and their own sense and belief about what is right and wrong for them, but rather the strong are to go out of their way not to offend them, not to become, as we see many times throughout this last half of the chapter, not to become a stumbling block or a hindrance to them.

Now that's something that I want us to spend all of next Sunday morning talking about. How can those who are in the category of the strong, how can those who are in the category of being right, avoid becoming a stumbling stone, a hindrance to others within the body of Christ?

But this morning I want to focus on a statement that Paul makes toward the beginning of this section of chapter 14 and at the very end of this section because I think that understanding these will help us and put us on sure footing as we try to understand what it means not to put a stumbling block or be a hindrance to someone else.

So let's go up to the beginning of this section in verse 13, and we're going to zero in on verse 14 and verse 23, but let's go up to verse 13 first, alright? Paul says, sort of repeating what he's been saying in the previous paragraph, summing it up, Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer.

In other words, they've been doing that. That's been a problem. That's why he's told them a couple of times so far in this chapter not to judge one another. Let's not do that anymore, he says, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother that's coming next week, alright?

[ 11 : 23 ] But now here's sort of the reason that Paul says that. Because sometimes we might have the attitude, stumbling block, hindrance, I'm just trying to correct them.

They need to be put on the right path. They're actually wrong, and somebody's got to come along and tell them that they're wrong. Somebody's got to come along and fix what's wrong with their thinking about the Christian life.

That's our sort of attitude sometimes, and we can have difficulty understanding why Paul would approach things in the manner in which he does. But verse 14 gives us great insight into why Paul approaches things in this manner.

He says, I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. So there's his statement to draw in the strong who are reading the letter.

I know, I agree with you. Nothing just by itself, considered by itself, is unclean. Now, let's pause for a moment and think about what he means by nothing here, okay?

[ 12 : 24 ] He means there's no object that we encounter. There are no things that we are dealing with on a daily basis that by themselves are unclean. He doesn't mean no action is by itself sinless or lacking in sin.

There are certainly things that we do that just considered in and of themselves, regardless of motive or anything else, they are sinful. We know that. There are things, behaviors, that the Scriptures roundly condemn and say, do not do that and do not go there.

That's not what Paul has in mind when he says nothing in and of itself is unclean. He means that none of the things that we encounter on a regular basis, none of the things in our lives, specifically here the issue is meat and wine.

They're not in and of themselves, by themselves. They're not unclean. All right. So I agree with you guys. Come in close, strong. That's true. That's true. They're not by themselves unclean.

But now he hits them. Nothing in and of itself is unclean, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.

[ 13 : 28 ] That's turning the table suddenly on the strong. I agree with you that the food laws are no longer operative and there is no food. Here it's meat and wine, but whatever it may be, there's no

kind of food that by itself is unclean, therefore ritually defiled and sinful to consume.

There's none that's like that in and of itself. But if they think that it's unclean, if they're burdened in their conscience about it being unclean, that is not being suitable for a believer in Christ to participate in, then for that person who sincerely believes that, it is indeed unclean.

unclean. And knowing that and approaching other fellow believers with that understanding, with the approach of the Apostle Paul, that will help us as we endeavor never to cause them to stumble.

But I want us to think for a bit this morning about why it is the case that if you believe something is sinful for you to do, if you sincerely believe that it is sinful, even if it's not sinful in and of itself, why does it become sinful simply because you feel that it is?

Or you are convicted that it is? I mean, isn't it black and white? Isn't there right and wrong? And if it's in the category of right, it's in the category of right for everyone and that doesn't change and things don't move back and forth between those categories?

[14:56] Well, in a sense, yes. There are those behaviors, there are those actions that the Scriptures make clear. They are wrong and evil every time. We know that.

But for Paul and for the way that he looks at the world, there are other things that can be placed in either category depending upon how the person doing those things, participating in those things, using those things, depending upon how they understand and perceive them to be.

But why is that? Why is it the case that your convictions about something that is not sinful can make it sinful for you? I think the answer to that is found at the end of the chapter in verse 23.

And this is where I want us to sit for the next few minutes this morning, thinking about what the statement means at the end of verse 23. But let's jump down there real quickly. Verse 23. Whoever has doubts is condemned.

That's what he said in verse 14, right? If you doubt something or if you think something is unclean, if you think it might be, you're condemned if you participate in that thing. That is, it is sinful for you.

[16:07] So don't do it. Here's the reason why. Because the eating, that's the case here, because the eating is not from faith.

That's the fundamental issue. How can a clean thing become unclean for one person and yet remain clean for another? Because in participating in that thing, in partaking of that thing, in embracing that thing, they are embracing something with a lack of faith, without trusting in God as they embrace it.

Now that leads us to the last statement of this chapter, which is a much broader application of that principle and will help us to really zero in on what Paul really means when he says these types of things.

Listen, for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Or quite literally, everything that is not of faith is sin.

So he's offering to us here in this last verse of this chapter a new definition for sin. We tend to generally think of sin as anything that violates the law of God.

[17:19] And that's not a terrible definition. That's pretty good guidance for us. But we need something else. We need something a little bit more than that. Particularly when we're wrestling through Romans about whether or not the law applies to us in part or in its totality at all.

So we need another definition to come alongside that. And in fact, what we have seen, if you go back and listen to some of the sermons that I preached on some of these things in Romans chapter 4 and chapter 5, one of the things that we have seen is that the violation of the law of God is not really a definition of sin.

It's a subcategory of sin. It is a type of sin. It is, in the biblical terminology, that would be a trespass or a transgression, a violation of God's law.

But the category of sin is actually broader than that. It includes that, but it's actually broader than that. And so we need a broader definition of sin than simply breaking God's commands.

And here's one that Paul offers to us here. Whatever does not proceed, whatever does not come from, that is, whatever is not motivated by and rooted in faith is sin.

[18:34] This is not, however, the first definition of sin that we have come across in the book of Romans. In fact, we have been operating throughout our study of this book on another definition of sin that Paul has given to us earlier in the book of Romans.

I want you to hold your place here in chapter 14 and turn back to chapter 3 with me if you would. In Romans chapter 3, there's a very famous verse that is, in actuality, it is a kind of definition of us, for

us, of sin.

Romans chapter 3, verse 23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now those are not like two separate things.

People have sinned and in addition to sinning, they have fallen short of the glory of God. No, to fall short of the glory of God operates here in Romans 3, 23 as a virtual definition of what he means when he says all have sinned.

All have sinned. That is, everyone has fallen short of giving God the glory that He rightly deserves. Now I arrive at that interpretation of Romans chapter 3, verse 23, and I've said this several times in our study through Romans, because of what I read earlier in Romans chapter 1, where Paul describes the sinfulness of all of humanity, particularly the Gentiles, but all of humanity in chapter 1. [ 20 : 00 ] And he says things like this. He says things like verse 21. Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

They failed to honor God. They failed to give thanks to Him. That's what sin is. Or, for instance, you can move down a little further in verse 25.

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever. So, sin, or as he calls it here in Romans chapter 1, unrighteousness, is a failure to give thanks, honor, and glorify God as He deserves as our Creator and Maker.

That's what sin is. Sin is, most fundamentally, a failure to give God or a falling short of the glory that God rightly deserves from our lives.

That's the definition of sin that we have been using and depending upon throughout our study of Romans. And that's the definition of sin that I almost always use when I'm talking about these things.

[ 21 : 11 ] Even when I'm just basically sharing the Gospel with someone and I'm trying to help them to understand why it was necessary for Christ to die. I always go back to God made us, He owns us, we owe Him all thanks, praise, glory, and honor.

And yet we haven't done that. That's fundamental. But how are we to integrate that definition of sin with the new definition of sin that we have now been given in chapter 14?

Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. If we can bring together these two definitions this morning, that will go a long way toward helping us to understand how to avoid being a stumbling block or becoming a hindrance in the way of other believers and helping us to understand how something that is okay and not sinful can become sinful simply on the basis of someone's personal convictions.

So let's think about this statement for a bit. Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. The key word here obviously is faith. Right?

That's the key term. In Romans chapter 3 verse 23 the key term in defining sin is the glory of God. Now here the key term is faith.

[ 22 : 30 ] Anything that is not produced by faith in your life Paul says falls into the category of sin. So any action that you take in life that is not motivated by faith in God and in His promises is ultimately a sinful action.

So let's ask the question what does Paul mean by the term faith? Now we can say fairly broadly that the word faith is used in the New Testament in some different ways.

Right? James for instance uses faith in a way that is entirely unique and different from the way that Paul uses the word faith. We often find ourselves in a bit of confusion and a conundrum when we compare what James says about faith and salvation and justification with what Paul says about faith and salvation and justification.

Because James clearly says that faith without works is dead. It's useless. It's worthless. It doesn't profit you anything. Whereas Paul clearly says that it's faith apart from the works of the law that results in justification.

Well justification is not nothing is it? Right? That's not spiritual death. So for Paul faith results in justification. For James faith by itself it's dead.

[ 23 : 46 ] James even goes so far as to say even the demons believe which means that James is using the words faith and believe in a way that's entirely different from the way that the apostle Paul uses those terms.

We should expect that though all of the word of God has God as its ultimate author yet God somehow mysteriously in the work of inspiring the scriptures allowed the individual writers to have their vocabulary and their personalities shine through.

It retains its status as God breathed and inerrant and yet mysteriously we can still see differences between the way that John writes and the way that Paul writes or the way that Peter writes and the way that Matthew writes.

We can still see those things and here we see a difference between the way that Paul writes and the way that James writes. For James faith is nothing more than agreement with a set of truths. Even the demons believe that God exists.

They believe it. They know it to be true. They affirm that truth and yet they tremble and fear that truth because his existence means their condemnation. That's not how Paul uses the term faith. [ 24 : 50 ] Paul has a much more robust understanding of faith. For Paul faith is something that doesn't need works to fill it out.

Faith is something that automatically produces good works in the lives of those who have faith. Faith is something entirely different from mere mental assent to a set of truths.

It has to begin there. I mean you have to agree with the truth of God's word but you've got to do more with it than simply agree with it for it to have the justifying power that Paul ascribes to it. So I want to use two terms this morning to help you to better understand Paul's use of the word faith. And that is for Paul faith is not mere mental assent but faith is trusting and treasuring the promises of God.

Alright? Faith is not mere mental assent it is trusting and treasuring the promises of God. Or if you prefer faith is resting in and rejoicing in the promises of God.

[ 25 : 59 ] So there are two components to faith the way that Paul uses the term. There is first of all the component of trusting in God's promises. That is faith does not cling to self-reliance.

In fact faith is the opposite of self-reliance. Faith is reliance upon another. Faith fully trusts that God is able to do what He has promised He will do.

That's why faith justifies us. Because faith no longer tries to present our own deeds of righteousness before God as here here's what I've done God.

That's not what faith in the Pauline sense of the word does. No. Faith turns the other way. Faith casts aside all that I have done because it's worthless.

And faith clings to what God has done for us in Christ. That's why it justifies. Because faith is not for Paul a trusting in what I can do.

[ 27 : 00 ] Faith is fundamentally a trusting in what Christ has done on my behalf. Both in bearing my sins upon the cross and in living a life of righteousness in my place.

Faith clings to the righteousness of Jesus credited to my account rather than presenting my righteousness as worthy of God's attention.

For Paul faith alone justifies because faith trusts solely in the righteousness of Jesus and the work of Jesus on my behalf.

But there's another element that we need to layer in on top of that. I would say that fundamentally faith in Paul's thought is trusting. But I think we ought to layer in on top of that, that trust comes along with a kind of treasuring or rejoicing in the truth of God.

God. It's not merely, you've often heard the illustration, or perhaps you have, I've seen it many times, of the illustration of here's what faith is. And so someone will take a chair and set it down and say, sit down in this chair.

[ 28 : 07 ] And so the person will sit down in that chair and they'll say, see, that was faith. Because you didn't doubt and you just trusted that the chair was not going to fall apart and it was not going to hold you up. That's true and that's fine so far as it goes.

But we're not trusting in a chair. We're trusting in a person and that involves the heart. So it's not a mere belief that God will hold up His end of the deal. It is a wholehearted trusting and treasuring Christ and all that He has promised us.

There is a relational component to faith that cannot be left out or you're missing out on what faith really means. Faith fundamentally trusts in God and treasures God because He is worthy of our trust.

Now with that understanding of faith in mind let's ask the question how might we integrate our two definitions of faith? Faith is a failure to give God the glory that He deserves and sin is anything that

does not proceed from faith.

If faith is viewed as trusting and treasuring God and all of His promises in Christ then faith is the means by which we give honor and glory to God.

[ 29 : 28 ] Faith pushes away all acclamation for myself. Faith by its very nature says I cannot depend upon myself.

I am not trustworthy. I have nothing in and of myself to present before you God. And so rather than trust in myself rather than offer up to you my own meager efforts I will throw those aside and I will cling to you.

And in that God is greatly glorified. When we trust in God and when we treasure Him above all else then He is glorified.

So to say that sin is a falling short of the glory of God is one way of saying that sin is anything that we do that does not proceed from our trusting and treasuring our resting and rejoicing in God Himself.

Now to the matter of gray areas. Let's think this through carefully. If this is what sin is and if this is what faith is then there can be a particular action that in and of itself is not sinful.

[ 30 : 47 ] We'll start with the example from Romans 14. The eating of certain foods which have been labeled as unclean under the old covenant. The eating of certain foods.

We know that those laws no longer directly apply to us as those who live under the new covenant. We know that we don't have to obey the food laws. Jesus tells us that. Peter was told that in a dream that's recorded for us in the book.

We know that quite clearly. That's true. But suppose there is someone who does that and know that as clearly. Suppose there is someone for whom perhaps their background, perhaps the culture that they've come from or the way that they've been raised, even if they can see and understand the basic statement nothing is unclean in and of itself, yet they cannot get over the sense and the feeling of uncleanness when they see those things that for their entire life they've been told they are unclean.

They cannot get past it. It's just every time they encounter it, they feel dirty. They feel defiled in some sort of way.

They genuinely feel and believe that their eating of that food would be a sinful thing for them to do. so suppose they go ahead and eat the food anyway.

[ 32 : 12 ] They're surrounded by a lot of other people. Perhaps they've gone to someone's house for dinner or perhaps they're just in the market where people are freely eating and buying and they don't want to stand out.

They don't want to look odd and strange and so despite this overwhelming knot in the pit of their stomach, they eat the food that they believe is wrong for them to eat.

Is there any sense in their eating of that food that they were trusting in God? No, there's not. Is there any sense in their eating of that food that they are treasuring Him?

No, because in the moment they treasure fitting in more than they do their allegiance to God. Never mind the fact that it's not unclean in and of itself.

They believe it to be unclean and so in that moment they have made a choice. I would rather fit in than do the thing that I believe would be pleasing to God in this moment.

[ 33 : 17 ] And so that action does not flow from their faith in God and therefore that action becomes sinful for them. There are a lot of parallels to that in our world today.

there are particularly a lot of parallels for that within the church because we come from different church backgrounds. I know some of you don't have any sort of church background and in some ways that can be a help for you.

You come almost as a blank slate as it were when it comes to discovering and understanding the will of God. There are far more advantages to having been raised in the church and having a background in the church but that's at least one advantage to not.

But we come from these varied backgrounds, right? And so we're going to come from different traditions that have fences set up in different places.

They're just going to be set up in different places. And there are going to be certain things that all of our lives have just been wrong. You don't do that. Or you must do this.

[ 34 : 19 ] And yet for other followers of Christ it's never entered their mind or it's just never been a big issue. Take for instance let's go to the very common issue of tithing.

Alright? Tithing is simply the practice of giving the first 10% of whatever it is that you make to God. Usually we say to the church. Alright? It's a very simple concept.

The tithe literally means 10% and in the Old Testament over and over and over the people of God were told to give the first fruits and the first 10% of their things to the Lord.

Sometimes the percentage was actually higher in some cases and sometimes it was lower. But the first fruits that they had were to be given over to God and many times 10% is singled out as the amount that they ought to give.

Fast forward to the New Covenant. Obviously many of those laws no longer apply. We would want to still apply the principle of the first fruits, right? There are good biblical principles that lie beneath those laws that we still want to continue to apply.

[ 35 : 22 ] So we would want to say yes we should give over to God and devote to Him the first fruits of all of our labor and that's not just our money that's our time that's whatever we have to offer up to the Lord.

We don't want to hold the best back and hoard it for ourselves. We want to freely give to God out of all that He's given to us. Yes, but the law of a precise and exact 10% is not the law of the New Covenant.

I would argue that the law of the New Covenant exceeds that many times because sometimes for us what is the best and the first fruits is going to far exceed 10%. But nevertheless the exacting amount of 10% is not a New Covenant law.

The principle of the first fruits is good to continue to apply and we ought to but the exacting amount of 10% is not. But if you have been raised and if you have your entire Christian life if you have steadfastly given your 10% and for you to even ponder and think about not giving that amount you shudder and you would feel greatly convicted of that then we would be able to stand back and say you have a genuine conviction about how much you ought to give.

There may be others in the church who could make a biblical case that that's not exactly precisely right but nevertheless you have a deeply ingrained conviction about that.

[ 36 : 43 ] And suppose suddenly times were tight and you were tempted not to give it and you thought I know there are other people in my church who don't give 10%.

I think it will be okay. I'm going to dial it back a little bit and give a little bit less. But as you do it you just feel wrong about doing it.

Why do you feel wrong about doing it? Because your motive is off. Because you are not trusting in God to provide for you. You are thinking that I need to hold more back because I've got to take care of myself.

And you are not treasuring all the good things that God promises to those who offer up to them all that they have not merely their first fruits. You're not trusting Him to provide.

You're not treasuring the promises of God for those who are faithful to Him. And so for you in that moment it would be sinful to fail to do that.

[ 37 : 44 ] Because you do not honor God with your treasuring of His promises. And you do not glorify God by trusting Him to provide for you rather than yourself.

It always comes down to the very simple matter of how can we by trusting and treasuring in Jesus bring most honor and glory to God.

How can we do that? And in the same situation two believers may genuinely arrive at different conclusions about how they might most glorify and honor God in that matter.

And for either one of them to violate that conviction would be to fail to trust and treasure Christ in that moment and therefore it would fail to glorify God and therefore it would be sinful.

The key at the end of the day is faith. Simple faith and trust. Anything that we do not moved and motivated by faith is sin.

[ 38 : 58 ] And that means for starters that if you have not trusted in Christ, if you have not genuinely made Him your treasure, and you have not genuinely put your faith in Him as the only one who can supply the righteousness that you need and the only one who can make a way for your sins to be forgiven, then you do not have the ability to do that which is ultimately pleasing to God.

Without faith, the writer of Hebrews says, it is impossible to please God. And that begins with conversion. If you have not trusted in Him, been rescued from your sin, and justified by Him, you cannot do that which is truly and ultimately right and good.

Everything that you do, even those things that on the surface are good, will have beneath it a layer of sin you cannot avoid. Because everything that doesn't come from faith ultimately is sin. And so you ought not to move, you ought not to do anything else until you have trusted in Him and confessed your sins and turned from sin to Him in faith.

You ought not do anything else. And I want to say one more word before we close to the vast majority of you who are believers. I want to say to you what I said at the very beginning of this sermon.

[ 40 : 24 ] That holiness is a community project. Yes, in the sense that we need to be sensitive to one another and as we'll see next week, avoid causing others to sin against their genuinely held convictions.

But also in the sense that we need one another. I need you if I am to pursue holiness. I need the church body.

I need you to call me to account when I go astray. I need you to encourage me when you see me pursuing Christ in a good and healthy way that honors Him and glorifies Him. I need your encouragement to come up alongside me.

We need one another. There is no such thing as a lone ranger Christian. They don't exist. John has a statement about those.

He says, they went out from us because they were never really of us. You abandoned the body of Christ because you never belonged to the body of Christ.

[ 41 : 27 ] We desperately need one another. And God is greatly glorified when His people come alongside one another to encourage one another and to motivate and push one another toward greater holiness.

Let's pray. voy voy voy voy voy voy voy voy! voy!