

Lent Day 34

Saturday April 8, 2017

Reading: Romans 14:13-23

13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

Reflection

I love movies. That's not a surprise to anyone who knows me for any length of time. I remember while working at Tyndale talking about the movie Good Will Hunting with a Seminary student. I was flummoxed that he hadn't seen the movie — a sin in my mind! So, I offered to loan it to him — insisted more like. He, hesitatingly, accepted to borrow it. At the last moment though he turned to me and said, "There isn't a lot of sex in it is there? I don't like to watch movies with a lot of sex." Again, I was puzzled — sex in media is just par for the course.

What I've learned over the years of being a Christian is that everyone has different thresholds. For some people sex, drugs, and language is just background to the plot of the story. For others they are deeply difficult and can cause harm. Paul has a similar thing in mind as he addresses the Romans.

For them the question is about food. There are some who fear the meat they eat could be meat that was sacrificed to an idol, which would be destructive. But, there are others who can say, well all meat comes from God so I can thank God and eat up. Think about those two people sharing a table. They could look at each other and judge; you're a fool to not eat and you're going to bring down God's wrath on your own head because you do!

Paul says judging each other as lacking is the wrong way to go about it — whether movie content or food. Rather, our concern which is love for the Lord and community worked out in practice is to ensure nothing harms the other. I have gotten better at recognizing that the content I can stomach is not the same for everyone, so I do a better job at letting them know what might be harmful if they watch. That's one example of not putting a stumbling block in the way of a brother or sister. Where do you need to adjust?

Prayer

Lord, help us to look to the other as we navigate our faith. Do not let us ruin another for the sake of our own rights. Amen.