*Northwest Bible Church – July 10, 2005                Worship Service – Alan Conner***Rom. 14:13-23***Exhortations to the Strong*

**INTRO -** Paul has given us 4 reasons why we should not judge our fellow brothers over secondary issues:
         1) God has accepted him (v. 1);
         2) we have no right to judge the servant of another (v. 4);
        3) each believer eats or does not eat for the Lord (v. 6);
        4) each believer will stand before God (10-12).
    Starting in v. 13, Paul now singles out the strong for exhortation about the weak.

**A. THE NATURE OF THE CONTROVERSY**
     “unclean” in v. 14 and “clean” in v. 20 indicate that Jewish ritual laws are primarily in view.

    WEAK – believed that the OT ritual laws should still be practiced. MOSTLY JEWS.
    STRONG – had faith to understand their liberty, they were not binding. MOSTLY GENTILES.

**B. PAUL IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH THE STRONG**

    Rom. 14:14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself.
    Rom. 14:20 All things indeed are clean.

**C. WHAT DOES THE STUMBLING REFER TO?**
    Notice the following descriptions of the potential harm that can be done to the weaker brother when the stronger brother uses his liberty:
        - obstacle or stumbling block (vv. 13, 21)
        - hurt (v. 15) or grieved
        - destroyed (v. 15)
        - tear down (v. 20)
        - condemned (v. 23)

**HOW ARE WE TO INTERPRET THESE INJURIES?**
        1) Hurting the weak brother’s conscience (v. 15).

        2) This offense is very spiritually damaging to the weaker brother.

            “destroy” (v. 15b) -
            “tear down” (v. 20) –
            “stumbling block” (vv. 13, 21) -
            “condemned” (v. 23) -

                There are two possible interpretations:

            a) This person is lost. 1 Tim. 1:19-20.

            b) This person is saved but spiritually devastated. 1 Cor. 5:5.

**D. WHAT MUST THE STRONGER BROTHER’S ATTITUDE BE?**
    1) ABUSE NOT YOUR LIBERTY (Gal. 5:13).

     2) UNDERSTAND (vv. 14, 20, 23).

    3) LOVE (v. 15).

    4) FOCUS ON THE KINGDOM (vv. 16-18).

    5) PEACE (vv. 17, 19).

    6) GIVE-UP (vv. 20-21).

    7) PRIVATE CONVICTION (v. 22).

**E. WHAT MUST THE WEAKER BROTHER’S ATTITUDE BE?**
    1) DO NOT SIN AGAINST YOUR CONSCIENCE (vv. 14, 20, 23).

    2) SEEK A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

CONCLUSION