

February 9, 2011

Romans Chapter 14: 11 – 23

Title: The Weak and the Strong

Vs 11: For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Here in this verse Paul quotes from Isaiah 45:23. An oath is a declaration, based on an appeal to God or to some revered person or object, that one will speak the truth, keep a promise, remain faithful, etc. Men swear by the greater (Hebrews 6:16), but since there is none greater than God, Jehovah swears **by Himself** (see Isaiah 45:23, "I have sworn **by Myself**". The fact that every knee shall bend is guaranteed by this immutable oath.

Vs 12: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Notice the awesome, personal accountability: "Every one of us shall give account of [concerning, with respect to] himself." I will not give account for you. You will not give account for me. Every believer will stand before God as an individual. Forget the other person--what he did or how he served. The issue is YOU. Every believer is personally accountable before Christ and must give account for himself. May our great ambition be to be well pleasing to Him (2 Cor. 5:9)

What could be more rewarding then for me to someday hear "Well Done!" from the lips of the One who died and rose again for us? What could be more satisfying than to be able to say, as Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8)?

Vs13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Let us not judge one another any longer. Leave the judging in the hands of God. You are not your brother's judge, Christ is. Rather than judging your brother, you are to love him.

Paul in this passage presents the "stumbling block" principle which many have referred to as "the law of love." Notice what is being said in this verse: "Don't judge...but judge." Paul's point is this: Don't judge your brother but **JUDGE YOURSELF** and make sure that you are not putting a stumbling block in the way of your brother. It is ourselves, not our brother, that we are to judge. Let us make sure that we are not doing anything to trip up or harm our brother in Christ. Seek to lift your brother up, not cause him to fall. Seek to help him, not hurt him. Seek to build him up, not tear him down. Place a stepping stone before your brother's path, not a stumbling block.

Vs 14: I know, and am persuaded by the Lord [Jesus](#), that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

The Scripture clearly teaches that in this present church age there are no foods that are to be considered unclean by believers: which God hath created **to be received** with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. **For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused**, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

So then, what makes something unclean? *When a person considers something to be unclean, then to him it is unclean!*

If in my heart and conscience I consider something to be wrong, then I must not do it. In time I may need to rethink and relearn some things in light of God's Word and I will discover that what I thought was wrong was not wrong at all. But in this chapter Paul refers to the weak believer who does not understand these things at this stage in his growth in Christ.

Vs 15: But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom [Christ](#) died.

If you are a stumbling block to your brother because of the food you eat, then you are not walking in love. Remember, love edifies or builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). Love wants God's highest and best for the brother.

The word "destroy" is a very strong word. It is used most often of the eternal destruction of unbelievers. It means "bring to ruin, cause to perish." Paul is saying, "Don't ruin your brother." Instead deal with your brother according to the law of love as God Himself did in John 3:16-- "God so loved the world..." Christ sacrificed everything so that this brother would not be destroyed eternally.

We should not take it lightly if a believer is not being built up. His welfare is crucial, lest he be "destroyed" or "ruined."

Vs 16: Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

You that is strong and are persuaded in your own mind that every creature of God is good and to be received with thanksgiving. You are free to eat, but do not abuse this good liberty of yours. You are not free to behave in a way that will hurt your brother.

Whatever you do; do it with love and to edify other believers (Cor. 8:1)

Vs 17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and [drink](#); but [righteousness](#), and peace, and joy in the Holy [Ghost](#).

Brothers and sisters let us never lose sight of what is essential and what is not really important. What is really important is not the FOOD that goes in but the FRUIT that is produced by God.

Vs 18: For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

In this verse "these things" refer to righteousness, peace and joy noted in verse 17. In (1 Peter 2:24) the Bible tells us serve Christ by living unto righteousness by claiming and appropriating God's peace (John 14:27) and by experiencing the fullness of God's joy (John 15:11).

Vs 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

To "follow after" means to run after, pursue, and chase after. Let us pursue and chase after the things that pertain to peace. As we are commanded in Ephesians 4:3, we are to make every effort ("endeavor") to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of PEACE.

Vs 20 - 21: For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Don't destroy the work of God for the sake of food! The term "destroy" means "tear down, demolish". What is the work of God? God's work is to build up, to edify. To eat and to cause a brother to stumble is EVIL. It is sin. The moment you use your liberty to cause a brother to stumble, you have sinned. You have sinned against your brother and you have sinned against Christ (1 Cor. 8:12).

Vs 22 – 23: Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

The voice of conscience must not be ignored. The conscience is like an inner moral judge: "What you are doing is wrong. You are guilty" or "You have done what is right." Whatever you do must be with full conviction. It is sinful if you do something against your conscience.

In conclusion: believers must know that there is no monopoly of knowledge. As Christians, we should have the understanding that there can be legitimate differences of opinion among believers.

Fellowship among Christians is not to be based on everyone's agreement on disputable matters. As a matter of fact, Christians do not agree on all matters pertaining to Christian life. Our focus should be on Christ the author and finisher of our faith.

Christ so much value the weak brother that He died for him. So also the strong Christian should be willing to make adjustments in his/her own behavior for the sake of such brother.

Reference:

<http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org>

