

Romans 14:1-15:13 A Church Shaped by Grace

Key Points in the text

- In order to be united in Christ the church must lay down selfish division.
- There was division in the Roman church which centered around two groups judging themselves to be better than the other.

Text Study

Verses 14:1-12, Welcome one another: Addresses both groups teaching them to not look down on each other, or sit in judgement of each other.

Verses 1-3, Welcome one another because God has welcomed you.

¹Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

- You and your brother are both under grace, not the law.
- Think of the story Jesus tells of the man forgiven a great debt who then turns around and takes a man to court for a much smaller debt.

Verses 4-9, God has welcomed you under the Lordship of his King.

⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

- As redeemed children of God we are all under His authority. Just as we trust God to lead us in sanctification to His glory, we should trust the same for the redeemed in our church.

Verses 10-12, Welcome one another because we are all accountable to God.

¹⁰But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,

**“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall give praise to God.”**

¹²So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

- Paul really sums it all up here, why do you judge your brother? God is the judge of all.
- This also connects back to chapter two where Paul challenges us for condemning one for sins that we also commit.

Verses 14:13-23, The Strong should love The Weak

Verses 13-21, The Strong should not cause The Weak to stumble.

¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way. ¹⁴I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. ²⁰Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. ²¹It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

- These verses can seem like a lot but it is really summed up by the last verse. It is good not to eat, or do anything which would hurt your brother’s faith.
- As partly sanctified children of God we can fall into the trap of thinking that somebody else’s weaker faith is not our problem and should not change what we know we can do without fear.
- Paul’s point here is that if we live that way we are not loving our brothers and sisters, but we must love them, so we will willingly lay down things to avoid causing them to stumble.

Verses 22-23, What is not done from faith, is sin.

²²The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- The concession Paul is making is to give up what is acceptable, not to do what is unacceptable. That is to say we do not participate in sin or accept sin in order to ‘make the church seem more welcoming’, that would be sin on us and them.
- Going a step further, to cause someone to do something they believe is sinful is not good either as it will harm their faith.
- Verse 23 is saying if you allow yourself to do something for any reason apart from faith it is sinful. Basically this goes to self reflection, why do I want to do this thing, is it for a selfish or self-promoting reason, then don’t do it.

Verses 15:1-13, Welcome one another

Verses 15:1-6, Unity in Christ means not pleasing ourselves.

Exhortation: **¹Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. ²Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.**

It is better for us to deny ourselves in love for others than to push them to do what is sin in their minds.

Reasons: ³**For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”** ⁴**For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

Two reasons

- Christ is our example and He for sure did not do what He could have done
- The laws that are in debate here are laws that were intended to be a shadow of what Jesus would fully do, and therefore, they were meant for good, so they are not harmful to abide by if we do so out of love for our neighbor.

Prayer: ⁵**Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

This prayer is the point of the whole thing. It is not about us or our needs or wants, it is about us serving the Lord together to spread the gospel and His light.

Verses 7-13, Unity in Christ fulfills the promise of God.

Exhortation: ⁷**Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.**

Our unity was a promise made by God long ago.

Reasons: ⁸**For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, ⁹and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;**

- Promises fulfilled
- God glorified because of His mercy

The Promises Fulfilled: **as it is written,**

**“Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles,
And I will sing to Your name.”**

¹⁰**Again he says,**

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.”

¹¹**And again,**

**“Praise the Lord all you Gentiles,
And let all the peoples praise Him.”**

¹²**Again Isaiah says,**

**“There shall come the root of Jesse,
And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles,
In Him shall the Gentiles hope.”**

Prayer: ¹³**Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- Paul here is not praying for a new thing or a thing that God has not already promised to all who believe in Him. This is yet another example of Paul showing us that it is good to pray back to God the promises He has made. It increases our faith, and puts our focus on Him.

Application

- When interacting with fellow Christians our minds should always first be one of grace not judgement.
- When getting frustrated with fellow Christians we should remind ourselves of the grace and mercy of the Lord to us.
- Don't waste time in fruitless debates with fellow Christians.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 15:14-16:27

Focus: Paul's Travel Plans, Greetings, and Doxology