

"THE HIGHEST GOOD OF OTHERS"

I. Romans 15:1-7

A. It's been quite a week...

- 1) GOP Convention... (*This week the DNC Convention*) Watch & Pray...
- 2) Hurricane Isaac hit Mississippi, Louisiana, & Alabama... We got rain!
- 3) The Sweet Corn Festival came and went...
- 4) A home-invading thief was caught Tuesday. Kudos to John Hitchcock!

B. Romans 14 is about strong & weak believers and 14 folds into Chapter 15.

- 1) *"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials liberty; in all things love."*
- 2) Life Application Study Bible on Strong & Weak Christians...
- 3) e.g. Jonathan Edwards & Charles Spurgeon... (Whitefield & Wesley)
- 4) Those who sneer vs those who frown vs those who love...

C. Romans 15:1-7 talks about strong and weak Christians...

- 1) The strong are called to bear the failings of the weak...
- 2) Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 and applies it to Jesus: *"The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."* (Besides Jesus bearing our sin and God's wrath towards us, He also bore man's insults and disdain for God the Father. Why? LOVE!)
- 3) Philippians 2:5-8 echoes Jesus' heart even better...
- 4) Then Paul issues this Blessing: *"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (This was written for those who sneer and those who frown!)

D. Jesus was drawn to weak, poor, ill, distressed, downtrodden people...

- 1) We all came from that lot of people! Luke 5:31-32... (*Supper with Levi*)
- 2) If you don't think there's anything wrong with you guess what's wrong with you? Recalling the rich young ruler--there is always something we lack!
- 3) You may frown on those who smoke as if they're committing the unpardonable sin... You may sneer at believers who have convictions about eating healthy because it threatens your liberty. Love trumps all sneers and frowns!

E. As we prepare for Communion, let's remember how Jesus committed Himself to our highest good...

- 1) He became sin that we might be made righteous... (cf 2 Cor. 5:21)
- 2) He became a curse that we might become blessed. (cf Gal. 3:13)
- 3) He endured God's wrath to turn us from enemies into His friends... (cf Rom. 5:9-11) (*These Scriptures will be in your sermon notes today...*)
- 4) Committing ourselves to the highest good of our brothers & sisters, whether they be weak or strong, reveals we are genuine followers of Jesus and we honor and glorify Him by demonstrating towards others, His heart towards us...

II. Communion

A. So we take the Bread & Cup without sneers and without frowns...

B. We take the Bread & Cup without boast nor any confidence in our own righteousness. (*"He is all our righteousness, we stand complete in Him, and worship Him..."*) And we know that's true for our Brothers & Sisters as well!

C. We take the Bread & Cup in faith--confident in His blood, trusting in His righteousness alone, with sure and certain hope of all He has promised...

D. Pray & serve Communion... Benediction: Phil. 2:9-11 & Rom. 15:5-6...

Scriptures & Videos

Mark Thogmartin's Worship Meditations

<http://markthog.wordpress.com/category/worship-meditations/>

“Lay Down My Life” by Sidewalk Prophets

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG2vAmlfGAo>

“Plastic Jesus” by Igniter Media

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Expao2nWdAU>

Church Diversity--A Shoe Shiner’s Wisdom

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2o9pqq3DYk>

Why Are There Different Denominations? --John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09lgZeLrt7g>

Weak, Baby Souls vs Cavalier Souls

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJ1yPpip8Ic>

From "Chariots of Fire" "When I Run I Feel His Pleasure"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGc9pWan-FY>

"Bind Us Together, Lord"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw_5_JHWfLs

Romans 15:1-7 (NIV)

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. **2** Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. **3** For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “*The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.*” **4** For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5** May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, **6** so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, **7** but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

Luke 5:31-32 (NLT)

31 Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor--sick people do. **32** I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.”

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Who Is Weak or Strong?

From The Life Application Study Bible, Intro to Romans 14

Who is weak in faith and who is strong? We are all weak in some areas and strong in others. Our faith is strong in an area if we can survive contact with worldly people without falling into their patterns. It is weak in an area if we must avoid certain activities, people, or places in order to protect our spiritual life. It is important to take self-inventory in order to find out our strengths and weaknesses. Whenever in doubt, we should ask, “Can I do that without sinning? Can I influence others for good, rather than being influenced by them?” In areas of strength, we should not fear being defiled by the world; rather we should go and serve God. In areas of weakness, we need to be cautious. If we have a strong faith but shelter it, we are not doing Christ’s work in the world. If we have a weak faith but expose it, we are being extremely foolish. p 2507.

Bonus Stuff

On Strengths & Weaknesses

A person who calls himself frank and candid can very easily find himself becoming tactless and cruel. A person who prides himself on being tactful can find eventually that he has become evasive and deceitful. A person with firm convictions can become pigheaded. A person who is inclined to be temperate and judicious can sometimes turn into someone with weak convictions and banked fires of resolution . . . Loyalty can lead to fanaticism. Caution can become timidity. Freedom can become license. Confidence can become arrogance. Humility can become servility. All these are ways in which strength can become weakness.

- Dore Schary, Bits and Pieces, December 9, 1993, Page 3-4

I Cannot Do Without Thee

Author Unknown

I cannot do without Thee
I cannot stand alone;
I have no strength or goodness
Nor wisdom of my own.
But Thou, beloved Savior
Art all in all to me
And perfect strength in weakness
Is theirs who lean on Thee.

The Stag

Author Unknown

A stag was drinking at a pool, admiring his stately antlers, but feeling ashamed of his spindly legs. Suddenly he heard an approaching mountain lion, and those spindly legs propelled him into the safety of the forest, but his antlers became caught in the underbrush and soon he was killed.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 3:13 (Amplified)

13 Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified)...

Romans 5:9-11 (NLT)

9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.