

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Mar 25/26, 2023

ROMANS SERIES Part 30: Glorifying God by Accepting One Another in Disputable Matters

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Some matters are clearly spelled out in Scripture as either right or wrong. In matters which the Bible does not address directly, we are given freedom to make up our own minds, providing the way we live reflects the heart of Jesus. Salvation is not a disputable matter.

In chapter 14 Paul addresses how to love one another in the area of disputable matters. The early church consisted of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and slave owners, and rich and poor. For many, loving each other was not easy.

Christians in the early church were divided over matters of food and days of worship. Today even more issues divide us as Christians. So how do we stay unified and love each other as Christ followers?

Paul responds with 3 key principles: When it comes to disputable matters we need (1) to accept one another, (2) to be sensitive to one another, and (3) to keep focused on what really matters.

Regarding accepting one another, Paul addresses two groups—**those whose faith is weak** and **those whose faith is strong**. Weak Christians are those who, regardless of how long they have been saved, still don't understand grace and the freedom they have in Christ. They haven't allowed the full implications of the gospel to sink into their hearts. They trust Jesus to save them but still battle with a legalistic mindset. Strong Christians realize who they are in Christ and know they are saved by grace alone through faith alone. Therefore, they are free to do anything that is not specifically prohibited in the Bible as long as it is done with a spirit of sensitivity to others and in the spirit of Christ.

How do we, in practical terms, accept one another? **Don't label** those you disagree with. And **don't judge** those you disagree with in disputable matters. **Don't look down on** those who are uncomfortable doing what you feel free to do. **Don't shun** them or make them feel they aren't real Christians. Rather, **accept them**. Treat them as brothers and sisters in the family of God.

WHY?

1) because GOD has accepted them (v.3).

2) because they answer to God not to anyone else (v.4).

3) because only God knows their motives. Some people dress up for church because they believe that when you meet royalty you put on your best clothes. When they come to worship the King of Kings, they believe He deserves their best. Others deliberately dress down, not out of disrespect for God but out of concern for people visiting our church who may not be able to afford nice clothes and therefore feel out of place or intimidated by those who are well dressed.

4) because we're related to each other in Christ (v.7-9). We are all members of the body of Christ. We understand God's grace enough to love others with the same love Jesus extends to us.

5) because each of us will give an account of ourselves before God (v.10). For those outside the church, those who do not call Jesus Lord, we are not to judge. For those who claim to be a Christian and habitually behave in ways the Bible clearly forbids, Matthew 18 spells out a process for the church to address this. In gray areas we shouldn't judge others. A day of reckoning is coming. Genuine followers of Jesus will not appear at the Great White throne judgment, but they will appear before the judgment seat of Christ and be held accountable for how they lived as Christians.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What clubs, schools or organizations have you belonged to that had 'unwritten' expectations ex. Dress code, behavior, etc.
2. What are some examples of disputable matters that Christians might disagree on today?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 14:1-12

3. What is meant by 'weak' faith in verse 1? Who would be considered to have 'strong' faith? What are the disputable matters mentioned in this passage? For what reasons are we to accept them?
4. Why should we not judge another? What principles can we draw from these verses to guide our interactions with other believers in areas where there may be disagreement?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Where do you find yourself most easily slipping into judgmentalism? How can we balance our responsibility to be obedient to God's Word with the need to be accepting and loving towards those who see things differently?
6. What qualities should characterize the church, especially in the eyes of those who are new to the faith or not part of the church? How does verse 12, "each of us will give an account of ourselves to God," encourage us on how to treat others?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Instead of looking down on a person in your life, is there someone you need to accept, pray for, love and encourage? Leave your areas of concern with God. Ask God to forgive you and show you how you should change your ways.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 14:1-12

¹Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ²One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³The 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. ⁴Who 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.

⁵One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶Whoever 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. ⁷For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸If 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. ⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰You, 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.

¹¹It is written:

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

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

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