

The background features ancient Roman stone ruins under a warm, golden light. A prominent circular stone archway is visible on the left side. A semi-transparent cross-shaped graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image. The word "ROMANS" is written in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

ROMANS

Transition/Hingepoint ... (Romans 12-15)

1. Romans 1-3: **God's glory.**
 - doctrine of *Total Depravity*.
2. Romans 4-8: **God's love.**
 - doctrines of *Justification & Sanctification*.
3. Romans 9-11: **God's sovereignty and my responsibility.**
 - doctrines of *Election & Free will*.

4. Romans 12-15: **Transformed Relationships.**
 - what happens when I give God ALL of me.

God's Mercies

Rom. 12:1

My New Life

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy, ...

Romans 12

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy,

- ***Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God*** – this is your spiritual act of worship.
- ² ***Do not conform*** to the pattern of this world, ***but be transformed*** by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Because of God's mercies ...be transformed:

1. Live in His mercy, not in your fear. (Rom. 12:1-2)
2. See the Church through God's eyes. (Rom. 12:3-8)
3. Create together a healthy Church. (Rom. 12:9-13)
4. Express Jesus to a broken world. (Rom. 12:14-21)
5. Understand & honour the State's role in your lives. (Rom. 13:1-7)
6. Live prepared and ready for Jesus' return. (Rom. 13:8-21)

This Week: Because of God's mercies... (Rom. 14:1 - 15:8)

... Respect and care for each other.

Truth: All of us bring the past into our new life with Jesus ...

- the good things, the bad things, the broken things.
- the events & relationships that have made us what we are.

... **and our pasts are not the same.**

The issue: *What happens when our pasts collide?*

(... and why do they?)

14 *Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters ... ²² Whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

15 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

Romans 14-15

“The weak” and “the strong”: Who are they?

1. Paul is not talking about disagreements regarding **essential matters** of biblical truth, but **non-essential matters** of personal conviction.
 - matters that Christ has freed us from, but that our past continues to convict us about.

1st Century Church: Food, Festivals, Customs.

- Jewish feasts, holy days & circumcision. (Roman Church)
 - Jewish Christians: *we must keep them!*
 - Gentile Christians: *who cares.*
- Gentile feasts, holy days & foods. (Corinthian Church)
 - Jewish Christians: *who cares.*
 - Gentile Christians: *we must abandon them!*

² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables ...

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another person considers every day alike.

The Christians in Rome – Romans 14

⁴ So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God...

⁷ However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated.

The Christians in Corinth – 1 Corinthians 8

“The weak” and “the strong”: Who are they?

1. Paul is not talking about disagreements regarding *essential matters* of biblical truth, but *non-essential matters* of personal conviction.
 - matters that Christ has freed us from, but that our past continues to convict us about.

21st Century Church:

alcohol	ordination of women;	climate change
Halloween	young earth/old earth	war & non-resistance
spanking	capital punishment	political affiliation
capitalism	Revelation/end times	Vancouver Canucks.

“The weak” and “the strong”: Who are they?

2. The “Weak” are Christians that are still struggling with their freedom in Christ.

- their past prevents them from seeing that something they consider essential is not ... it does *not* apply to everyone, and does *not* matter to God.
- their temptation is to lose focus concerning their freedom in Christ, and focus on religious behavior & tradition.
 - forgetting that they are justified through faith in Christ alone, and not in religious rule-keeping.
- their tendency is to apply their not yet fully-formed understanding to those who are free.

Note: We are not talking about legalistic Christians who are not weak but just plain obstinate - demanding their own way and selfishly holding others hostage.

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud
⁵ or rude. **It does not demand its own way, and is not irritable ...**

1 Corinthians 13

“The weak” and “the strong”: Who are they?

3. The “Strong” are Christians who know that they are free in Christ, and not bound by non-essential things.
 - they have worked through their former convictions and are free from religious thinking & obligation.
 - their temptation is to lose focus that the freedom they possess comes with great responsibility.
 - it is *possessed* in Christ (vertical).
 - it is *exercised* with others (horizontal).
 - their tendency is to insist on enjoying their freedom, while looking down on the weak.

Too many Christians are concerned about their own rights, forgetting that in Christ we have given up all our rights, submitting our lives to Him.

T.H. Epp

Four Essentials God Wants Us To Learn & Apply:

- 1. Liberty.** Jesus, my Savior, has set me free from my past. (v.v.3-4, 14a)
 - **as I mature in Christ and follow Him, I will increase in my freedom.**

² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them ...

¹⁴ I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat ...

Reminder: We are not accepted by God because of “dos & don'ts”, but because of His Son, who, while we were still in sin, gave His life for us.

Four Essentials God Wants Us To Learn & Apply:

2. **Integrity.** In spite of my freedom in Christ, I may have strong convictions on non-essential matters. (v.v. 5-8, 22-23)

- **God wants me to live my personal convictions with integrity.**

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.

⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God ...

¹⁴ I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong... ²³ If you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions.

Four Essentials God Wants Us To Learn & Apply:

3. **Responsibility.** Jesus commands me to love my brother/sister, and not disrupt & destroy His transforming work in them.

- **If I am Weak:** I must not judge/condemn my “older” sibling. (10-13)

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat...¹² Each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. ¹³ So let's stop passing judgment on one another...

Four Essentials God Wants Us To Learn & Apply:

3. **Responsibility.** Jesus commands me to love my brother/sister, and not disrupt & destroy His transforming work in them.

- If I am Weak: I must not judge/condemn my “older” sibling. (10-13)
- **If I am Strong:** I must not insist on my freedom if it distresses my “younger” brother/sister. (15-19)

¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are not longer acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good. ¹⁷ For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

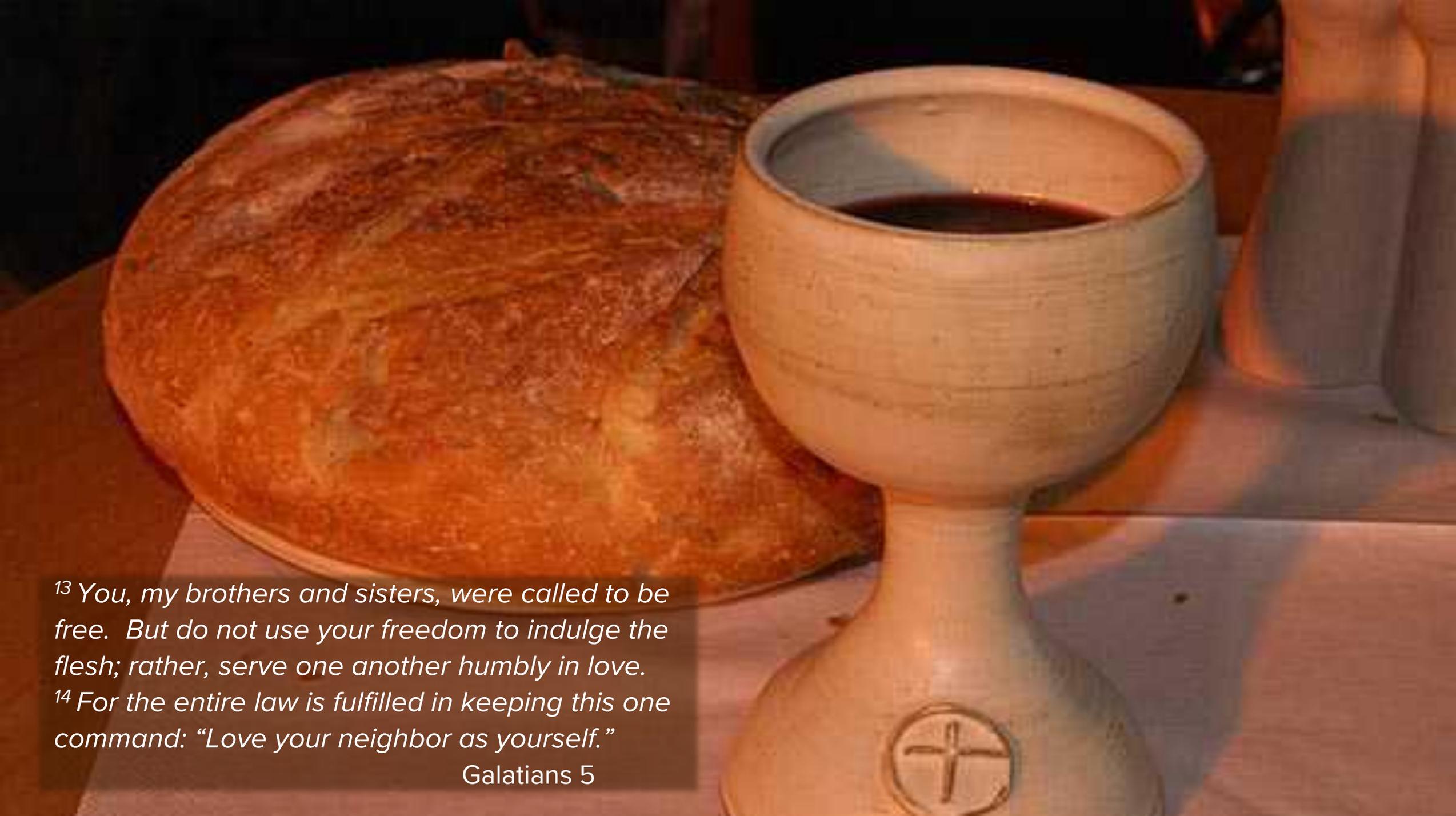
Four Essentials God Wants Us To Learn & Apply:

4. **Unity.** Our love, concern & respect for each other expresses Jesus to each other and glorifies God. (15:1-8)

***15** We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up ...*

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Accept each other, then, just as Christ has accepted you, so that God will be given glory. ⁸ Remember that Christ came as a servant ...



¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5