*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