

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity

- THURSDAY -

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye. – Romans 14:1.

To whom does the apostle refer here as one who is "*weak in the faith*"? The person described in the rest of the chapter is NOT one who seeks to be justified by works of the Law (Galatians 5:4), for such a person is not "*in the faith*" at all. However, in the early Apostolic Church, many simple believers, who had come to faith in Christ Jesus as God's true Messiah and to justification "*by faith without the deeds of the Law*" (Romans 3:28) but had been raised under the "*yoke of bondage*" (Galatians 5:1b), under the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, had the tendency to carry over ceremonial laws and restrictions into their lives of sanctification when trying to determine what truly is a good work in the sight of God. Such a person earnestly desires to serve God with holy works as the fruit and evidence of saving faith but believes that, in order to do this, he must abstain from certain things, though God has not forbidden them, and that he must by all means do certain things, though God has not commanded them. Such opinions are not in accord with God's Word and need to be addressed by Christian brethren who are aware of them in loving, patient, longsuffering admonition. The errors are not merely to be tolerated in the guise of false love, but are to be identified, refuted and corrected "*in the spirit of meekness*" (Galatians 6:1). The "*weak in faith*" is not to be callously and precipitously excluded from the fellowship but is to be "*admonished as a brother*" (II Thessalonians 3:15; cf. Matthew 18:15-17a) as long as he is willing to hear and to heed the Word of God. However, one who is unwilling to receive instruction and correction and sets himself against the Word and will of God is NOT a "*weak*" Christian. His "*proud, knowing nothing*" (I Timothy 6:4) and must be dealt with thenceforth no longer as a brother who is merely "*weak in faith*" but as an enemy of the truth from whom we should "*withdraw [ourselves]*" (v. 5) lest we be ensnared by his error. Dear Christian souls, "*weak in faith,*" may be found still today, who err in such matters as "*meat and drink*" (Romans 14:17); for whatsoever God has not forbidden must not be condemned, and the use of it dare not hinder us in the service of God; and whatsoever God has not commanded is of no value in the sight of God, and the doing of it cannot be of assistance to us in serving God. May He graciously preserve us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end and ever willing in meekness to instruct, admonish and edify weak brethren to the same blessed end for Jesus' sake.

PRAYER – Dear Lord, grant that I always be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving toward my brethren, even as Thou, for Christ's sake, hast forgiven me. And when they in weakness fall into sin and error, grant that I, by patient but firm admonition according to Thy Word, restore them in the spirit of meekness, considering myself, lest I also be tempted. Grant me an ever greater measure of Thy grace as I grow in it and in the knowledge of my Savior, that I may be edified to stand fast against the wiles of the devil and not be like a child tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine but grow up and be strengthened in Thy Word and faith unto my end. Amen.

Spirit of life, of love and peace, unite our hearts, our joy increase; Thy gracious help supply.

To each of us the blessing give in Christian fellowship to live, in joyful hope to die.

Hymn 412, 3.

* Scripture reading for Thursday: 1 John 4:1-6, Philippians 2:12-6 Theme this week: The World