**Receive One who is Weak in the Faith**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Romans 14:1-8**

**Wednesday Evening**

**March 12, 2025**

**Romans 14:1-8**

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 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.

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

**1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.**

Saints, the key word is accept, which also means “receive” or “welcome.” Believers in the church in Rome came from a wide variety of backgrounds.

As we’ve already seen, the major differences were between Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

But there were other differences. Some believers were slaves, some were masters; some were wealthy, most were poor. In addition, they were all at different stages of spiritual maturity.

Growing in the spirit is like growing physically—everyone grows at different rates as God works in each life.

So the first instruction Paul gives the church is to accept, welcome, and love one another without judging or condemning—no matter how weak, immature, or unlearned someone’s faith may seem.

**1 Timothy 1:16**

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

Acceptance creates room for growth to continue; rejection stunts growth.

**Who is weak in faith, and who is strong?**

Every believer is weak in some areas and strong in others. A person’s faith is strong in an area if he or she can survive contact with sinners without falling into their patterns.

The person’s faith is weak in an area if that individual must avoid certain activities, people, or places in order to protect his or her spiritual life.

Paul advises that those strong in an area should not argue with those who are weak about what they think is right or wrong. This refers not to doctrines essential to salvation, but to discussions about differences of lifestyle.

Paul says we are not to quarrel about issues that are matters of opinion. Differences should not be feared or avoided, but accepted and handled with love.

We shouldn’t expect everyone, even in the best church, to agree on every subject.

**1 Corinthians 4:5**

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Through sharing ideas we can come to a fuller understanding of what the Bible teaches. Our basic approach should be to accept, listen to, and respect others.

Differences of opinion need not cause division. They can be a source of learning and richness in our relationships.

**2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.**

Saints, believing it is all right to eat anything may refer to freedom from certain Jewish dietary restrictions.

When Jews became Christians, many still would be concerned about the proper preparation of food according to their laws.

Some believers were more sensitive and would eat only vegetables, most likely for fear that meat might have been improperly prepared or offered to idols.

How could Christians end up eating meat that had been offered to idols? An ancient sacrificial system was at the center of religious, social, and domestic life in the Roman world.

After a sacrifice was presented to a god in a pagan temple, only part of it was burned. Often the remainder was sent to the market to be sold.

Thus a Christian might easily, even unknowingly, buy such meat in the marketplace or eat it at the home of a friend.

Some thought there was nothing wrong with eating meat that had been offered to idols because idols were worthless and phony.

Others carefully checked the source of their meat or gave up meat altogether to avoid a guilty conscience. This problem was especially acute for Christians who had once been idol worshipers.

For them, such a strong reminder of their former paganism might weaken their newfound faith.

**1 Corinthians 8:8-13**

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Paul is speaking about immature faith that has not yet developed the strength it needs to stand against external pressures.

For example, if a person who once worshiped idols were to become a Christian, he might understand perfectly well that Christ saved him through faith and that idols have no real power.

Still, because of his past associations, he might be badly shaken if he knowingly ate meat that had been used as part of a pagan ritual.

The same would be true for a Jew whose strict observance to the law would cause him to be concerned about the preparation of the meat.

**3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.**

Saints, when believers differ over scruples or matters of opinion, they must not look down on or condemn each other.

The Greek for look down on means “despise” (see) or “reject with contempt.”

**1 Corinthians 10:31-33**

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

The stronger one faces the temptation to despise the weaker brother or sister. The weaker one is in danger of condemning the stronger brother or sister.

Neither attitude is acceptable. Believers should not condemn each other for their different opinions, because God does not; instead, God has accepted them both.

Paul responds to both brothers in love. Both are acting according to their consciences, but their honest scruples do not need to be made into rules for the church.

Our principle should be: In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in everything, love.

**4 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.**

Saints, every believer will be judged by God alone; therefore, believers have no right to condemn one another. Each person is accountable to Christ, not to others.

**Matthew 7:3-5**

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

**Luke 6:37**

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

**Luke 6:41-42**

41 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

**1 Corinthians 4:3-5**

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

While the church must be uncompromising in its stand against activities that are expressly forbidden by Scripture (such as adultery, homosexuality, murder, theft),

it should not create additional rules and regulations and give them equal standing with God’s law.

Often Christians base their moral judgments on opinion, personal dislikes, or cultural bias, rather than on the Word of God.

When they do this, they show that their own faith is weak, and they demonstrate that they do not think God is powerful enough to guide each of his children.

When we stand before God’s judgment seat, we won’t be worried about what our Christian neighbor has done.

**2 Corinthians 5:10**

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.**

Saints, for Jews, this holy day would have probably been the Sabbath; for Christians, the Lord’s day (Sunday).

The believers had differing opinions about the sacredness of certain days.

For example, if a Jew who once worshiped God on the required Jewish holy days were to become a Christian, he might well know that Christ saved him through faith, not through his keeping of the law.

Still, when the feast days came, he might feel empty and unfaithful if he didn’t dedicate those days to God.

Other believers might not have any concern about that and might think that every day is alike—in other words, every day is holy to the Lord.

**Colossians 2:16-17**

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Saints, the position of each is no matter to Paul, but he does add that each person should have a personal conviction about this matter through prayer and careful thought examining whether that action is what he or she believes God wants him or her to do.

People must decide for themselves before God and be convinced of the rightness of their position, even if it means disagreeing with other believers.

Believers can disagree on some points and can still be acceptable to God.

**6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.**

Saints, when it comes to differences of opinion between believers on matters of conscience, each believer should respond to the Lord, doing as his or her conscience dictates.

**1 Timothy 4:4-5**

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

This great principle of freedom should guide us: we are to dedicate our actions, attitudes, and habits to the Lord.

**Matthew 15:11**

Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

Thus whether we are setting aside a day to honor God, or eating different kinds of food, or refusing to eat certain kinds of food—in all cases we must want to please the Lord.

The questions that others ask us about our convictions should cause us to ask, “Am I doing this out of respect for God?”

**7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.**

Saints, we do not live in a vacuum; everything we do affects others. We need to consider our responsibility to others.

We can demand freedom for ourselves, but we must also allow other believers that same freedom.

**Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If demonstrating our freedom causes us to act in an uncaring, hurtful way toward other believers, we are not yet free.

Ultimately we are not our own masters. Our entire life, from beginning to end, belongs to the Lord.

**Philippians 1:20-22**

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

We live to him and die to him. Our relationship with the Lord is more important than life or death, and life and death are more important than religious observances

**8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.**

Saints, so all our discussions must never interfere with our relationship to Christ, who is our Lord.

It is the Lord’s judgment that matters. With respect to the way we treat other believers, we ought to consider the question, “Am I treating people as though they also belong to the Lord?”

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**