

**Title:** Welcome One Another

**Passage:** Romans 15:1-7

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Summary:

Ways we are to welcome one another:

I. Bear with the failings of the weak (v.1-2)

II. Remember the example of Christ and previous saints. (v. 3-4)

III. Relying on the supernatural power of God. (v.5-6)

IV. Remembering the work of Christ reconciling us to Himself and to others. (v.7)

Key Truths:

- Pursue unity in diversity (oneness of heart and agreement on major points of doctrine with differences on secondary issues). Not uniformity (all are the same or unanimity (all agree on all things)
- Remember to focus on the key issues, especially moral, ethical issues. Is it better to be materially wealthy but heading to hell or be morally and ethically right before God?
- In the church, God is the great composer in creating harmony - not to be uniform but rather be tuned to the Holy Spirit to glorify God.

Application:

- Be gracious with other people's preferences.
- Be a welcoming church to others. Consider the implications.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- How can Christians share a spirit of unity despite having different views on certain practices or issues?
- How can a strong Christian use his or her strength to help other Christians?
- What can you do this week to spread love and mutual edification among Christians?
- James 1:22 admonishes us to be “doers of the Word.” What next steps will you take in response to the truths you have been exposed to?

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**Introduction**

All are welcome to the church

- regardless of background or race or lifestyle or sins.
  - But we pray that would not stay the same but the power of Jesus Christ would work in your heart and continue to change and grow like Christ.

**Context of Passage:**

Romans 1-11: Theology, doctrine

Romans 12: Shift to practical application.

Romans 14-15 What does it look like to be united and welcome one another?

Unity in diversity:

- oneness of heart and agreement on major points of doctrine with differences on secondary issues.
  - Not uniformity (all are the same) or unanimity (all agree on all things)

**Passage:**

Romans 15:1-7

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

**EXPOSITION****Overview**

Ways we are to welcome one another

I. Bear with the failings of the weak (v.1-2)

II. Remember the example of Christ and previous saints. (v. 3-4)

III. Relying on the supernatural power of God. (v.5-6)

IV. Remembering the work of Christ reconciling us to Himself and to others. (v.7)

**I. BEAR WITH THE FAILINGS OF THE WEAK**

***Romans 15:1-2***

***We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.***

*weak*

- Those who feel that by doing certain things that they will be closer to God.

*strong*

- Those who feel they have more freedom in their actions in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.*

- each of us must not judge or criticize one another.

*We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak*

1 Thessalonians 2:4

but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- Bearing the failings of the weak is to be done with proper context.
  - Those that deal with preferences
    - Not in situations that concern heresy or key doctrinal issues.

Distinctions

- Sin is very clear in the Bible
  - we must call it out.
- But in areas of preferences, we must bear with one another.

1 Corinthians 15:3

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

- "Of first importance"
  - There are different priorities of doctrine.
  - The Gospel of Jesus Christ is of utmost importance.

Philippians 3:15

Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

- Other areas are not as important as the Gospel.
- Distinction exists between essential and non-essential doctrines.
  - Essential: God is one; Our salvation rests in God's mercy
  - Non-essential: lower categories

## Analogy: Triage

- Like an ER, we must delegate or discern as things come in to the right category.
  - Like between critical care vs. simple care, we must discern between the level and type of doctrine.

## Categories of Doctrine

- Category 1:
  - Key doctrinal issues at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - Examples: Jesus is fully divine, virgin birth, salvation from faith alone by grace alone through Christ alone, Bible is infallible.
- Category 2:
  - Church has positions on the issue but not necessary for salvation.
  - Examples: Believers baptism vs. infant baptism. Spiritual gift of speaking of tongues. Predestination vs. election.
  - As long as united with the Primary Doctrines, we can agree to disagree agreeably.
- Category 3
  - Examples: Endtimes. Age of the earth.
- Category 4 (preferences)
  - Examples: music, dancing, make-up, dress attire.
- Note: if take any issue and believe it is required for salvation, then it rises to a Category 1.

Pursue unity and not argue about minor issues

### 2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

### Titus 3:9-11

But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

- welcome one another by bearing the failings of the weak.

## **II. REMEMBER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST AND PREVIOUS SAINTS. (v.3-4)**

### **Romans 15:3-4**

***For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for***

***our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.***

*For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."*

Luke 14:1-4

One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away.

- Religious leaders criticized Jesus for not properly observing the Sabbath.
  - This was an issue of the Gospel
    - If one followed the religious leaders, then would point to the way of salvation.
    - This was a Category 1 issue about what it means to have a right relationship with God. Gospel issue.

Matthew 17:24-27

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Remember to focus on the key issues

- especially moral, ethical issues.
  - Is it better to be materially wealthy but heading to hell or be morally and ethically right before God?

Matthew 16:26

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

- Example: Abraham and Lot

Genesis 13:8-9

Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you?"

Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

- Abraham deferred and let Lot have first choice.
- Moses gave up his place in the house of Pharaoh.

### **III. RELYING ON THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF GOD.**

#### **Romans 15:5-6**

***May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

- Unity is ultimately a supernatural gift.
  - God must grant us this gift.
    - As we follow Jesus.
- Unity is a byproduct from seeking Christ.

***you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus***

- Harmony is not the same note. It is actually different notes that blend together in harmony.
- In the church, God is the great composer not to be uniform but rather be tuned to the Holy Spirit to glorify God.

***that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

- When you are genuinely worshipping God in the church, there is unity
  - People are worshipping the one God with one heart and mind.

### **IV. REMEMBERING THE WORK OF CHRIST RECONCILING US TO HIMSELF AND TO OTHERS.**

#### **Romans 15:7**

Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

How did Christ welcome you?

- While you were still a sinner.

#### **Romans 5:8**

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### **Ephesians 2:4-5**

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Likewise, we ought to be ready to love others as our brothers and sisters.

### **APPLICATION POINTS**

If a Christian, are you a person who is gracious with other people's preferences?

- do you hold tight the things you should hold tight and hold loose the things you should?
- We need to be thoughtful and gracious.

Are we a welcoming church?

- This is a family, not an institution.
- We are all part of a family with different gifts. When you come in, don't just sit and leave. Welcome others.
  - If someone looks different, welcome them.
- We are not perfect but by the grace of God, continue to grow.

If not a Christian: focus on the main things. True hope and peace is only through Jesus Christ.

- Once submit to Jesus, attend a Bible-centered church where people are humble and meek at heart.