

Remnant Life Church
August 11, 2013

Majoring on the Minors
Romans 14:1-12

- We have all heard the phrase “Don’t sweat the small stuff.”
- “Don’t sweat the small stuff...and it’s almost all small stuff.”
- Anxiety, nervousness, tension, worry are all by-products of sweating the small stuff
- Anxiety can be caused by many different things:

In July 1992, a Los Angeles Times story on fear of heights featured an interview with the psychotherapist who heads the ADA or Anxiety Disorders Association. He reported that one of his patients could only cross the 200-foot-high Chesapeake Bay Bridge in Maryland if his wife drove the car and locked him in the trunk.

A pastor was retiring after 25 years in his church. As he came to clear out the bedroom of the parsonage, he found a small bowl with 5 apples in it along with a \$1,000 in cash. Baffled he called his wife, "Honey, what is this little basket under the bed with five apples and \$1,000 in it?"

"Oh," she said "I must confess that every time you preached a bad sermon I've put an apple in the basket." Secretly the pastor was pleased. "Not bad! Five bad sermons in 25 years" he thought. "And what about the \$1,000", he asked?

"Well every time I got a dozen or so, I'd sell them!"

- Medication related to anxiety
 - 10 years ago 3.3 billion prescriptions were filled
 - 12 times the population
- Small things can be very important
 1. Attention to detail is important in day to day life
 2. Can we learn to differentiate those things that matter from those that don't?
 3. God is in every detail of our lives but when we give more life to the things that don't matter we are also giving them power over our lives

Romans 14:1-12

1. Paul is writing to the Roman Christians

- a. This is not a church that Paul started
- b. Probably a group who had returned from the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:10**)
- c. Writing the letter most likely from Corinth
- d. Paul is planning to visit this group after he left Jerusalem on his way to Spain (**Romans 15:25-28**)
- e. Paul never makes it to Spain

- i. He is arrested in Jerusalem
- ii. Taken to Rome for trial
- iii. Under house arrest for 2 years
- iv. Released for a brief time then arrested again
- v. Martyred in the mid 60's A.D.

2. He is writing for several purposes

- a. We are all in need of God's grace and mercy (1:18-3:20)
- b. The path of righteousness (3:21-5:21)
- c. The path of holy living (6:1-8:39)
- d. Practical living (12:1-15:13)

3. In that last segment he teaches the need for knowing what is important and what is not

- a. He begins by looking at what people eat
 - i. Meat in Rome sold to the public would have already been dedicated or offered to one of the many pagan gods
 - ii. Christians in Rome were struggling with the question of whether they could they eat that meat
 - iii. There was also division over whether to continue observing specific feast days (v 5)
 - iv. Paul tells them that whatever one chooses to do it is based on the strength of their faith not on the act itself (v 3)
- b. John Wesley – 1703-1791
 - i. Founder of Methodism (with his brother Charles)
 - ii. Estimated to have preached over 40,000 sermons in his life
 - iii. Spoke of the difference of “opinion” versus “essential truths”
 - 1. Opinion is what is thought in a wide degree of variation
 - 2. Essential truth is the foundational teaching of the scripture
- c. Wesley was enforcing the teaching of Paul that things like what we eat or drink should not divide the church
 - i. Wine is another place where this is seen
 - ii. The Methodists were the first to use grape juice in communion replacing the common drink of wine
 - 1. Many of the mid 1700's in England who were becoming Christians were coming out of hard drinking lifestyles
 - 2. Wesley always expressed concern at not wanting to tempt people back into a previous lifestyle by serving wine in church
 - 3. In the mid 1800's a Methodist man by the name of Thomas Bramwell Welch, a physician and dentist, found a way to make unfermented wine
 - 4. Welch's Grape Drink – 1869 – Vineland, NJ
 - iii. Should we allow something like what we eat or drink to divide us?
- d. Denominations
 - i. In 2006 there were 217 different denominations listed

- ii. Emphasizing our differences and not what unites us
- iii. All because we majored on the minors

4. How do we determine what is important and what is not?

- a. How does what I am dealing with line up with the Word of God?
 - i. What does the Bible consider important?
 - ii. Is what I am dealing with of any value to anyone?
- b. Common sense with questions requiring honest answers
 - i. Do I always have to have things my way?
 - ii. What effect will there be to my life over what I am so concerned about?
 - iii. Much of these things come out of expectations
- c. Am I simply judging another person by what they have or have not done?
 - i. What right do we have to judge anyone?
 - 1. **Rom. 3:23** – *All have sinned...*
 - 2. **Eph. 2:8** - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--*
 - ii. **Rom 14** tells us that every aspect of our lives is because of God
- d. Is what I am focused on born out of love?
 - i. It is easier to love others and overlook their faults when we keep in mind what each of us has been forgiven of
 - 1. Paul states that we will all have to stand before God one day and give an account for our lives (v 12)
 - ii. **Luke 7** – the story of the woman at Simon's house forgiven her sins