

Sermon Notes on “How to Accept One Another” Romans 15:7-13

- Paul wraps up his message on unity with some instruction on how to “*accept one another, just as Christ also accept us to the glory of God*” (v. 7)
- People tend to gather in tribes (a loyalty to one’s social, economic, political or blood ties with a common culture and dialect) and while tribes can perpetuate attitudes and behaviors that foster disunity and division in life, Christianity is an ultimate tribe that includes anyone who is willing to unite in Christ and follow His relational standards:
 1. Marriage is heterosexual, equally yoked in faith (Gen 2:18-25; 1 Cor. 7:39) and designed to propagate a family (Gen. 1:28) that models love, submission and honor by parents and children (Eph. 6:22-32; Ex. 20:12)
 2. Employees are to work with honesty, submission and devotion to their employers and employers are to be just and fair to those they oversee and manage (Col. 3:22-4:1)
 3. Citizens are responsible to offer willful submission and honor to all governing authorities and governing authorities are to protect, promote order and uphold justice for its citizenry (Rom. 13:1-7)
 4. The church is to befriend, love (Luke 6:35; 10:25-37), witness (Col. 4:2-6) and do good (Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:15) to all unbelievers as equal image-bearers of God (Gen. 1:26-27) with wise caution (1 Cor. 15:33). Believers separate from false religious systems (Rev. 18:4-5), false teachers (2 Tim. 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Jn 7-11) and unrepentant believers (2 Cor. 5). Believers fellowship and serve with other believers with the same faith essentials and with those who differ on secondary non-essentials of faith and practice (Rm. 14-15; 1 Cor. 8-10)
- Paul shares **two supreme ways** believers can learn how to “accept one another” despite our differences in faith conviction, ethnicity and any other differences:
 1. **Let the ministry of Jesus Christ govern your relationships** (15:7-12)
 - **Jesus Christ accepted us all into the same family** (15:5-7): It was “*according to Christ Jesus*” (v. 5) and “*just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God*” (v. 7). The Lord’s gracious ministry on the cross provided our unity together.
 - **Jesus Christ served us all to fulfill God’s plan** (15:8-12): Now Paul looks at God’s unity plan for Jews and Gentiles. The Lord was a servant to Israel (“the circumcision”) “*to confirm the promises give to the Father on behalf of the truth*” (His faithful word to Abraham in Gen. 12) AND for the Gentiles “*to glorify God for*

His mercy" (Paul quotes 4 Old Testament passages from all three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: the Law, Psalms and Prophets that shows God's plan to include the Gentiles--v. 9-12)

2. **Let the ministry of the Holy Spirit grow your relationships (15:13)**

- **The Holy Spirit builds confidence (hope) in your relationships through “*the God of hope*”:** Relational unity needs confidence to pursue the challenges in overcoming personal differences and God's hope provides that confidence.
- **The Holy Spirit empowers confidence (hope) to “*abound*” in relationships when God “*fills you with all joy and peace*”**
 - “**joy**” is not having a bubbly personality, but possessing the supernatural ability to have inner delight in spite of the challenge of pursuing unity with other different-minded, different believers (Philemon 7)
 - “**peace**” is not about being unruffled or divided by other different thinking believers, but possessing the supernatural ability to be a peacemaker in the face of relational challenges (1 Thess. 5:13)
- **The Holy Spirit strengthens your confidence (hope) in relationships by “*believing*”:** It's trusting God that His resources (joy and peace) will energize you to overcome whatever obstacles may be preventing unity.