

Life aboard the Fellowship

Accept One Another

Romans 15:7-13

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Text Introduction: We are in a series of messages entitled “Life aboard the Fellowship” in Romans 15. I would actually like to take just a moment to remind you of the reason for this emphasis. The emphasis is tied to a theme that we have adopted for 2009—to grow as Jesus did. The Bible says in Luke 2:52 that Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and with others. We have considered each of those four growth areas this year. We have come to this final emphasis of growing in relationship with others. To be like Jesus, we must be in right relationship with others. A place in the Bible that helps us to understand that idea is this chapter, Romans 15. There are 8 imperatives (as I see it) that we are given in Romans 15. The first action is given to us in verse 1. We are to “Bear with one Another when there is a difference of opinion over things not specifically covered in Scripture. The second action that we talked about is in verses 2-4 and deals with the idea of “Pleasing One Another.” We encounter the third action in verses 5 and 6, which is the idea of “Agreeing with one another.” That brings us to our primary text today which tells us to receive or another translation “to accept one another.”

Text: ⁷ Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. ⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

*“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,
And sing to Your name.”*

¹⁰ And again he says:

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

¹¹ And again:

*“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!”*

¹² And again, Isaiah says:

*“There shall be a root of Jesse;
And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”*

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3 Questions about Acceptance

This text is fairly straightforward. We have a certain command—“accept one another.” We are given the reason that we are to accept one another—“Christ accepts us.” We are given the result of such acceptance—“to the glory of God.” Then, we are given some historical context to this idea of acceptance in the example of Jewish/Gentile relationships.

The application for our lives is that we must do likewise and “accept one another.” To help us with this lesson today, I want to present to us some guiding questions that come out of this text. Honestly dealing with these questions will help us to measure our own ability to accept one another.

1. Does Jesus accept all who come to Him in faith?

The answer to this question is a resounding “Yes!” Any person who desires to repent of sin and believe by faith in Jesus is promised that he or she will be accepted. Accepted! That’s a wonderful feeling isn’t it? Remember that awful feeling of being rejected. I think our first experience of rejection comes fairly early in life. I don’t know if this is done too much anymore, but remember as children when we would “choose teams” to play a game. The first feeling of rejection that ever comes in life is to be the last one picked.

Rejection continues throughout life. You get rejected in Kindergarten to play kickball. You got rejected. In high school, you ask someone out on a date and you got rejected. You applied to a particular college and you got rejected. You applied for a job and you got rejected. You tried to get a raise and got rejected. You tried to publish a book and you got rejected. You get the message—life is a series of rejections. But, write it in big letters—Jesus accepts all who come to Him in repentance and faith. Never will it be said that Jesus rejected anyone who earnestly repented of sin and responded in faith.

This is the best news of the day. I want you to keep listening, but if you don’t hear anything else, I hope that you will remember that Christ accepts you. You know, sometimes we say, “I accepted Christ. I accepted Christ when I was nine years old.” The truth is, though, that long before you accepted Him, He accepted you. Amen!

The Purpose of His Coming

This is the expressed reason for His coming. His very name is Jesus saves!

Examples of His Invitations

- The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4)—outcast—woman; Samaritan, married 5 times already and living with someone. Jesus said, “I accept you.”
- Zacchaeus (Luke 19)—rich tax-collector, but Jesus says, “I accept you.” “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”
- The Apostle Paul—First time we hear his name in Scripture, He is in hearty agreement with the stoning of Stephen. The second time we encounter his name he is still “breathing out murderous threats against the LORD’s disciples.” But it is in this experience that Jesus reaches out to Paul and says “Why do you persecute Me?” From

this moment on, Paul becomes a Christ follower unparalleled by any other person in history.

His Invitation—Romans 10:9-13

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, *“Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”* ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For *“whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”*

2. Do we have a right to reject anyone when Christ has accepted us?

The very obvious answer is “NO!” Our acceptance of one another ought to be rooted in His acceptance of us. If Christ has accepted us with all of our stuff, we ought to accept everyone. When did Christ begin to love us? Romans tells us that also. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

To illustrate this point, Paul gave 4 examples from the Old Testament. (Psalm 18:1, Deuteronomy 32:10, Psalm 117:11, and Isaiah 11.

Paul said to the Jews, “You must accept the Gentiles.” Paul said to the Gentiles, “You must accept the Jews.” In Christ, we are one. We do not have the right to reject anyone that Christ has accepted. When we do, we are placing ourselves in a higher level of authority than God, and I don’t think any of us want to do that.

3. Do we have a right to reject anyone whom Jesus accepts?

This is kind of the same question, but this time from God’s angle instead of our angle. It does not make sense does it to reject a person that Jesus calls His.

We ought to be willing to pray, “LORD, reveal to me any ...”

- Prejudice—No place for it in the body of Christ.
- Pre-Conceived Judgments—Root of many biases before we even get to know a person.
- Partiality—Sometimes to compensate for our knowledge that prejudice is wrong, we still tend to treat people with partiality.
- Pride—The root of all things that keeps us from becoming more like Jesus.