

Romans– You are Welcome

Romans 15:1-7

“We pursue being a disciple making family: surrendered to Jesus, transformed by the gospel, and saturated in His word.”

We see an extremely rich text of Scripture that has the capacity to change everything. We always say that every organization has a culture. These verses in Romans 15:1-7 are really the blueprints for creating a gospel-culture among the church. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read that it is by grace that we are saved through faith and not by works so that no one can boast. As we read in Galatians as well we see that our justification is by Christ and nothing else. A church that realizes that “Christ has welcomed us” will truly see this as the work of the gospel. We as believers should reflect that welcome to others.

Discussion Questions* -- *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. Paul wrote to the diverse church in Rome that they are to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed them. This reality would bring glory to God. This diverse church had both Jews and Gentiles. They were from very different backgrounds and brought very different experiences to the church. They were called to be one for the glory of God. How can the “welcoming” of others in the church bring glory to God? Why is this welcoming so difficult?
2. The believers that are strong in conscience have an obligation to bear with the failings of the believers that are weak in conscience. The particular struggle here in context is that some of the Jews were struggling with the importance of special diet and certain holy days being observed. Struggling with eating meat sacrificed to idols. They were considered weak because those diets and days did not bring justification for them. However, they were struggling. Paul is telling the believers in Rome that they have an obligation if they are mature to endure these difficulties from the weaker conscience brothers. They are not to please themselves but to please their neighbor to “build them up” in the faith. Do we really look at our welcome of others as a way to build them up? In what ways do we do this or not do this? What are some examples of how we try to please ourselves in the church family? Are there people we tend to gravitate towards or shy away from? What are some ways that we might build up less mature believers?
3. Jesus is the example of this welcome that builds up. He was clearly the great example of this text lived out. Psalm 69:9 that is quoted shows that He endured great reproach that should have been ours. When we take that in, we realize our deep need to live that welcome out to others. We didn’t deserve it. Self-justification tends to make us very unwelcoming. We have a perspective that makes us aloof, have a sense of superiority, and hold negative scrutiny towards others. A culture of demanding oppression is what is created by self-justification. What would this gospel

culture of welcoming truly look like for us at Heritage? What would you need to do in order to help build this culture? What kind of church culture emerges when there is no gospel culture present? (i.e. selfish ambition, savage destruction, etc.)

4. It is clear that God is the conductor of this gospel culture. He has given us the Scripture and endurance so that we might have hope. It is a gift from God. This gift should allow us to live in harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus so that we might glorify God with one voice. This harmony is not uniformity, but it is a "common unity." A community built around the welcome of Christ. The way this occurs is that we are tuned to Christ. We are building one another up. We are in accord with Christ. Harmony is not the singing of the same notes but different notes that together make a rich, full sound. The church of Jesus is a very diverse community that together sings an amazing song of salvation. The church is not meant to be a new community but a new kind of community. How do you envision a church being in accord with Christ? How should that church handle disagreements and differences? How would this be inviting to a broken world?