

ROMANS

Chapter 14:1-12

Tolerance Regarding Doubts

The Weak and the Strong

- First century Christians were no different from us
 - Different backgrounds
 - "Baggage" from a past unspiritual lives
 - Growing at different rates in faith and works towards maturity in Christ
 - Whether Jews or Gentiles it matters not – only that some had more doubts than others as to certain actions (eating meat (2), regard for Holy days (5), and drinking wine (21), any other "stumbling block")

Tolerance regarding doubts

- “Now” or “But”
 - Marks a slight contrast to our previous study which spoke of being vigorous and thorough in our love towards our fellow man and in our spiritual life.
 - Here, do so with gentleness and sympathy towards weaker Christians – severe with self, gentle with others – accepting the weakness of those we fellowship with and living in unity with them understanding that we are all one in Christ.

Tolerance regarding doubts

- “accept the one who is weak in faith”
 - Different context and meaning than 4:19
 - Not a weakness of trust in God or Christ but a lack of understanding in regards to what God permits.
 - Acts 10:9-16 – Even an apostle of Christ had growth to accomplish in his journey towards Christlikeness.
 - This is a lack of faith caused by a misunderstanding of the conduct implied by faith.
 - Allow this weaker Christian into your fellowship

Tolerance regarding doubts

- “do not have *quarrels over opinions*”
 - a myriad of translations for these two words
 - *Gr – diakrasis* – the act of judgement – discern, distinguish, pass judgement
 - *Gr – dialogismos* – a reasoning argument – disputing, dissension, doubts, opinions, reasonings, speculations
 - Accept the weak in faith **BUT NOT** for the purpose of passing judgements on their doubts.

Tolerance regarding doubts

- One eats all things, another only vegetables
 - Faith here is explained as conviction or confidence
 - Law forbade the eating of only certain meats – certain persons had doubt about eating any meats
 - Excessively cautious, wanting to be safe, lest they eat meat sacrificed to idols, or unclean for any reason
 - Side note - Grain offerings? Drink offerings? Seems just about all food could have been made “unclean”

Tolerance regarding doubts

- The heart, attitude and behavior of the strong
 - The strong is not to *despise* the weak
 - To regard or treat the weak person as stupid or inferior because of his lack of understanding
 - May cause the weak to violate his conscience
 - Paul gives his opinion in verse 14 – an opportunity to teach, lovingly, the weak brother with time, patience and exposure to the loving fellowship of strong Christians – problems solved.

Tolerance regarding doubts

- “and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats”
 - The weak is not to judge the strong a sinner
 - Not a warning about any judgement – certainly brothers should speak to each other about any sinful nature that is seen and its danger.
 - The weak brother must come to **recognize** the difference between opinion and matters of law

Tolerance regarding doubts

- “God has accepted him”
 - The strong and the weak are accepted by God
 - No one is in the position to judge a person unfaithful except God
 - Man does not know mans heart
 - We can disagree, but that MUST BE where it ends
 - NO ONE is to reject a fellow Christian by making up rules and adding to the divine conditions of fellowship.

Tolerance regarding doubts

- Who are you to judge?
 - The servant is responsible only to his master
 - The Christian is responsible only to God
- He will stand
 - The servant will stand because the Lord has the power to make him stand
 - His standing depends on God, not on the doubts of the weak, or the ability of the strong
 - In the end it is GOD THAT MATTERS! Romans exemplifies this display of the power of God

Tolerance regarding doubts

- Illustration #2

- Observing days

- Most likely references to Jewish festivals and holy days
 - Jews regarded some days more holy than others
 - A Gentile might regard all days equally or all days holy and to be devoted to the Lord

- Act out of conviction

- Don't just follow the crowd – it may lead to violation of one's conscience

Tolerance regarding doubts

- Illustration #2

- 1) “be fully convinced”

- To be persuaded without doubt

- 2) Act out of regard for the LORD

- To honor the Lord and not one’s self

- In all we do, we must be fully convinced that our actions bring glory to the Lord, whether to eat or not, whether to celebrate a day or not.

Tolerance regarding doubts

- Our lives must have a sense of our responsibility to the Lord
 - We live and die NOT for ourselves, but God
 - We are responsible to HIM and HIM **ONLY**
 - Christ died AND WAS RAISED, to show He was the Lord of both the dead and the living.
 - We participate in His death through baptism and in doing so experience death of our old lives.
 - When we die physically, we experience LIFE everlasting

Tolerance regarding doubts

- Judgement is God's alone
 - Jesus is Lord, judge and mediator for all who love Him (John 5:22-27; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Tim 2:5-6)
 - Rebuke is given to all who judge brother or sister (10)
 - A reminder to all who judge (vs 1-9) that there will be an ultimate judgement by Christ - the verdict which will be eternal.
 - A reminder from Isaiah that God IS the judge (11)
 - Conclusion – take note – GOD WILL JUDGE ALL (12)

Next Week

- Dean Crews teaching
- Romans 14:13-23
 - Walking in love: Denying self for others sake