

Accept One Another

Romans 14:1-15:13

Glorify God through the Gospel going to all the nations

Introduction: Irish executive's story

2 kinds of believers

1. Weak
 - a. Eats only vegetables
 - b. More strict emphasis on the Law
 - c. Maybe called "weak" to counterbalance a tendency toward pride
2. Strong
 - a. Eats everything
 - b. Emphasis on freedom in Christ through faith

3 issues in the Roman church

1. Eating meat (14:2-3, 6)

Meat bought in the marketplace may have been sacrificed to idols.
Real issue today in much of Asia
2. Drinking alcohol (14:21)

Serious cause of stumbling for some people.
3. Keeping Jewish holidays and strict observance of the Sabbath (14:5-6)

4 reasons to accept one another

1. **Judgment:** Don't pass judgment on your brother or sister in Christ.
 - a. God accepted him or her (14:3, 15:7).
 - b. He/she is God's servant, not yours (14:4, 10-12, 13)
 - c. Do everything to please God: you are accountable directly to Christ (14:5-8,12).
 - d. You will stand before Christ on the Judgment Day (14:9-12).
 - e. So eating and drinking must be done by faith with confidence (14:5,14).
2. **Serve** your brothers & sisters
 - a. Don't distress or tempt your brother or sister to sin (14:13,15)

- b. Build each other up in peace (14:18)
- c. Please others; love your neighbor, because Jesus did that (15:3)

3. Please God

- a. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit please God (14:17).
- b. Jesus died and rose to be Lord of all (14:9,11).
Don't do what you always do and ask God to bless it. Get on board **His** ship.

4. Values: What matters

- a. The Kingdom of God is worth infinitely more than eating & drinking (14:17).
- b. Your brother/sister in Christ is a work of God, worth far more than food (14:20).
- c. Old Testament Scripture was written to build us up, leading to hope (15:4).

1 overarching principle: Glorify God through the Gospel to all the nations

1. The Gospel is the **basis** for their unity.
 - a. Romans is all about reconciling Jewish & Gentile groups in the church at Rome.
 - b. Paul eloquently explains the Gospel of Grace as the common source of salvation.
2. The Gospel is the **reason** they need unity.
 - a. By accepting one another, God is glorified and praised (15:6-7, 9-12).
How? Almighty power to glorify God is in our unity (John 13:35, 17:23).
 - b. Gentiles are saved and worship God (15:9-12).
 - c. Jesus is rightly Lord of their lives (14:9,11).

3. It's all about the Gospel.

Fruit: Righteousness, peace, joy, hope, the Holy Spirit (15:13, 14:17)

God's "purpose in all of history is to uphold and display his glory for the enjoyment of his redeemed people from all the nations." **Let the Nations Be Glad** (Piper 2003, p.52)

Today's issues

1. Masks
 - a. Weak: follow every rule & recommendation of CDC & WHO, all the time
For the benefit of others, public health
[Note: The analogy to the "Weak" is Paul's terminology to describe those who are more strict in their approach. It is not our ordinary understanding of the word

“weak.” No one should look down on someone because their views are on the more strict side of the spectrum of views.]

- b. Strong: may pass by <6 ft on walks, try to reduce risk to neighbors but not so strict
Some may go further than this.
- c. How to get along
 - i. Strong: accept the weak. Love for who they are without trying to change them.
 - ii. Don’t despise them but don’t be pressured by them either.
 - iii. Each owns their own position, and consequences of decisions, before God.
 - iv. Weak: don’t condemn someone for bending the rules.
 - v. Are you concerned for your own health? Express your concern freely (without anger), but clarify that you are the one in need, not pointing the finger or calling others selfish.

2. Race and culture

- a. Understand: People are under stress
 - i. Too long in isolation—depression and its flip side, anger, are increased.
 - ii. (I’m not evaluating, just describing the situation).
 - iii. Pre-existing tensions are aggravated

b. Weak: Obligated to speak up

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- c. Strong: Feel freer in their response (may speak up; may share something on Facebook; volunteer; etc.). [Note: if you have children, you still need to teach them to value justice.]
- d. The Gospel: Black lives matter because Jesus died for black men and women.
- e. Emmanuel Acho (Youtube: Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man) Q&A at work. Insightful, educational. He could highlight his work with a Christian mission agency without hindrance. Thank God! All that makes the Gospel good news is good!

3. Politics

- a. Some focus on morality of the candidate.
- b. Some focus on eliminating abortion.
- c. Some focus on concerns of the poor.
- d. This world is not God’s Kingdom. No political solution represents Jesus.

Finally, back to the Gospel.

Paul speaks about disputable matters (14:1).

The Gospel is not disputable but forms both the basis and motivation for our acceptance of one another.

There is no option to be silent about the Gospel (Mark 8:34-38).

Whatever you do on other matters, do it to advance the Gospel, because unbelievers’ lives matter.



MERCY HILL

Rom 15:14-24 – no place left! That is the goal.

7/19/2020