

Paul's letter to the church at Rome

Romans

Sunday, March 8th, 2009

Attitude and conduct expected by Christians at Rome (12:1-15:13)

- Chapter 14: dealing with fellow Christians that may have different views
 - Chapter 14 is Paul's view that the Jews and Gentiles in the church at Rome may not be able to reconcile some of their differences
 - V.1...the church is to accept ("take to yourselves") Christians who are not well-grounded, but NOT with the intent to win a debate about non-critical issues
 - V.2-3...don't debate over "being a vegetarian" because God accepts both the meat-eaters and vegetarians
 - V.4...who are we to stand in God's place to judge one of His servants? Note that God "is able" (Greek is *dunatos*, meaning power or ability) to make the weak brother stand
- Chapter 14-15: dealing with fellow Christians that may have different views
 - 14:5...differences may also exist regarding honoring one day over another (likely an issue about the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) versus the Christian Sabbath (Sunday)). Note that Paul does not offer a solution, but rather encourages the church to
 - 1. Accept each other in spite of the difference
 - 2. Individually make an intelligent and honest decision
 - V.6-9...all Christians belong to the Lord whether in life or in death, so we should be accepting of one another
- Chapter 14: dealing with fellow Christians that may have different views
 - 14:10-13...don't act as a judge. Compare 14:1 with 14:10.
 - V.10..."why do you (the strong one) show little/no regard for the weak brother just because he doesn't see things the same way"? This is like an adult belittling or rejecting a child because the child can't think/ behave like an adult.
 - V.12...we will individually give an account to God (see 14:4b)
 - V.13...instead of criticizing each other we should focus on not putting a stumbling block in front of others
 - 14:13-23...stumbling blocks like food and drink
 - V.14...Paul is absolutely convinced (14:5) that no food is "unclean". He has a "strong" believer's view. Acts 10:1-16 concerns a Jewish Christian (Peter) receiving a revelation about "unclean food". But if someone has the opposite view, then that food is 'unclean' to him. The issue isn't the food, but rather a person's view of the food.
 - V.15...if we (the "strong" one) offend a "weak" believer by eating things that will cause them to stumble, then we are not acting in love. See also 1 Cor. 8:1-13
 - V.16...don't do good things (eating in liberty) in a way that may be considered evil
 - V.17-18...the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy...so be careful how you use "liberty" (God and men will both approve)
 - 14:13-23...stumbling blocks like food and drink
 - V.19..."follow after" (Greek is *dee-o'-ko* meaning to run after and pursue as if you were in a race) things that lead to peace and edification (Greek is *oy-kod-om-ay'* meaning to build up; it's also the English word for edifice, i.e. an impressive building)
 - V.20...don't tear down the work of God that He is doing in the lives of "weak" Christians
 - V.21-23...we should not violate our conscience and also should not violate the conscience of others
 - What are stumbling blocks?
 - V.13...anything that causes someone to stumble
 - V.20...things we do that hinder the work of God in someone's life
- 15:1-3...is a continuation from chapter 14.
 - Strong believers should help weak believers by accepting them and building them up...be patient
- V.5-7...unity expected

- V.5...Paul does not expect the Jews and Gentiles to agree on every matter, but God expects a "spirit of harmony and unity". It's no different for us today.
- V.6...the evidence of unity is when believers have "one heart" and "one mouth", meaning we have an outward expression of our feelings
- V.7..accept others just like Christ accepted you (strong and weak)
- V.8-13...the ministry of Christ is for the Jews and Gentiles alike
- V.14-33...closing remarks begin