

Daily Devotional, September 14, 2020

“Receive One Who Is Weak”, (Romans 14:1, NKJV)

“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.”
(Romans 14:1)

Here we have an exhortation to Christian love. We are commanded to receive a brother who has either an incomplete understanding of certain non-essential aspects of the faith, or who has many additional convictions beyond the Law of Christ as presented in the New Testament. In **Romans Chapter 14**, Paul gives a couple of examples of convictions which we have liberty about, namely diet and day of the week of the public worship. Where there is Christian liberty allowed, we must not condemn others who choose not to exercise the fullest extent of it. **“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand”** (Romans 14:4). We have two applications with regard to our dealings with other Christians.

The first is with regard to new Christians. We often find new believers exercising so much zeal for holiness, that they go very far to manage their conduct as a new believer in Christ. This is commendable, so long as it does not descend into legalistic self-righteousness. Let us not put a stumbling block in their way by doing the very things that their conscience does not allow them to do. Why not instead **“rejoice with those who rejoice”** (Romans 12:15) in their new found faith?

The second application for today is with regard to our dealings with other Christians. We must as Christian duty **“contend earnestly for the faith”** (Jude 3) regarding essential doctrines such as the divinity of Christ, the blood of Christ, the virgin birth, eternal security of the saints, the Second Coming, and the Resurrection. We also can contend strongly for the biblical roles of men and women in the church, biblically defined marriage and sexuality, and the murder of conceived babies. But although we may have certain universally held beliefs within the local church, such as a particularly specific understanding of total depravity and election, and a pre-millennial view of the sequence of the end times events, we need not dispute with others of like faith on the essentials but differing views on fine points of non-essentials. This is true even though we are quite certain with regard to our convictional understanding of Bible doctrine, that our understanding is the correct one. I can recall one mature individual who left the church abruptly because of a different understanding of the terms of the doctrines of grace, without ever coming

to me about it. I found this out after the fact. But I think it could have been resolved based on what we understood certain terms to mean. When we get into definitions of theological terms, we introduce a human element into things that will sometimes move into the arena of “doubtful things.” It is fine to have knowledge, wisdom, and convictions. And it’s fine to publish certain Scripture arguments for public examination within and without the church, but only for the right motive of promoting Bible truth. Let us never use any of these to bludgeon other folks with our prideful feelings of superiority. Or worse, to count them as enemies. “A house divided against a house falls” (Luke 11:17). May our actions, and dealing with others, especially other Christians, never cast a negative light on our Lord, God, and Savior who bought us by His blood, Jesus Christ.