

ROMANS
Lesson 456–March 3, 2019

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a Christian Church with worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. At Barah Ministries, our God is the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We make a difference by teaching the Word of God from God's perspective, and not from man's perspective.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Do You Honor the Journey of Others?

In the opening of every lesson at Barah Ministries we learn something about God. In recent weeks we have learned that God is FORGIVING...He is JUST...He is RIGHTEOUS...and He is SOVEREIGN. Today, we learn that He is OMNISCIENT...the combination of two Latin words...OMNI...which means ALL...and SCIENTIA...which means knowledge. We get the English word science from this Latin word *scientia*. What is omniscience?

OMNISCIENT

God knows everything...everything in the past...everything in the present...and everything in the future. God is the original "know-it-all" because He knows everything that is knowable. God is not a learner...He knows everything all at once.

Psalm 147, Verses 4 and 5...

PSALM 147:4

He counts the number of the stars...He gives names to all of them.

PSALM 147:5

Great is our Lord and abundant in strength...His understanding is infinite. Having knowledge of the names of each of seventy million stars to the twenty-second power...myriads of stars...is quite a feat. Yet in the midst of

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this universe of knowledge He even knows your name. God knows all there is to know about you. Matthew, Chapter 10, Verse 30...

MATTHEW 10:30

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God knows you better than you know yourself. You can keep secrets from people, but you can't keep secrets from God. God knows everything that happens to you and He already has a plan in place to handle it. Psalm 139, Verses 1 to 4 says God has a relationship with us...King David has this to say about our omniscient God...

PSALM 139:1

O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

PSALM 139:2

You know when I sit down and when I rise up...You understand my thoughts (and their motivation) from afar.

PSALM 139:3

You scrutinize my path and my lying down...and You are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

PSALM 139:4

Even before there is a word on my tongue...behold, O Lord...You know it all (you know everything I will say).

God even knows how we feel. Toward the end of his life, King David had this to say about his son, Solomon... First Chronicles, Chapter 28, Verse 9...

FIRST CHRONICLES 28:9

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind...for the Lord searches all hearts... and the Lord understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him...but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”

God knows what we are going through. Hebrews, Chapter 4, Verse 15...

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HEBREWS 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses...but we have a high priest who has been tempted in all things just as we are tempted...yet He is without sin.

God never gives in to temptation. God sees everything...Proverbs 15, Verse 3...

PROVERBS 15:3

The eyes of the Lord are in every place...He keeps on watching the evil and the good.

God's knowledge extends forward billions of years and backward billions of years...even everything that unfolds before you right now. God knows everything long before it happens...especially knowing the most miraculous thing, highlighted in Isaiah, Chapter 7, Verse 14...

ISAIAH 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign...behold, a virgin will be with child and she will bear a son...and she will call His name Immanuel.

God knew about our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...His birth...His life... His death on a Cross...and His resurrection from the dead were all known by an omniscient God long before they occurred.

God's omniscience gives us the confidence that He has carved out a perfect path for our lives...and He knows exactly where the path leads...a path that ends face-to-face with Him.

Sarah Reeves knows the truth about our omniscient God, and she tells us about it in her song RIGHT WHERE YOU WANT ME. Let's listen!

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

RIGHT WHERE YOU WANT ME

Sarah Reeves

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OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you Father for making us all different...thank you for teaching us through your Word that we can value the difference between us and others... thank you for putting us in a world that does not value differences because your enemy, Satan, sews the seeds of discord, encouraging us to hold our differences against each other...being in a hostile place is great training...thank you for not holding our difference against us...

Teach us to love unconditionally...show us how to have honor...show us how to admire the journey of others...help us to learn from the differences...

...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Do You Honor the Journey of Others?

There is no theme change as we move from Romans, Chapters 12 and 13 into Romans, Chapter 14...we are still being commanded to love our neighbors unconditionally, just as we love ourselves. If there is one word that explains the whole of Christianity it is LOVE...unconditional love. However, Romans, Chapter 14 zooms in a bit to our treatment of other believers in Christ. Do you "Viva la Difference?" Do you value the differences between you and others? Said another way, do you honor it that others are on a unique journey in this life, one that may be not at all similar to your journey? Can you value the journey of others without thinking that those who are not like you are somehow wrong because they are different? Let's begin our study of the first four verses of Romans, Chapter 14...here they are...

ROMANS 14:1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith...but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions (his viewpoint concerning things).

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ROMANS 14:2

One person has faith that he may eat all things (anything)...but the one who is weak eats vegetables only.

ROMANS 14:3

The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat...and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats...for God has accepted him.

ROMANS 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master a servant stands or falls...and the servant will stand...for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Last year, I was in a restaurant in Dallas having breakfast. The waiter was male, but he was undergoing a change to female. The world is calling such a change transgender. Someone who is transgender is said to have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from his inborn gender. Some people who are transgender identify as transsexual if they desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another.

The waiter was male going to female. I could clearly see the symbols of transition, but to me, he was a male. So when he brought water to the table, I said, “Thanks man!” That was not intentional...it was habitual. That’s just something I say in normal interaction with waitstaff.

The waiter was not amused. He stormed off, clearly upset. Later when he brought the food, the habit slipped again. “Thanks man!” He lost it. I followed him to assure him that even though he was making the transition I had not. I assured him that I wasn’t being mean, but since it had happened twice, he didn’t believe me.

Transgender is not something I ever saw coming. I don’t know how you feel about it...how you see it...but to me it’s a bit of a shock. I can honestly say I don’t understand it. I have a friend whose son has become a daughter...including a genital transformation...and I can’t get my head wrapped around it. Yet I have my head wrapped around this idea...I respect the journey.

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I don't know what these people have experienced in their lives...I don't know what they are going through...I have neither the right nor the desire to judge them...especially since my journey isn't "all that." There's nothing about me that makes my journey or me more special than theirs, especially not in God's eyes. Do you give honor to the journey of others?

What if this guy is a believer in Christ? He and I have the same Savior. He's going to heaven. Aren't we in unity? Aren't we exactly the same in the eyes of a God with whom there is no partiality?

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I have a different opinion.

This is one of the ground rules of workshops in my consulting business. Disagreement is not allowed. You can't say to another person, "I disagree with you." You can say, "I have a different opinion."

The reason for the ground rule is quite simple...there is room for multiple opinions. When we say we disagree with someone else, what we are subtly saying is that our opinion is right and theirs is wrong. Of course, the person who is told they are wrong immediately clicks in to self-justification, and the argument ensues. No thanks!

I have a different opinion.

In question form, I have a different opinion asks, "Do you honor the journey of others?" Each of us is on a life journey. We are different in many ways. We are different in race, different in gender, different in social standing, different in age, different in experience, different in attitude, different in outlook, different in perspective, and different in background. We are very different from each other. As Christians, how can we be in unity with each other when all of us are so different from each other? Clearly God wanted us to find out.

Romans, Chapter 14 identifies two categories of believers in Christ...The Weak and The Strong. Believers in Christ have differing levels of maturity, as Paul points out in First Corinthians, Chapter 3, Verses 1 to 3...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 3:1

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And I (Paul)...brethren...could not speak to you as I would speak to spiritual men...but I speak to you as I speak to men of flesh (carnal men)...as if I am speaking to infants in union with Christ.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 3:2

I gave you milk to drink (basic truths from the Word of God)...not solid food (advanced truths from the Word of God)...for you were not yet able to receive advanced truths. Indeed, even now you are not yet able to receive advanced truths...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 3:3

...for you are still fleshly (carnal). For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly (carnal)...and are you not walking like mere men (as if you were imitating unbelievers)?

There are two types of believers in Christ...CARNAL and SPIRITUAL. Carnal believers are immature believers...meaning not fully developed... Spiritual believers are mature...meaning well developed. Paul is not making a value judgment here...he is speaking truth. If I were holding a newborn baby, it wouldn't take a deep assessment to know that I am more mature than the baby. The same is true of Christians. An "infant Christian" ... a person new to Christianity...sees Christianity and the world through a completely different set of eyes than a Christian who has been studying the Word of God for years.

In this passage, Paul is pointing out that there are weak believers and there are strong believers. Again, no value judgment intended...just the facts. God created the weak believer and the strong believer, but He clearly does not want there to be divisions...rather He wants unity of the weak and the strong.

How should we treat each other when there are differences? This is what Paul is addressing in Romans, Chapter 14. When we return from our five-minute break we'll take a look at the verses of the passage to see what we can learn.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK

Unconditional Love
Donna Summers

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Do You Honor the Journey of Others?

If you listen to Barah Ministries, then God is probably motivating you to give to Barah Ministries, because that’s just what He does. Listen to His prompting! We need the help. Let’s welcome Deacon Denny Goodall with the offering message.

THE OFFERING
Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

EPHESIANS 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood...our struggle is against the rulers...against the powers...against the world forces of this darkness... against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

OFFERING
FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE
Dave McClure, Instrumental

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Do You Honor the Journey of Others?

If you listen to Laura Story sing the song BLESSINGS on her You Tube video, you’ll know immediately that this is more than just a song...it’s worship from a woman who has lived every word and every note of this song. Let’s listen to her sing about the BLESSINGS of our amazing God.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION
Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

BLESSINGS
Laura Story

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Do You Honor the Journey of Others?

Welcome back! Romans, Chapter 14, Verses 1 to 4...

ROMANS 14:1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith...but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions (his viewpoint concerning things).

ROMANS 14:2

One person has faith that he may eat all things (anything)...but the one who is weak eats vegetables only.

ROMANS 14:3

The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat...and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats...for God has accepted him.

ROMANS 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master a servant stands or falls...and the servant will stand...for the Lord is able to make him stand.

As Paul instructs the members of his congregation at first century Rome he noticed a difference...there were some believers who were strong in faith, and some who were weak in faith. In his instruction concerning unconditional love, Paul knew he had to deal with the issue.

How are strong believers in Christ...that is mature believers...to deal with weak believers in Christ...the immature? Mature believers are usually stronger in faith...stronger in knowledge...stronger even in freedom. Perhaps a weak believer...one who is immature in the faith...has been the victim of legalistic teachers...perhaps they have not yet learned to reconcile in their minds that their sins are all forgiven...perhaps they are ignorant of just what it means to be in union with Christ...perhaps they have not transitioned out of self-loathing because they can't understand why they don't ever do what they intend. The strong are not to "tolerate" the weak...God would have us love the weak unconditionally...which means to receive the weak...to ACCEPT the weak believer. Romans, Chapter 14, Verses 1 and 2...

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ROMANS 14:1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith...but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions (his viewpoint concerning things).

ROMANS 14:2

One person has faith that he may eat all things (anything)...but the one who is weak eats vegetables only.

Perhaps believers who are weak avoid meat and wine...perhaps they decide from immaturity that they will be more pleasing to God if they abstain from certain practices. The word that defines the weak believer's initial approach to Christianity is ASCETICISM.

ASCETICISM

The idea that a person can attain an enlightened spiritual or moral state by practicing self-denial, self-mortification, extreme abstinence, or austerity.

Perhaps strong believers eat meat and drink wine...in other words, they feel free to eat anything they want. From spiritual maturity they know that self-denial is not impressive to God. <CELIBACY> The strong have a responsibility to the weak. Romans, Chapter 14, Verses 3 and 4...

ROMANS 14:3

The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat...and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats...for God has accepted him (the weak).

ROMANS 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master a servant stands or falls...and the servant will stand...for the Lord is able to make him stand.

The approach of the weak believer is God centered...people who are “on fire for God”... people who have “lighter fluid” faith and are really “into” God. The weakness described here is not legalism. Paul sought to get this across to his congregation in Galatia...notice what he says in Galatians, Chapter 5 Verses 1 to 6...

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GALATIANS 5:1

It was for freedom that Christ set us believers in Christ free...therefore keep standing firm in the freedom and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

There is bondage and there is slavery...Christianity is a lifestyle of freedom.

GALATIANS 5:2

Behold I, Paul, say to you Galatian believers that if you receive circumcision (seeking righteousness by works), Christ will be of no benefit to you.

You cannot work for salvation...it's a waste of time.

GALATIANS 5:3

And I (Paul) testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Mosaic Law.

If you want righteousness by Law...you can't break a single law or you are guilty of breaking the whole law.

GALATIANS 5:4

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified (saved) by (keeping the) law...you have fallen from grace.

Falling from grace is turning away from the benefit of grace...it similar to what happens when believers in Christ today turn to the ideas that salvation requires repentance, confession, faith plus something else, water baptism, and church membership.

GALATIANS 5:5

For we believers in Christ, through the (baptism of the) Spirit, by faith in Christ alone, are waiting for the benefit of the righteousness we have hoped for.

GALATIANS 5:6

For those in union with Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything...but faith in Christ means everything working through unconditional love.

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Paul is not bothered by weak believers...weak believers simply have not made the full transition to freedom. Weak believers do not think their abstinence earns God's acceptance or contributes to their justification. Yet they hamstring themselves with rituals that are not a part of freedom. <WATER BAPTISM> They get tied up in a mixture between Christianity and the world.

What are strong believers to do when dealing with weak believers? We are to accept them. We are to honor where they are in the journey, remembering that at one time, someone was honoring us that way. We'll continue our study of Romans, Chapter 14 in the next lesson.

GOD WANTS YOU!

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

The closing moments of our study are for the benefit of anyone who does not have a personal relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want you to know that GOD WANTS YOU.

On the day before Thanksgiving in 1987, the news on the radio in my hometown...Chicago, Illinois...was quite shocking. Our beloved Mayor, Harold Washington, was dead. He was in a meeting in his fifth floor office at Chicago's City Hall. He slumped forward, his face rested gently on the desk, and in a moment, he was dead from a massive heart attack.

I can remember the day as vividly as if it were yesterday. What I remember most was wondering what it must be like to get up in the morning, and as you're getting dressed, not knowing that in a few short hours you would be dead.

All of us will die physically one day. That is hardly at issue. What we don't know is when we will close our eyes in this life. My concern is that you may be one of the people who is walking around today unprepared for this reality.

I was talking to a young man in Spain recently who is quite unprepared. I asked him if he is a Christian. He said, "No." I asked him why not. He

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said, “To tell you the truth, I don’t even think about God.” I appreciated his candor. I told him, it would be wise to think about God all the time. He asked why, and I’ll share the things with you that I shared with him. This is especially for those of you who don’t have a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22a says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22a

For all in union with Adam at physical birth (and that is every human who comes to earth) are set to die the second death in the Lake of Fire...

You were born physically alive, yet spiritually dead. That’s bad news. Worse news is that you may not have even known that is your situation. The good news is that the Lord Jesus Christ paved the way to get you out of the predicament. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22b says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22b

...yet all those in union with Christ (all believers in Christ) will be made spiritually alive.

Do you want to be saved? Do you want to spend all eternity in a relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ? Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31 says...

ACTS 16:31

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes.”

Right now, right where you sit, you can spend the gift of faith given to you by God...and you can use this faith to be saved...Ephesians, Chapter 2, Verses 8 and 9...

EPHESIANS 2:8

For by God the Father’s grace you have been saved through faith (in Christ for salvation)...and that grace and that faith and that salvation are not from the source of yourselves...it is the gift of God the Father...

EPHESIANS 2:9

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...so being saved is not as a result of your works (deeds you have done in self-righteousness)...so that no one may boast (about saving himself).

Right now, the Lord Jesus Christ wants to save you. Funny thing about the young man I was talking to...he knew what faith is...he said to me, “It sounds like you’re saying if I put my confidence in Jesus Christ I will be saved forever.” It’s exactly what I am saying. Faith is placing your confidence in the object of your faith. John, Chapter 3, Verse 36 warns...

JOHN 3:36

“He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him.”

How can you get to heaven? Right where you sit, RIGHT NOW, you can tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the moment of eternal life for you. John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to the doubting apostle, Thomas, “I am the way (to salvation), and I am the truth (through the gospel message from the Word of God), and I am the resurrection life...and no one comes to God the Father (in heaven) but through believing in Me.”

Won’t you join me in heaven? If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ right now you will.

Mayor Harold Washington had no idea that he would not celebrate Thanksgiving in 1987...at least not on earth. Yet he was somewhere. He was in heaven or he was in hell. If you choose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you’ll have no concern about the moment you close your eyes in this life. You’ll be in heaven. You’ll have no chance to go to the Lake of Fire.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 35 asks a rhetorical question that we all know the answer to...

ROMANS 8:35

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Who will separate us from the unconditional love of Christ? Will tribulation separate us...or will distress separate us...or will persecution separate us...or will famine separate us...or will nakedness separate us... or will peril separate us...or will a sword separate us?

Of course the answer is nothing. Once you become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, John, Chapter 10, Verse 28 says...

JOHN 10:28

...and I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give eternal life to believers in Christ, and they will never perish...and no one will snatch them out of My hand!

Here's June Murphy to sing a Babbie Mason song...WHAT CAN SEPARATE YOU. Enjoy!

CLOSING SONG

WHAT CAN SEPARATE YOU

June Murphy

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Thanks for coming!

Thanks for watching!

Thanks for listening!

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