

## ROMANS 14:1-16 CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Paul is very interested in the way Christians treat other Christians.

He goes to great lengths in this section about this. Romans 14 starts a new section and is one of the book's longest parts.. It is the longest single part of the closing part of Romans, chapter 12 to the end. Why does Paul give so much length to this? This is about Christians accepting others when they don't agree on issues that are not essential. Is it really that important? Paul thought so. Having a Christian mind was devoted to only 2 verses. To have the right attitude to others was 6 verses. A call to love had 13 verses. Government dealt with 7 verses. Right conduct was 7 more verses. But now this topic required all of chapter 14 and half of 15.

### 1. HOW THE WEAK ARE TO BE TREATED-VV 1-12

#### A.WHO ARE THE WEAK? V 1

Verse 1 is the theme of the section. Weak is not necessarily defined here.

In one sense we are all weak. The only strength we have is from the Lord.

It seems to be a general thought here rather than a specific one because he uses eating and holy days as examples. In 1 Cor 8 and Galatians 4 and Col 2

He speaks of the same thing but a different context, basically legalism.

Weak in faith or weak in the faith, not understanding the full truth of the gospel

Weak in the understanding and living out the faith These are to be accepted by the mature.

The problem is that Christians are always dumping on each other. Some times there is good cause for that, but that is not the issue here. These people were wasting time finding fault with each other.

#### B. APPLICATION FOR TODAY v 1

1. When a Christian goes through adversity Like a husband has been deserted by his wife and had lost his job and can't support his family. Some well meaning Christian might come up to him and say you must be out of the will of God.. Or someone accuses him for failing to support his family.. God must be trying to get your attention.

2. How does one Christian measure up to another? We sometimes expect others to be like us. Somebody might be more "spiritual" than others in that they do devotions and others don't. Someone may read more spiritual books than others. ie James Strong

was considered to be not spiritual because he wasn't involved in hardly anything at church.

This went on for 20 years. What he contributed to the Christian world was the Strong's Conc.

3. Different denominations Church affiliations often divide Christians.

4. Personality difference One woman didn't like the humor Spurgeon put in his sermons. He replied back, Madam, you would think a great deal better of me if you knew the funny things

I kept out.. Another time a young man asked him what he should do about a box of cigars

he was given. Spurgeon said" Give them to me and I will smoke them to the glory of God.

Spurgeon used to travel to meetings in a first class railway carriage. One antagonist asked him

what he was doing up in first class while he was back in third class taking care of the Lord's money.

Spurgeon replied "And I am up here in the first class taking care of the Lord's servant.

#### C. THE COMMANDS v 1

1. Accept other Christians---(Prolambano) a command to accept others.

Willingly receive other Christians who differ with you.

John Murray said" There is to be no discrimination in respect of confidence, esteem and affection."

2. Don't judge others in non-essentials

#### D. TWO WRONG RESPONSES v 3

God receives all of us. God Himself does not make issue with such things,

why should we?

1. The strong despise the weak

2. The weak condemn the strong

Judge (Kriano) separating and isolating Finding the accused as guilty

Francis Schaeffer spoke of "the chasm" We divide ourselves from other Christians.

There should not be a chasm. The only chasm should be between Christians and non-Christians.

Contempt--(Exoutheneo) looking on someone who is totally worthless, nothing

or next to nothing, utter disdain or abhorrence

#### E. EATING CERTAIN FOODS v 2

God does not care what we eat but is concerned with what comes out of our hearts.

1. Jewish dietary law---Some Jews were troubled by the eating of certain foods because of idolatry practiced by other pagan religions in their offering meat for sacrifices. Like Peter in Acts 10 they were still weak. So they didn't want to be defiled they would eat vegetables only.

2. Gentile asceticism Some of the Greek and Roman philosophers dressed in plain clothes, ate

only vegetables and drank only water. Some of these became Christians but they wanted to live a simple lifestyle for they didn't want to be less pure than before they were Christians.

3. Eating meat sacrificed to idols 1 Cor 8:13

#### F. WHAT THE STRONG NEED TO KNOW V 4

1. Christians answer to God I Cor 4

2. God accepts Christians as they are

3. All Christians stand by the grace of God

4. All Christians are accountable to God Mt 12:36

#### G. HOLY DAYS VV 5-6

In the Middle Ages the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of the church divided over the filioque clause in the Nicene Creed. That dealt with whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father or the Father and the Son.

In the reformation period, there was a division over communion. There were differences between Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Luther kept repeating, This is my body. Zwingli said it was a remembrance service only while Calvin said it was the real presence of Jesus but only in the spiritual sense and not in the physical sense.

Gal 4:10-11, Col 2:16-17

1. Sabbath worship Exodus 31:3, 17

2. Sunday worship as the Sabbath

3. Sunday worship as the new Lord's Day

4. Conclusions

a. Each must be convinced in his own mind

b. Can serve the Lord either way

c. Thankfulness

#### H. LIVING AND DYING TO THE LORD VV 7-9

1. Living to God Coram deo before the face of God God's all seeing presence

2. Dying to God The way we are called to die is from God and we are to trust His manner.

Some go instantly and others decay over the course of years. If He is sovereign in our deaths He is sovereign in our lives. Is it a tragedy when we die? Is it a cosmic mistake? God is sovereign. We belong to Christ, what better comfort.

#### I. WE MUST ALL GIVE AN ACCOUNT VV 10-12

1. Judgment seat of Christ 1 Cor 3:11-15, 2 Cor 5:10

2. Accountable? Every word--Eph 4:29, 5:4, Mt 12:37

Talents-Mt 25:21,23, Money-Mt 6:19-21,24, Time

2. HOW THE STRONG ARE TO USE LIBERTY- VV 13-16

1. Legalist judgment

2. The underlying truth v 14

3. The strong and his responsibility vv 15-16

4. The strong need to give up their privileges