



JULY 2019



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

The following is an article by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson a Reformed Theologian, Pastor, Author, and Professor. He is also Scottish and sounds like Sean Connery. This article deals with Christian Liberty and I thought it would be appropriate for the month of July as we celebrate our liberties in this country to understand what are liberty in Christ truly means.

It was years ago now, but I still remember the discussion. I was making my way out of our church building some time after the morning service had ended, and was surprised to find a small group of people still engaged in vigorous conversation. One of them turned and said to me, "Can Christians eat black pudding?" To the uninitiated in the mysteries of Scottish haute cuisine, it should perhaps be said that black pudding is not haggis! It is a sausage made of blood and suet, sometimes with flour or meal.

It seems a trivial question. Why the vigorous debate? Because, of course, of the Old Testament's regulations about eating blood (Lev. 17:10ff). Although (as far as I am aware) no theological dictionary contains an entry under B for "The Black Pudding Controversy," this unusual discussion raised some most basic hermeneutical and theological issues:

How is the Old Testament related to the New?

How is the Law of Moses related to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

How should a Christian exercise freedom in Christ?

The Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15, sought to answer such practical questions faced by the early Christians as they wrestled with how to enjoy freedom from the Mosaic administration without becoming stumbling blocks to Jewish people. These were questions to which Paul in particular gave a great deal of thought. He was, after all, one of those appointed by the Jerusalem Council to circulate and explain the letter that summarized the decisions of the apostles and elders (Acts 15:22ff; 16:4). Faced with similar issues in the church at Rome, he provided them with a series of principles that

apply equally well to twenty-first-century Christians. His teaching in Romans 14:1-15:13 contains healthy (and very necessary) guidelines for the exercise of Christian liberty.

Here are four of them:

Principle 1: Christian liberty must never be flaunted. "Whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God" (Rom. 14:22, NIV). We are free in Christ from the Mosaic dietary laws; Christ has pronounced all food clean (Mark 7:18-19). We may eat black pudding after all! *But you do not need to exercise your liberty in order to enjoy it.* Indeed, Paul elsewhere asks some very penetrating questions of those who insist on exercising their liberty whatever the circumstances: Does this really build up others? Is this really liberating you—or has it actually begun to enslave you (Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 6:12)? The subtle truth is that the Christian who *has* to exercise his or her liberty is in bondage to the very thing he or she insists on doing. Says Paul, if the kingdom consists for you in food, drink, and the like, you have missed the point of the gospel and the freedom of the Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

Principle 2: Christian liberty does not mean that you welcome fellow Christians only when you have sorted out their views on X or Y (or with a view to doing that).

God has welcomed them in Christ, as they are; so should we (Rom. 14:1, 3). True, the Lord will not leave them as they are. But He does not make their pattern of conduct the basis of His welcome. Neither should we. We have many responsibilities for our fellow Christians, but being their judge is not one of them. Christ alone is that (Rom. 14:4, 10-13). How sad it is to hear (as we do far too often) the name of another Christian mentioned in conversation, only for someone to pounce immediately on him or her in criticism. That is not so much a mark of discernment as it is the evidence of a judgmental spirit. What if the measure we use to judge others becomes the measure used to judge us (Rom. 14:10-12; Matt. 7:2)?

Principle 3: Christian liberty ought never to be used in such a way that you become a stumbling block to another Christian (Rom. 14:13). When Paul states this principle, it is not a spur-of-the-moment reaction, but a settled principle he has thought out and to which he has very deliberately committed himself (see 1 Cor. 8:13). When that commitment is made, it eventually becomes so much a part of our thinking that it directs our behavior instinctively. We are given liberty in Christ in order to be the servants of others, not in order to indulge our own preferences.

(continued on back)

Principle 4: Christian liberty requires grasping the principle that will produce this true biblical balance: "We ... ought ... not to please ourselves.... For even Christ did not please himself" (Rom. 15:1-3). There is something devastatingly simple about this. It reduces the issue to the basic questions of love for the Lord Jesus Christ and a desire to imitate Him since His Spirit indwells us to make us more like Him. True Christian liberty, unlike the various "freedom" or "liberation" movements of the secular world, is not a matter of demanding the "rights" we have. Dare one say that the American Founding Fathers, for all their wisdom, may have inadvertently triggered off a distortion of Christianity by speaking about our "rights" to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? The Christian realizes that before God he or she possesses no "rights" by nature. In our sinfulness, we have forfeited all of our "rights." Only when we recognize that we do not deserve our "rights" can we properly exercise them as privileges. Sensitivity to others in the church, especially weaker others, depends on this sense of our own unworthiness. If we assume that we have liberties to be exercised at all costs, we become potentially lethal weapons in a fellowship, all too capable of destroying someone for whom Christ has died (Rom. 14:15, 20).

That does not mean that I must become the slave of another's conscience. John Calvin puts the point well when he says that we restrain the exercise of our freedom for the sake of weak believers, but not when we are faced with Pharisees who demand that we conform to what is unscriptural. Where the gospel is at stake, liberty needs to be exercised; where the stability of a weak Christian is at stake, we need to restrain it.

This is all part and parcel of "living between the times." Already, in Christ, we are free, but we do not yet live in a world that can cope with our freedom. One day we will enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Then may we eat black pudding whenever and wherever we want to! But not yet. For now, as Martin Luther wrote, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." As it was with the Master, so it is with the servant.

*In His Name & For His Glory,
Pastor Tim*

Deaconess of the Month:
Lynn Abitz
Communion is Sunday, July 7

Birthdays:

3—Rick Hinz
20—Sheryl Zwerg
25—Gary Snortum
27—Betty Callahan



Happy Anniversary

7—Ron & Cindy Kempen
13—Bill & Doris Olson

If you have events and need bulletin inserts
made please send me the information by
Tuesday of each week.

St Joseph's Food Pantry

Each month we will collect
non-perishable food items.
Place your food items on the
table provided in the foyer.



***July 7, 5 pm
Ask PT***

Evening Service

***July 14, 5 pm
July 28, 5 pm***



Fox River Baptist Vision Statement

We desire that everyone who enters Fox River Baptist Church grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in authentic, loving, familial relationships to make the name of Christ known in our community and world, all for the glory of God and joy of all.

Nursery Schedule



July 7
Stephanie Smith & Elle Pogreba
July 14
Catherine Smith & Kate Pogreba
July 21
Rhonda & Anna Dohms
July 28
Gene Pogreba & Bryce Middlestead

Usher Schedule



July 7
Ron Van Asten & Keith Brown
July 14
Jeff Middlestead & Jerry Kroehler
July 21
Kyle Tubbs & Ryan Smith
July 28
Ron Kempen & Jay Hoffman

Financial Update

June 2-23, 2019
Budget needed weekly: \$ 2606.00
Received: \$ 2515.00
Contact Rob Mlodzik with questions.



Online giving is available on the website:
www.foxriverbaptist.com. Contact Bill Olson
if you have any questions.

Conference Room

***If you would like to use the Conference Room
(#5) for your meetings or activities please sign
the calendar on the door with name and time.***

***Fox River Baptist Church
2600 E. Henry Street
Appleton, WI 54915
920-734-6162***

***Website: foxriverbaptist.com
Email: office@foxriverbaptist.com
Office Hours:
Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon***



Backyard Bible & Basketball
Fox River Baptist Church
2700 E Henry Street Appleton, WI
54915

920-734-6162

www.foxriverbaptist.com

Sign up available on website.
We will be providing supervised
care on Friday mornings from
June 14th — August 9th (except on July 5th)

****A special basketball free camp will
be provided the week of August 12th,
more details to follow.**



Sunday, July 21
11:00 am
Colony Oaks Park

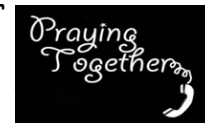
The church will provide the main dish,
water and paper products.

A sheet is available on the counter in the
foyer to sign up for side dishes and
desserts.

Bring your chairs!
Games and activities will be provided!

Praises & Prayers

Here at FRBC, we have a prayer
chain meant for the sharing of
prayer request needs and for
sharing praise for the awesome
& mighty work God does in our
lives. Please feel free to share any praise or re-
quest at our new prayer request email address:
prayer@foxriverbaptist.com



**Care to be part of the prayer chain? Email or
call Shari Middlestead: shari@middlestead.com
(920)209-1989 or
Renee Brown: eenr654@gmail.com
(920)428-5306**