

Bearing the infirmities of the weak

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[0 : 00] Let us hear God's word from the scriptures of the New Testament, the epistle of Paul to the Romans, the portion of chapter 14, reading through chapter 15 to verse 6.

Romans chapter 14 at verse 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

I know, and I am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.

But to him that estimeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walk as thou not charitably.

Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of.

[1 : 24] For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

For me destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for a man who eateth with offense.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

[2 : 34] And he that doubteth his damned defeat, because he is not of faith. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

For even Christ pleased not himself. But as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 53] wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

And so on. May the Lord add his blessing to that reading from his word. And to his name be the praise. Seeking the Lord's leading, let us look again at the portion of scripture read.

Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 15, At the beginning. We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification, or even Christ pleased not himself.

But as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

[5 : 23] And we shall seek to consider these words first, a gentleman.

Secondly, a Christian gentleman. Thirdly, Paul's argument regarding gentility, regarding courtesy, and fourthly, its wellspring, the fountain from which it flows.

A gentleman, a Christian gentleman, Paul's argument, regarding gentility, or courtesy, and the wellspring, of courtesy.

Courtesy is the badge, of a real gentleman. A real gentleman never forgets his manners.

He would not be a real gentleman if he forgot them. No matter how provoked he may be, no matter how assailed, the real gentleman will never betray his breeding.

[6 : 55] And the higher the degree of surliness directed against him, the more will his gentility display itself.

Outwardly, his manners are impeccable. He may be cursing you in his heart, but his looks and words and deeds show no sign of it.

The real gentleman is polished in manners, whatever his circumstances. Even amidst the strictures, and confinements, of the prisoner of war camp, one can easily recognise the stamp of a real gentleman.

And that is not to be wondered at. For the very word courtesy, betokens the style of manners, the style of manners, becoming a court.

And what is a court? A court. In this sense, it means the palace of the king or queen.

[8 : 25] And what is a courtier? A courtier is one who frequents the palace of the king or queen.

One who sits at the king or queen, at the king's table or the queen's table. David enjoyed this after the wondrous episode against Goliath.

The David who was so disparaged by his own older brethren, and so set at naught by his own father.

The same David was promoted to the rank of courtier by Saul. Saul took him that day and would not let him go home anymore to his own father's house.

And David himself promoted a poor, lame man to the rank of courtier.

[9 : 39] You remember, he promoted Mephibosheth in spite of that man's disfigurement.

He promoted him to be a courtier eating at his table. table and that because of his love for one who had shown the greatness of his love for David.

Jonathan, in any special way, showed the greatness of his love for David.

How did he do it? By strengthening David's hand in God. That is, in the love of God.

Oh, that we were good at this. then we would have all real friends and real friendship if we were strengthening each other's hands in the love of God.

[11 : 03] Is there yet any one? Is there yet any? Ask the great heart of that great king. Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

In the fables of the Greeks, the first virtue their greatest teacher inculcated in the young heroes left to his charge.

The first virtue he inculcated in them was good manners. But the word courtesy has a higher meaning than that which we have been dwelling on.

What is a courtier? The courtier is the one who pays court. He pays court.

He cultivates the art of pleasing the king. Courtesy is the desire and effort to please.

[12 : 27] There's more than that. Courtesy is the desire and effort to please arising from a good motive and directed towards a good end.

The sycophant, the flatterer, he decides to please but he acts from a selfish motive and for a selfish end.

secondly, the Christian gentleman. Christianity takes this word courtesy and lifts it to inestimable levels.

after all, what is a Christian but one who enjoys the court of the king of all kings and the lord of all lords.

the Christian is privileged to sit at the table of the king of kings.

[13 : 55] He has been lifted from the dust. He has been raised from the dung hill.

these terms are not too strong. They are scriptural terms. He has been lifted out of all the impoverishment of spiritual destitution.

He from the dust doth raise the poor that very low doth lie. He has been raised from all the dung hills of the vanities of this world.

These are the terrible dung hills. Dung hills of vanity, of self righteousness. And he has been set alongside princes.

We must remember as a prince himself. he has not been set among princes as a pauper but as a prince himself.

[15 : 15] Even the chiefs of the people. His person is now with the saints and with the excellent of the earth.

He is in Christ. He is a new creature. All things are passed away. Behold all things are new.

And what the gentleman of this world can only be from the outside. The Christian can be in reality. What would you say the main difference between a gentleman of this world and a Christian gentleman is?

Is it not this? A gentleman of this world gracefully insists upon his rights but he does gracefully what about a Christian gentleman?

[16:33] A Christian gentleman gracefully insists upon the rights of others. He is the reality of what the other can only seem to be.

He is in control of his temper. He does nothing in excess. He is spiritually dignified. the spirit of the Lord accomplishes this in him and through him. every Christian ought to possess a delicate tact which never offends because it is full of sympathy.

If you have sympathy enough it will make you tactful in all your dealings. He should discern afar of anything which would hurt even the most fastidious feelings of those who are most readily hurt. He should discern these feelings afar off. He feels with others. He possesses not only sympathy but empathy a modern word.

[18:16] He possesses empathy as well as sympathy and is ever on the watch in truest reverence and in the fear of the Lord.

the Christian possesses the only true refinement because in the deepest sense he and he alone knows what it is to be loved and to love.

to be loved and to love. Love has cascaded into his soul.

That's the force of the word used in the fifth chapter of Romans. It has cascaded into his soul.

The Holy Spirit has effected this and that love must find utterance in his lifestyle.

[19:33] Love is the bond of perfectness. What does that mean? It means that love perfects all the other graces by binding them together just as it binds the real church of God in a mysterious and marvelous fellowship a fellowship of unity and just as a real gentleman never parades himself he doesn't have to a real gentleman never parades himself if he parades himself he is just showing that he's only a deceiver so love never makes a parade just as a real gentleman is never ill mannered love never behaves itself unseemly and just as a real gentleman graciously insists on the rights of others love seeketh not its own thirdly

Paul's argument regarding courtesy the first meaning of the word argument that word has changed its meaning its first meaning was proof Paul uses this argument of Christian courtesy powerfully both in chapter 15 and in the previous and the preceding chapter just as he uses it in the first letter to the church at Corinth at Corinth and it would seem that there was this in the church at Rome too at Corinth those who were strong despised the narrowness and weakness of their scrupulous brethren to despise those who are weaker is a sin the strong were those who realized their liberty as

Christians they realized their Christian liberties the weak were those who did not realize their own liberties that's the distinction but by despising their weaker brethren they were setting a stumbling block before them and the apostle warns them that in sinning against the brethren they were sinning against Christ Paul declared to them the golden rule of courtesy everything must be done to the glory of God that's the golden rule of courtesy offense must be given either to Jew nor to Greek nor to the church of God they must seek to please all men in all things not seeking their own prophet but the prophet of many that they may be saved wherefore he says wherefore the apostle says if meat cause my brother to offend

I will eat no flesh while the world stand death lest I make my brother to offend and he uses the same argument here in Romans in chapter 14 he declares him that is weak in the faith receive ye but not to doubtful disputation receive him but not to his detriment not to doubtful disputation those who are strong in the faith must put up cheerfully with those who are weak it's a Christian privilege to do so besides being a duty a real Christian gentleman will never oppress on others will never impress on others the inferiority of their position or the inferiority of their knowledge or the inferiority of their talents or of their usefulness or of their liberality and a real

Christian lady will never disparage either the poverty or the riches of her neighbor steward of cromarty but exceedingly great preacher he warns of the dangers of ungentlemanly behavior in holy things he declares that there is a manner of asking questions on most important issues that is the state of another person soul that there is a manner of asking questions even about another person's soul which is as lacking in courtesy as asking a person how much money he has in the bank and this is also true

[26 : 27] I have learned on the journey of life says a great writer I have learned on the journey of life that the busiest have the most time to spare and I have learned that the ripest are the most considerate of the rawest it is a privilege to put up cheerfully with those who are weak in the pilgrim's progress great heart deals most courteously with Mr.

Fearing and great heart shows most prominently in these places where Mr.

Fearing is most vexatious and most dry and in the same way Christian courtesy has to bear with little faith and feeble mind and his daughter much afraid and ready to halt and all that company the kingdom of God is not in terms of meat or drink or scruples concerning these the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost the strong then ought to bear the infirmities of the weak not pleasing themselves but pleasing their neighbour for his good to edification and Paul brings us to the well spring of courtesy Paul demonstrates the real vital ground and foundation of this rule he did not find it in a Greek textbook he did not find it among the philosophers he founded in the face of Jesus Christ for even Christ pleased not himself the sum of Christian courtesy and wisdom is to be like Christ we see eternal courtesy in the scheme of salvation we see it in this he being in the form of

God thought it not robbery to be equal with God he was equal and what comes after that he made himself of no reputation he took on him the form of a servant he was doing his father's will and in our nature we see his courtesy to his earthly parents when he was age twelve and we can imagine what courtesy he displayed in the courts of the temple in his father's house we can imagine how his courtesy must have impressed the learned men there his courtesy to his parents impressed upon them that he must be about his father's business what courtesy he displayed to his mother on all occasions even when he seemed to rebuke her at

[31 : 13] Cana even when she came with his brethren seeking to take him away from what he was doing remember his reply who is my mother and who are my brethren those who do the will of God there there you will find the well springs of courtesy and to his mother even on the cross he addressed her in terms of courtesy when he addressed her in terms of John of the John whom he loved woman behold thy son we can see him displaying courtesy to

John the Baptist as he kept John the Baptist on these spiritual rails on the banks of the Jordan where John was baptizing suffer it to be so now for thus it becomes us to fill all righteousness what courtesy he displayed to Simon the Pharisee as he reminded him of what he had neglected to do as a host Simon had not realized that when he welcomed this person he became the guest Simon became the guest and the guest became the host and the great host himself was sitting before the murmuring Pharisee the Pharisee was full of complaints against him if he had known who this woman was he would not have allowed her to do this murmured the Pharisee but the great host himself set before him the real rules of spiritual etiquette they were fulfilled by that woman who had been a sinner because God had filled her heart with God and Simon's heart was empty of God what kind of hearts have we got before him here what courtesy he the only pure one showed to the woman taken in adultery woman where are these thine accusers have no man condemned thee no man lord neither do I condemn thee go and sin no more

I am the light of the world what a contrast to the band of hypocrites who had brought her not chiefly to accuse her that was not their motive that was not their chief motive their chief motive was to accuse him because every one of them had a great big beam in his own eye and they were confronting the only one who did not have a mold in his eye what courtesy he showed to Martha as he gently rebuked her amidst her complaints and remonstrances against himself and against Mary what dignity was shown on the cross how it affected one malefactor no man could behave like that but the son of God and what courtesy the risen Lord displayed in forbidding the Magdalene to touch him it was spiritual courtesy which forbade her to touch him he rewarded her love by making her the first harbinger of the resurrection and thank you what courtesy what courtesy ensured in giving

[37 : 08] Peter a secret interview no one no one knows what went on in that interview but he gave Peter a secret interview before that great public interview which the Bible sets before us what courtesy the great shepherd displays to the young in Christ he carries the lambs in his bosom what courtesy he shows to those in travel he gently leads them what courtesy he displays to the weak a bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax shall he not quench what courtesy he displays to sinners whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely and what courtesy is evincing to yourself here today

Christian lo I am with you always even to the end of the world you remember how Dr.
Livingston read the courtesy of his master in these words and acted accordingly amen let us pray
blessed Lord enlarge your hearts hearts enlarge your hearts for everything that is pure and honest
and lovely and of good report enlarge your hearts for thyself and for each other enlarge your hearts
for young and for old oh Lord take away our selfishness and bless us for
Christ's sake amen