

February 2, 2011

Romans Chapter 14: 1 – 10

Title: The Weak and the Strong

Vs 1: Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Who is the weak person described in this verse? He is weak, not strong, but he is a believer because he is "in the faith." He is weak in his doctrinal understanding. Perhaps he is a new believer or perhaps a believer who has failed to grow in the things of God (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:1-4). Perhaps he has not been under sound teaching. This weak believer is not living in sin. There is no indication from the context that there is a moral problem involved. However, the person does not understand what Christian liberty is all about.

What is our responsibility toward this weak brother? "RECEIVE" him. Do not reject this person. Take him to yourself, accept him, count him as one of you, and consider him a beloved brother in Christ. This word "**receive**" is illustrated in Acts 28:2. Paul was received kindly by these uncultured people and treated very well. Weak believers need to be treated kindly and well, for Christ's sake.

Vs 2: For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

The believer with a correct doctrinal understanding knows that he may eat all things. Read Lev. 11 to learn about certain foods that the Jews could and could not eat under the law. God was teaching them here to make a distinction between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy (Lev. 11:44-47). During the present dispensation nothing which God has created is off-limits **if it be received with thanksgiving** (1 Tim 4: 4-5). The weak believer mentioned in Romans 14:2 was in the habit of eating only herbs or vegetables, believing that it was not permissible to eat all things (believing that meats were off-limits).

Vs 3: Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

This verse serves as warning to both the strong and the weak believer. The strong believer's tendency would be to despise the weak (hold him in contempt, look down upon him). The weak believer's tendency would be to judge or criticize or condemn the strong believer.

The strong believer might say, "You foolish vegetarian! How can you be so doctrinally weak? Don't you know that as believers in Christ we can eat all things?" [DESPISING]

The weak believer might say, "You should not eat meat. You should not eat pork. You are wrong to do this!" [JUDGING]. God has graciously received every believer (Romans 15:7).

Even a believer who is mature and understands doctrinal issues is very weak apart from the grace of God. It is in our weakness that we learn God's strength (2 Cor. 12:10).

Vs 4: Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

This verse is for the person who judges his fellow believer because of what he eats. The one judging needs to realize that he is not the head of the house. He is not this man's master or lord. He is merely a fellow servant, a fellow believer. The believer's Master is the LORD Jesus Christ (see verse 9). The believer is accountable and responsible to Him. It is before His judgment seat that we shall stand (verse 10).

What kind of Master is our Lord Jesus? Our Lord does not want His servants to fall. He wants them to stand. God holds them up. God is for them and not against them (Rom. 8:31).

Vs 5: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Our subject now moves from foods to days. Should we regard one day as more special or more holy than another day? One believer thinks so but another believer considers each day the same. One believer picks out one day and says, "This day is special. This day is holy." The other believer considers all days to be holy: "Saturday is just as holy as Sunday and Sunday is just as holy as Monday." Which believer is right? Which believer is the strong believer with the correct doctrinal understanding of days?

For the believer in Christ, every day is "holy ground," as we serve the Saviour and walk in a manner worthy of our high, heavenly and holy calling (Eph. 4:1). Obviously we should not be more dedicated to Christ on Sunday than we are on every other day. However, in religious circles we admit that there are many "Sunday-only Christians" who put on a very good show on Sunday morning and live quite differently the rest of the week. Brethren, such things ought not to be so!

At the end of verse 5 Paul said, "Let every man be FULLY PERSUADED (fully convinced, certain, assured) in his own mind." We are to love those who are weak in the faith (verses 1 and 3) and we are to build them up, but God never encourages the believer to be weak in the faith and weak in doctrine for ever. When it comes to doctrinal issues and matters of faith and practice, believers need to be "fully persuaded." May God help us to stand. Let God convince you and persuade you as to what is right!

Vs 6: He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Although there are differences in practice with respect to eating and observing days, it is important to note that as far as each person is concerned the motive is right, the heart is right and the attitude is right. Each believer is doing what he does TO THE LORD, to please the Lord and to honor the Lord. Each one is doing it with thanksgiving, being God-conscious. Each one is putting into practice the principle of 1 Corinthians 10:31--"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**" The believer who recognized that he was free to eat all things was careful to give God thanks (see 1 Timothy 4:3-5). The believer who ate herbs (v. 2) was careful to give God thanks for the herbs that were set before him.

Vs 7 - 9: For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end [Christ](#) both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

What we do is important and every believer needs to be fully persuaded in his own mind. **How we do** what we do is even more important, and every believer needs to make sure he does what he does as unto the Lord. The real issue is the fact that "WE ARE THE LORD'S." We belong to Him spirit, soul and body! He is our Master.

We no longer are to live for ourselves. We spent all of our unsaved life living this way (1 Pet. 4:1-2). Rather we are to live for the One who died and rose again for us.

Vs 10: But why dost thou [judge](#) thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of [Christ](#).

Believers must not judge other believers and must not show contempt for them. In light of verse 6, remember that the person you are judging or showing contempt for is YOUR BROTHER. He has the right attitude, the right heart, and he is serving the Lord and giving thanks. His motivation is right. He is not your enemy. Seek to help him and edify him and be an example before him, but don't judge him or look down upon him. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be the Judge of every true believer: "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

We--in the context this refers to believers only, those "who are the Lord's" (v. 8).

"Shall"--this is a future event to take place immediately after the rapture of the church (compare 1 John 2:28).

"All"--this is a judgment for all believers; none will be excluded.

"We shall all stand"--this is a promise. Every one of us will stand there. It is guaranteed.

"Stand"--to stand or appear before a judge (Paul in Acts 27:24 -- must stand before Caesar, the highest human judge or ruler at that time).

