

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

The Weak & the Strong

Speaker:

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Scriptures

Rom. 14:1-12

Theme: The mercies of God teach us to diminish internal quarreling.

Introduction: Disagreements or quarreling about something that matters very little can become an occasion for tremendous hurt and the wronging of one another in the church. Unfortunately, this is a mark of humanity in its fallen state. Quarreling over insignificant issues is also common. When it does, the most important parts of a relationship get thrown out for the unimportant ones. As a result, the church is greatly harmed. God sees it as a problem and wants us to repent of it and to learn how we can avoid it.

1. Start with a true welcome.
 - a. A true welcome is an authentically loving welcome. In this passage, the target of our welcome is the one who is “weak in faith”. The scripture says not to welcome the weak one to quarrel over opinions. This can be meant two ways.
 - i. First – Don’t quarrel with them. Plain and simple. Instead, help them understand that while you respect their opinion you are not going to quarrel with them.
 - ii. Secondly and most importantly – Don’t welcome them with the thought of convincing them of your opinion. It’s hard to genuinely welcome someone while you’re trying to get them to agree with you.
2. Clarify the categories of weak and strong.
 - a. “Strong and Weak” aren’t just labels that the church uses. It is clear that Paul is making a statement in his use of these terms. Being weak here doesn’t mean that the person doesn’t belong to Christ, and, being strong doesn’t mean that you have it all right. Most of us are probably “strong” in some ways and “weak” in others.
 - b. “Weak in faith” – means there are some activities from which God does not require us to refrain from, but we do so because we believe it to be wrong – even sin.
 - c. “Strong” – means we can engage in our God given freedom (like the early Christians who ate meat serves to idols). The rule of thumb – don’t call something sin that the Bible does not.
3. Remember that we are the Lord’s.
 - a. The issue of importance is that we learn to distinguish between matters of basic principle and of individual preference. We want to be sure to die on the right hill. We want to be careful not to turn matters of opinion into matters of truth thereby diminishing the fundamentals.
 - b. This is important because we belong to the Lord. And our current thoughts and actions are important to God. We will all have to give an account for our thoughts, words and actions. So, what we do now has the potential to bring glory to God for all of eternity.

Questions

1. How do you understand the significance of your relationships in the church with respect to God’s glory? With respect to your own spiritual growth?
2. Where are you tempted to despise others or pass judgement over them because of an opinion they hold or a choice they make that is not clearly forbidden in Scripture?