
Sermon Notes

July 31, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Welcome One Another

Romans 15:1-7

¹ We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

⁴ 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.

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

A Sandwich

- ❖ This passage is a bit like a sandwich, two pieces of bread and some meat in the middle
- ❖ The top slice of bread (vv. 1-2)
 - weak = those offended by the eating of meat previously sacrificed to idols
 - strong = those who say meat is meat, it has no spiritual significance in and of itself

- the principle = whenever we can, we must do whatever we can to please others by building them up and encouraging them in the faith

❖ The bottom slice of bread (vv. 6-7)

- tells us why we should set aside our own likes and preferences to serve others
- we sacrifice our own pleasure in order to serve others *for the glory of God*
- we join in worship to glorify God with one voice and we glorify God as we welcome and accept one another

❖ The meat in the middle (vv. 3-5)

- Jesus is the supreme pattern and example of how we are meant to look out for and welcome others
- do you want to be a person who joyfully serves, welcomes and accepts others for the glory of God?
- we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus!

The Condiments

- ❖ If we are going to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will need the ongoing exhortation and encouragement of **SCRIPTURE** (v. 3)
 - read the gospels if you want to be changed from one degree of glory into another (2 Corinthians 3:18)
 - reading Scripture fuels our hope

- ❖ None of this happens without **PRAYER** (vv. 5-6)
 - God must do His work in us or these goals will not be met
 - God must draw our hearts to Jesus and open our eyes to see His glory

Welcoming Others

- ❖ Welcoming others as Jesus welcomes us is a sure mark of godliness
- ❖ Who does Jesus welcome?
 - **sinners**
 - Matthew the tax collector (Luke 5:30-32)
 - a woman caught in adultery (John 8)
 - **outcasts** [lepers, demon possessed]
 - **unclean**
 - a woman who has been suffering from bleeding for 12 years (Mark 5)
 - the dead
- ❖ Jesus is still welcoming sinners, outcasts and those who are unclean [people like you and me!]
- ❖ We have been welcomed and accepted by God, now we are "the doorkeepers" Jesus puts in place to welcome others

- ❖ Jesus welcomes sinners, outcasts and those who are unclean
 - with joy (Luke 15;&, Matthew 11:28, John 7:37)
 - as they are (Romans 5:8)
 - impartially (Romans 2:11, James 2:1-4)
- ❖ We need to add a whole new layer of serving opportunities within our fellowship as we prepare to welcome our guests
 - parking
 - greeting
 - following up
- ❖ The way we welcome our guests is the way we welcome Jesus (Matthew 25:31-40)

Personal Application

1. When it comes to nonessential matters, do you find it easy or hard to set aside your own likes and preferences in order to do whatever it takes to make others feel welcome and accepted?
2. What things in Romans 15:1-7 will help you grow in your ability to welcome others as Christ as welcomed you?
3. How does knowing that welcoming and accepting one another brings glory to God change your perspective on the value of serving in a ministry position that seeks to make guests feel welcome among our congregation?
4. Prayerfully consider the ways in which you are willing to let God use you to help our fellowship welcome the guests He will send to our new building when we move into it this.