Twitter Thread by Tom Schreiner



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I think Romans 14 helps us on the matter of wearing masks, though I am not saying that those who believe we should wear masks are weak in faith.

Remember in Romans 14 the strong believed they could eat foods that were unclean according to the OT (Lev. 11 & Deut. 14), and they also believed that the sabbath and special feast days were no longer mandatory.

The weak thought one should refrain from eating food deemed unclean in the OT and also believed the sabbath and other feasts should be observed.

Paul clearly agrees with the strong theologically. No food is unclean now that the new covenant has arrived and Christ has come (Rom. 14:14, 20). The feast and sabbath days are no longer required (Rom. 14:5–6).

Still, when with the weak, they should refrain from eating unclean foods out of love for their brothers and sisters who think differently.

Notice this: the conscience of the strong gave them freedom to eat. They were convinced before God (and they were right!) that they were free to eat. It was part of their freedom in Christ!

But Paul says: your personal freedom isn't what should determine your actions when you are with the weak. What is more important is sacrificial love, the same kind of love Christ displayed in giving his life for us.

The same principles are at stake when believers are gathered. You may believe masks are worthless and even a government imposition.

My point in this post isn't to adjudicate the issue of wearing masks. Let's stipulate, for the sake of argument, that those who say masks don't do any good are correct (remember this is just for the sake of argument—I am not getting into whether the masks are helpful or not).

Even if the masks don't help, some believers think they are necessary. They feel that is safer to wear masks. They believe masks protect them from the virus.

Even if you disagree, you should wear the mask out of love for your brother and sister. Paul teaches we are to sacrifice our freedom for the sake of others, to show love for others.

What if you say, but not wearing a mask is a matter of conscience and conviction? But the strong in Romans 14 had the conviction that they were free to eat unclean food. The freedom to eat was a matter of conscience.

Paul says, when you are with the weak, don't live by your conscience, but theirs! Love them by wearing the mask, even if you think it is silly and stupid.

And notice what else Paul says to the strong (Rom. 14:3). Don't mock or ridicule the weak. Don't make fun of those who are more conservative than you are. We love our brothers and sisters by doing what they desire in a situation like this.

The way of the cross, the way of love, is to wear a mask if others want us to do so. And if that's the hardest sacrifice, we have to make for our brothers and sisters, well it isn't very hard!