

Living in Community with the Gospel of Grace

Week 3 - Romans 14

? What is a unique way that you feel connected to or worship God?

Objectives:

- Valuing the differences between members of the body of Christ
- Emphasis on the Kingdom of God bringing peace and joy

Differences Between Christians

Romans 14:1-12 (NIV)

¹ Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written:

“As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.”

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

? What's the difference between personal conviction and salvific requirements?

Possible answers: person conviction could be about specifics on how to live a Christian life vs salvific requirements is a saving faith in Christ Jesus

"Following the torah as a way of personal piety (not as a requirement of salvation) is in the category of what we call "adiaphora" - things neither prohibited nor required by the Christian faith. "
Encountering the Book of Romans by Douglas J. Moo - 181

? Verses 1-4 talk about different ways of Christian living. What topics of dispute might be applicable to us today and how do we interact peaceably with those who have different personal convictions than us?
Possible answers: yoga, tattoos, halloween, Harry Potter, drinking alcohol, politics, etc.
How do we interact? Remaining curious, acting out of love to everyone and anyone as Christ has shown us, respecting different ways of Christian living.

? How do we know when something is a stumbling block for our brothers and sisters in Christ and when something is a sin requiring gentle correction?
Possible answers: if this is someone you're in community with then: ask questions, pray, look to the Bible, consistent conversation, developing trust, asking yourself if this is truth or preference.

? Is there a tactful way to approach sin in people we don't know well?
Possible answers: Answers may vary. Likely that correction will not be received well if you don't know someone well. This could be a good place for prayer and seeking the Lord's guidance, being grounded in the belief that all sin has already been paid for through Jesus' work on the cross

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble

Romans 14:13-23 (NIV)

¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

? How can we encourage each other to zoom out to see the big picture of the Kingdom of God in our community? How is this contrary to the world?

Possible answers: Being able to take a step back and see the picture helps us to not get caught up in the small, trivial details. We can better see what God has for us in His Kingdom (his purposes, plans); the world tends to be judgmental, hard to live with differing views (cancel-culture) and creates division or segments which goes against our call to be a family/body.

? How can this help us serve one another?

Possible answers: Because the Kingdom of God is based upon peace and joy rather than works/rules, we can be fueled to support one another in a non-judgmental way.

? How might judgment on others, earlier in their faith journey, impact their faith with God negatively?

Why is it important to set aside judgment even if your own faith looks different than another's faith?

Possible answers: It feels unsupportive or exhausting to constantly be corrected, emphasis on the wrong values, focus on outward actions vs relationship with Jesus, we aren't the Holy Spirit (we don't grow and change people), difference between discernment and judgment

? Was there ever a time in your early walk with Christ when you needed some gentle correction? Who was this from and how did it play out?

Possible answers: Answers will vary.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What was God telling you through this passage this week? What did you need to hear?

? What actions and behaviors are you tempted to judge others more harshly for? How can we reframe that in light of the gospel?