

Romans

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Preacher: Farley, J John (1903-1980)

[0 : 00] Amen. The scripture which I hope the Lord will enable me to speak to you from this morning is to be found in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 14, verse 19.

The Epistle to the Romans, chapter 14, verse 19. Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

We read in one place in the Word of God, All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, and for reproof and correction and instruction in righteousness.

Therefore, it is clear that this chapter, being a portion of the Word of God, contains, if grace and discernment be given to us to perceive the same, some instruction for us, as well as exhortation.

Correction, if need be, reproof, if need be. I would like to make it clear at the outset that this application of the Word, in whatever respect the Lord may see it to be needful, is in His hands alone.

[2 : 03] No man can do either of those things of himself. But if the Lord is pleased to use means, His voice may be heard, in spite of the fact that you are listening to only another sinner.

One lesson which seems to stand out to me very clearly in the chapter, after a very brief survey of the saying, seems to be this.

What a trifling matter is sufficient to cause discussion, dissension, disagreement, and those other various things which finally may lead to dismissal, disruption, and the very opposite, to peace.

Such a trivial thing about what we shall eat and when we shall eat it. And yet it had reached such proportions in the church, it had reached the ears of the Apostle, and the Spirit directed him to take the matter up and deal with the same at some length before reaching the exhortations in our text.

Let us look then, as helped, at what the Apostle exhorts after dealing with this matter. Let us, I want to wait there a moment, it applies in its widest sense to the whole church of God.

[3 : 57] Let us, whether Apostles, or whatever office we may hold, or however small we may be in the church, or the congregation of his people, it still applies, let us, it applies in particular to every community where his children gather together for worship, suitably each might receive this word without any distinction or definition, let us, and the same thing applies to every individual.

It means this morning, if I'm God's servant, I wouldn't like presumptuously to lay claim to this, but I hope I may prove to be yet, then he has sent this message to us this morning gathered here.

Let us, means you and I, equally, this morning. And so we do well, pay attention carefully to that which is exhorted since it is addressed to us.

Therefore, what does the word therefore indicate? it means, among other things, because of this, for this reason, on this account, or by reason of what has gone before, therefore, seeing that there are things which militate powerfully against peace, therefore, for this reason, let us, you see the point, don't you?

There's an especial reason why we should follow after the things which make for peace, the reason being, clearly, that there are so many things in us, about us, which militate against peace.

[6 : 18] it sometimes assists in the meditation of God's word to study first the negatives to prove the positive.

Let's look at one or two things as the spirit may guide which militate against peace and then we may be led into the reverse, the things which will make for peace.

I know, of course, that the one main thing which militates against peace and everything else that is of a godly nature is sin.

But this has tributaries. It has various things flowing from it in a particular way which operate at different times and under different circumstances.

And one of the worst of these things belonging to proceeding from sin is pride. Oh, what a hideous sin is this of pride and the holiness of man's spirit by nature.

[7 : 41] Self-seeking, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, all these things, if left by God, will cause a poor sinner to be the cause of the very opposite of promoting peace.

There's mention in the word of God of one who would be in the forefront. He loved to have the preeminence, another cause of disturbance in the community if ever there was one.

I've mentioned these without seeking to apply the word in any sense, only in a general way by way of exposition and explanation.

These things militate against peace in the community. I'll leave the matter of personal peace and hope to look at it later if helped.

I feel at the moment my concern is your community, our community. Indeed, I feel I must keep to the word this morning, let us, those of us who are here, examine ourselves as to what is really in our mind.

[9 : 05] examine our motives, call our thoughts and actions o'er and see whether they in any way measure up to the profession we have made of his name, whether we do indeed walk as those who have learned the truth as it is in Jesus and have so learned Christ.

if these things are in us that I have mentioned, we are likely to be a thorn in the flesh to those who fear God.

We are likely to be a crooked stick in the bundle and there are those who seem determined at times to be in the forefront and there are those of course who are put there and usually speaking they are the ones who feel the least worthy are suited to be there.

But the Lord knows exactly how to prepare for any office he has designed and you will find the spirit never inflates a person when he is preparing such a person to serve him in any particular capacity.

He brings him down shows him in some measure or her either what they really are by nature their utter need of grace their complete need of pardoning mercy and when he has finally brought them to the stage of feeling the most helpless then he usually says go forward.

[10 : 56] Go forward now. Well such will under the help and protection and guidance of the spirit of God be led to make for peace will work for peace will endeavor to attain to peace that will be their motive but not at any price.

I don't want to be misunderstood. There is such a thing as having to stand for right things. That's very different. The end in view then finally is peace because there could be no peace where there is error.

No real peace. Things must be right and on a right foundation based on the scriptures of truth if there are to be finally things which make for peace.

Unless it should be thought that I have overdrawn the picture and that the human nature is not as bad as I have painted let me remind you of that occasion when Jesus said to his disciples what was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way?

What was it that was engaging your attention? what was it you were in such earnest conversation about? Well he knew what it was. He didn't need to ask them but he put the question to them to just give them to understand that he was acquainted with what it was.

[12 : 31] They were wondering who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. What did he say? He that will be the greatest among you let him become your servant.

Then what did he say? He said this and it should touch us if we are touchable I am among you as one that serve the son of God.

Think of this and think of the spirit that pervaded in such rich measure in Jesus Christ the son of God. And then oh my friends how much we need to seek for a greater portion of that spirit to be granted to us.

To be willing to serve. To esteem others better than ourselves. To walk humbly before God. To in other words follow after the things which make for peace.

Well what is one thing which will then obviously greatly assist in this. It is humility. Yes humility.

[13 : 47] It was so important that another apostle said this be clothed with humility. Let it be your garment your cover. And after all it's something that can be seen isn't it that which we wear.

And so it should be obvious that the Lord has humbled us and meekened and meekened us. What did Jesus say? I like to get to his words on all occasions if I possibly can.

And as directed he said take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart. And ye shall find rest to your souls peace.

Well my desire is I can honestly say not to come and reprove. It is simply to pass on this message to you this morning.

Let us follow after the things which make for peace. All of us. all of us.

[15 : 00] Now our younger friends may perhaps say well we can't do much in that. But you can. And it's highly essential and most desirable that you should begin to follow on to these things while young in years.

That this mind should be in you. A desire for peace. Very great mercy to possess this. if we desire for peace and a spirit of contention and dissension is removed from us or subdued within us why then we shall walk much more closely to the prince of peace.

peace. It's a great mercy to be dealt with young in years and since this cause of truth is blessed with so many young people my earnest desire is that there may be many early seekers for the word of God says they shall find.

find what? Why the sweet gift of peace may it be yours and mine then more earnestly to seek to follow after the things that make for peace and quietness.

peace. Now there's one serious aspect that I must bring before you as well as our own natures to which I have referred we have an enemy and that enemy is opposed to peace the peace which is in the Lord Jesus Christ he is bitterly opposed to he's the author of confusion he's the author of trouble he likes to stir up these things he's Satan now I've at least fulfilled one duty this morning in warning you about his power he is not a weak enemy he's a fearful foe very powerful and against him we have no might of our own it is essential that when attacked by this enemy we should use at least one weapon if we haven't the power or the ability to use the other there are two weapons for the child of

[17 : 28] God and some of us who hope we're more advanced in the way can't always lay hold of the first and have to betake ourselves to the second the first is the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and we can't always lay hold of it the other is prayer praying always all prayer that's the weapon and my young friends you'll need it and so we all shall in striving to follow that path and the things which make for peace but here we have a divine helper on the other hand I'm not here this morning to discourage you but rather to point to you that though we have a tremendously powerful foe we have one that is mightier than he on our side if we're his yes he cannot prevail against our helper but still you will find it necessary to appeal to him to come to your aid when in distress

I believe one had a little look at what he could do or be left to do if his nature prevailed when he wrote these lines save us from the rocks and shelves save us chiefly from ourselves hope some of us might take that word home and think upon it very carefully it may help us in our desire to follow after the things which make for peace now I've spoken in very general terms about peace largely in the community but there's a more divine and blessed aspect to this which I hope concerns many of us individually we want to follow after the things which make for inward peace inward peace oh what favored people are they who have ever felt the least measure of this flow into their soul when you realize that by nature we are enmity to

God and peace from all natural standpoints is absolutely impossible you will realize to some extent I trust the debt we owe to a mediator who has made peace possible and I know that in this sanctuary your pastor is often referred to the solemn price paid by that divine mediator that peace might be possible for poor sinners the word that has just come in is this peace by his cross has Jesus made the church his ever living head solemn way in which this was procured and if these few words have touched a heart somewhere I do hope they have because that's a cold heart that doesn't respond to the sufferings of the redeemer a very cold unfeeling heart that doesn't respond with a measure of sympathy and love toward him who died that we might enter into peace might taste it in this life and have an expectation and gracious hope of eternal peace when our journey here is ended shall we ever be able in the smallest measure to pay a might of tribute to him who is so deserving of all the praise that we can render for peace two main ways in the scriptures there are others of course in the experience of

God's children which make for peace one of them is an oft quoted scripture but I'll quote it again it's very precious to me be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God just briefly a personal word here there was just one occasion in my life when that word was applied and I can't explain the joy that I felt at the time unworthy though I felt of such an honor let your requests be made known unto God you think it over the wonder of it that such a sinner should be permitted to speak to God and let his requests be made known to God in heaven it's possible it's permissible it's encouraged and if the Lord speaks that into any heart today they'll go home rejoicing and they'll know what peace is because the words that follow are these and the peace of

God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus oh precious peace what a relief from the anxiety and care with which we're so often troubled about numerous things probably more than half of which do not deserve the attention we pay them and I'm sure of this that we're not sufficiently concerned about things that really matter and which might more often be the substance and subject of our requests but if you would know peace in this world enjoy the peace which is promised in the text it flows obviously from committing your way to God one of my favorite texts and so I suppose it will come into my poor ministry commit thy way unto the

[24 : 08] Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass there's peace there's relief from conflict and turmoil and the winds that blow you know what I mean who fear God there's one who can say to the roughest storm and the highest tempest and the most turbulent waves peace be still and immediately there will be a great calm I hope I'm talking to some who know what that is make for peace that's one thing there's another it's such a choice gift of heaven such a precious jewel it comes like this to some though it didn't to me not in those words but he does to son son daughter thy sins be forgiven thee go in peace ah if you've been the recipient of this thing this gracious blessed thing forgiveness you know what it is to feel peace

I've tried in my time to try to explain the peace that one feels in those circumstances but I have to admit it's impossible no it must be felt to be understood in the least measure so I would say to those who have felt it rejoice forgiven sinners go to heaven forgiven sinners enter into peace the Lord promises in the word he shall enter into peace peace yes he will she will when sin is forgiven and it will lead to that which is honoring to God he says this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise they must have a reason for it my friends if it's to be sincere otherwise you can sing and think of something else ah how we live to prove this but if the

Lord has touched your heart or spoken peace within you will sing with a reason your desire being to pay your humble tribute to a God of great compassion and tender mercy so one said this in the hymn and I often join him do you thy pardoning voice oh let me hear to still my unbelieving fear nor let me fall I pray oh what a word but it means peace to the recipient and the word this morning is let us therefore you and I follow after the things which make for peace always remembering as I've tried to hint already how peace was procured how it is purveyed how it is received what it will do to whom it will lead and you will know that it's a right performance if it leads you to the throne of grace and the mercy seat to bow there with humble gratitude and thankfulness and prayer to be kept peace what a state the world is in the present time wherever you look what can you describe it as a most uneasy peace a most unsettled peace and what is the reason sin the most solemn word in the word of

God a very trying word and yet it's a word which as the children of God we must fall under solemn though it is this is it there is no peace saith my God to the wicked no peace well how this does illustrate the ineffectiveness of all the efforts of man to procure international peace it's not possible you will say they do right to strive to attain it we must leave that matter the word of God declares it's impossible to attain to there should be wars and rumors of wars till the earth ceases and the world comes to an end I know that's a sad and solemn thing to have to say but it's the word of God but there is this blessing of peace which is given to an election of grace we constantly refer in our ministry to the children of God and it is to his children that he gives this peace but he provides a way for them to walk in that they shall follow after to make to get to the things which make for peace and the main way in which it is revealed to us upon earth has already been referred to it's by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to rest all our affairs upon the hand of and into the hand of an unerring wise and gracious

God who will give peace in providential matters commitment of our sins and sinners conscious of our need of the Savior are led by the Spirit to confide our whole soul's well-being into his gracious hands if peace flows from providential commitment certainly peace will from spiritual commitment of our souls into his keeping let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace peace one more word upon this particular clause and that is that the peace which God gives to his children is like himself eternal in his nature it will be that which is sometimes sung on but I fear so little experience peace perfect peace we see in this dark world of sin the voice of Jesus whispers peace within for this is the peace which is eternal in its nature because it is founded upon an eternal foundation the work and merits of the

[31 : 56] Lord Jesus Christ nevertheless the important thing concerning you and I is that we should ever strive to maintain peace that is why I read the word I did endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace the last word last verse shows the various virtues which if they be found within us will aid our following after those things be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another let me stop there there are so many things in our daily contacts with people which require this virtue to be in active exercise lives but that's not the only thing it's you'll excuse the expression it's a two way matter we need to be forgiven as well as to forgive but surely and I believe this was in the apostles mind this spirit should be prevalent among those who fear

God and hope they have been forgiven by the Lord Jesus and for his sake incidentally that was the word which assured me of my personal forgiveness several years ago now and you heard my poor prayer that it might be revived and renewed I feel to need it even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you that's the word I rest upon that's where my hope is if that proves vain I fall but I don't want to put a big if in front of that I want to remember it and I sometimes ask the Lord to remember it and I have the psalmist with me in this remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope it is that I am forgiven though so much remains still to forgive and therefore surely there should be found in you and I a tenderness of spirit sufficient to be willing to forgive there will be need for it and as I have said we shall need it too oh that this might be more often in their minds that we need the forgiveness as well as giving it it isn't just one way it's both ways then with tenderness in their hearts and a kindly feeling to one another we should deal gently with one another there's a word I feel I ought to give to the young people it's the words of

Jesus again here it is blessed are the peacemakers why ah they should be called the children of God what a wonderful privilege what a wonderful thing to be a peacemaker the Lord grant that in this community there may be very many peacemakers they're the children of God and they're a great help in the community the Lord blesses each with the desire to be a peacemaker and to follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another what is it to edify the word is variously interpreted it's one of a very wide range of interpretation and it doesn't seem altogether possible to really put in our language what the original seeks to convey you will say to edify is to instruct that's only true to a point because there's such a thing as wrong instruction as we know today so well there's much teaching but it isn't all good there's much teaching but it isn't all sound there's much instruction but it doesn't edify because it's not profitable in fact it's the reverse so at the commencement we must say that to edify will involve instructing to profit instructing rightly instructing according to the word of

God giving instruction according to the mind of Christ this is to edify while we are told by those who understand the original language which I do not that the apostle often used this metaphor basing it upon edification as relating to an edifice you'll know that he referred to the building you'll know that he said you are the temple of the living God and many other references to the children of God being but small parts of a building things wherewith one may edify another so if we look at this in the sense of that interpretation we shall see that it is a means of preparation to be inserted in the building what a wonderful mercy to have at any time been in the Lord's hands some help to some other member of the community that's what it really means to be useful to others to give suitable instruction at a suitable time

I know there's a great deal of right things said at the wrong time our sense of timing is as faulty at times as our sense of what is right I've been in my life much impressed by this and I believe it has been the spirit of God who has impressed me it's constantly with me and in my ministry such as it is a time to keep silence time to speak two distinct times and we need much wisdom as to when to do the one or the other but if we're to edify there must be something which will be either seen or heard did you notice seen there's a moral proverb which says this example is better than precept what does this mean this means the walk as well as the talk that which is seen as well as that which is heard oh what grace we need in this sense to edify one another to really show whose we are and whom we serve and don't forget that the word commenced and still applies let us therefore follow after things wherewith one may edify another that's the word and the young people again will say well that doesn't concern us does it but it does but it does my friends let me put it extremely simple you are watched by other people just the same as the grown ups are they say they go there see and look what they do who'd have thought that they would have done that when they go there you see what I mean well we all need much grace and the keeping power of the

[40 : 10] Holy Spirit and his divine aid if we are to live in such a way that our light in any little measure shines before men to the glory of God and that's what we wanted to do isn't it isn't that what we wish we could do doesn't that form sometimes the substance of our desires for more grace to show whose we are and whom we serve my young friends I hope you will be helped to set a good example to those about you by your walk you may not be called upon to say a thing but it would be a wonderful mercy if your actions speak louder than words won't it and if that applies to the children it certainly does much more to us who are older and those of us who are further on the way if I might say such a thing I mean of course nearer the end of the pilgrimage journey why it's incumbent upon us to let our light so shine isn't it and what a dull light it is sometimes some of us wonder if it's gone out occasionally and yet there is this things wherewith one may edify another is there the dropping of a word the word spoken in

I've lost word spoken in season how good it is but it isn't always given to us to know just what word will suit the case and therefore I believe the only safe procedure in this matter is to have regard to the word of God and his instruction upon it which is this it should be given you in that hour what she ought to speak that's the important thing isn't it now that can come from any child of God to another if it's given what a wonderful mercy if we this morning are here stimulated to seek for the grace that is necessary to give suitable words at a suitable time to those obviously in need of a word it may be comfort it may be merely a word establishing friendliness but I believe I can in this sense from personal experience show you how this will come about there will exist between kindred spirits a spark which will set a flame

I know this from personal experience there are some people when you meet with them they cause you to respond they draw you out perhaps unintentionally but there it is well I believe God looks upon this with approbation there's a word which says this then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another not about earthly things I don't believe either spake often one to another and the Lord heartened and heard it evidently with approval what a wonderful thing it would be if there was more of this today I think we must admit sorrowfully that there's a lack of this in our communities gracious conversation there seems no time for it does there but there's time for other things isn't there and there's time for other conversation isn't there oh dear

I don't like to go into these things but when you go out from the services sometimes what do you hear gracious conversation hope of eternal life being discussed a sweet sense of sin forgiven once more awakened in the soul or what is it I won't go into it because you know what it is and so do I oh that there might be then more a close following the things which by which we're with one may edify another it's a great thing to be able to give good counsel some of us have had cause to be thankful for godly companions and let me remind you of this it's possible to find a brother in the faith not necessarily a brother in the family but a brother in the faith with whom you can walk and your conversation does edify each other it's a mutual benefit and by this means god in heaven is glorified oh that we might be favored with more of this gracious conversation and ability to edify one another it's just time for one other word the lord raises up some to do this for the young

I believe it's carried on here and I believe that those who take this task in hand often realize what need they have of replenishing themselves that they may suitably edify those who are younger well may the lord who called them to the task still graciously supply their needs in this I believe it will finally prove that these two scriptures work together as scripture so often does if you and I are favored with a measure of grace sufficient to cause us to be made useful to others we shall enjoy in return peace in our consciences and still I would desire to close on that note of eternal peace for there is nothing so valuable as this and to remind ourselves how it was purchased still this man thy peace shall be sang the hymn writer and we believe that in him and in him alone is to be found true peace of mind the lord grant us this favor let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another the lord pardon all that has been amiss amen and time