

"Weak and Strong"

Romans 14-15:13

December 11, 2011

The Point: God-Honoring, Gospel-Glorifying **Christian Unity**

The Problem: Disunity developing over diets, days, & drinks...

1 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. **2** One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. **3** The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, **for God has accepted him.** **4** Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And **he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.** **5** One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. **7** For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. **8** If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, **whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.** **9** For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the **Lord of both the dead and the living.** **10** You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. **11** It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" **12** So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God.**

The Remedy:

- 1. God accepts ALL TRUE Christians... so should we... (v.1-3)**
- 2. The Lord validates ALL TRUE Christians by sustaining them... (v.4)**
- 3. The Lord's blessing & grace is active in ALL TRUE Christians... (v.5-9)**
- 4. The Lord alone will judge His children... (v.10-12)**

The Principle: Disciple-defining truth in deep deliberate love

13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, **make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.** **14** As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. **15 If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother** for whom Christ died. **16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.** **17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in

the Holy Spirit, **18** because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. **19** Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **20 Do not destroy the work of God** for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. **21** It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. **23** But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and **everything that does not come from faith is sin.**

The Reminders:

1. **Don't ever cause other Christians to stumble... (v.13)**
2. **Don't ever cause other Christians to grieve... (v.14-15a)**
3. **Don't ever cause other Christians to be devastated... (v.15b)**
4. **Don't ever sacrifice the impact of your personal witness... (v.16-19)**
5. **Don't ever do anything that tears down God's work... (v.20-21)**
6. **Don't ever denounce/flaunt Christian weakness/strength... (v.22-23)**

The Pattern: Savior-like, loving, lifting, & unifying servitude

1 We who are strong ought to **bear with** the failings of the weak & **not to please ourselves.** **2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.** **3 For even Christ did not please himself** but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." **4 For everything that was written** in the past **was written to teach us,** so that through endurance & the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5 May the God who gives endurance & encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,** **6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** **7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.** **8** For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs **9** so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name." **10** Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." **11** And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and **sing praises to him, all you peoples.**" **12** And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, One who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in Him." **13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy & peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Spirit.

The Footsteps:

1. **Bear with one another... (v.1)**
2. **Don't seek to please yourself but rather, build up others... (v.2)**
3. **Always prioritize Christ-likeness... try to be like Jesus... (v.3)**
4. **Submit in all cases to the authority of Scripture... (v.4)**
5. **Seek supernatural wisdom, power, & unity at all times... (v.5)**
6. **Do all things (together or alone) to the glory of God! (v.6)**

The Purpose:

God will be glorified, in part, thru the **unified witness** of His gospel-championing, cross-carrying, joy-filled, hope-overflowing, fully-devoted, followers of Jesus, the Christ!