

In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity

Augustine

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I. In non-essentials liberty

Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

Rom 14:2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

Rom 14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Rom 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Rom 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Rom 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

Rom 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

II. In essentials unity

A. There can be no divisions concerning the effectiveness of the cross of Christ

1Co 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment...

1Co 1:17 For Christ sent me...to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

B. Paul's disputations with the Galatians who left the gospel of grace for the law

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Gal 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Gal 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Gal 4:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Gal 4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Gal 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Gal 5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Gal 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

C. Disputations in the Jerusalem church with those who taught salvation by works

Act 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Act 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Act 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

D. Paul's very judgmental teachings about those who don't hold to things essential

Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Tit 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

2Ti 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2Ti 3:6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

2Ti 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2Ti 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

2Jn 1:10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:

2Jn 1:11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

2Th 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

2Th 3:15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

E. Truths about God and God's word are essential

1. God does exist

Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Psa 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

Psa 19:3 *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard.

2. There is only one God

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

3. The one God is three persons—The three persons are one God

1Jn 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Mat 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

4. Truth about God's word is essential (the Bible is God's unchangeable word)

2Ti 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

F. If the gospel of grace is essential, the components of the gospel of grace must be

1. Election is essential to the gospel of grace

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself...

2. A successful Savior is essential to the gospel of grace

Mat 1:21 ...call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

2Ti 1:9 Who hath saved us...

Heb 9:12 ...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

Heb 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

2Co 5:18 ...God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ...

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

3. Unassisted Holy Spirit regeneration is essential to the gospel of grace

Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth...so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

1Jn 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...

4. The elimination of works for eternal salvation is essential to the gospel of grace

Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then *is it no more of works*: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Eph 2:9 **Not of works**, lest any man should boast.

Rom 3:20 Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified** in his sight...

Rom 9:16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

5. The final preservation of all God's children is essential to the gospel of grace

Joh 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Joh 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Joh 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Joh 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

G. Teaching Christian-living is essential (though it is non-essential for eternal life)

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Mat 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Rom 1:17 ...The just shall live by faith.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

III. Thoughts on other essentials and non-essentials

A. Essentials

The reality of resurrection—of heaven and hell

Proper Bible-based teaching about the purpose of the gospel and of faith

The Bible's standard for what is sin

The Bible-based concept of church—pillar of truth—singing, praying, preaching (men)

The ordinances of baptism and communion

B. Non-essentials

Songbooks—handshake—passing plate

Lunchroom rules—window rules—steeple rules

Overalls—backward baseball caps

Appropriateness of baptisteries—photographs as images—eating in sanctuary

C. “Essentials” (with less conclusive Bible proof) (dangerous—but for honesty’s sake)

Musical instruments—close communion

Some questions on re-baptism—feetwashing as part of communion

Speaking in tongues—head coverings and hair length

IV. In all things charity

Rom 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Rom 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Rom 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Rom 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Rom 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Rom 14:21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

A. Paul’s kind of love

1. Paul sandwiched Romans 14 between love-in-action statements

a. Love worketh no ill—Put on Christ—Don’t give an inch to the flesh

Rom 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

b. Bear ye one another’s burdens—Please your neighbor—Not yourself

Rom 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Rom 15:2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

Rom 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

2. Charity beareth all things

1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

1Co 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

1Co 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

1Co 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

3. Love bears up his neighbor

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Gal 6:4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Gal 6:5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

4. Love’s words edify and extend grace

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

B. “Why do I have to be the one to give in?”

1. “Because Paul said so.”
2. Because you consider yourself one of the strong ones
3. Because you love God with all your heart
4. Because you love your neighbor as yourself
5. Because you want to have a strong church
6. Because you want to have a strong family
7. Because you want to have a strong nation

C. God blesses the humble

2Ch 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

