

04/03/22 Message

Part of Romansthe Life of Faith - the Power of Grace

April 2, 2022

Message: Unity in Diversity

Series: Romans

This is our twelfth message in the series Romans: the Life of Faith - the Power of Grace.

As one of Paul's epistles (or letters), Romans is considered the greatest of all his letters. It's been called one of the most foundational documents of Christianity.

Introduction

There was a division between the Jews and the Gentiles that combined were part of the Roman church. They had different backgrounds and life experiences. Paul wanted them to see the value of unity; the core principle of becoming "one" body of Christ.

We know what unity means, we talked about it last week. What does diversity mean? It's talked about a lot lately because we live in a diverse world. We're culturally diverse, socially diverse, I could go on... but the truth is, God didn't design us to be diverse. The truth is, God made us in His image, and He created us through two people, Adam and Eve. Acts 17:26 makes it clear, from one man, God made every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth. We are one race of people.

—Pastor Chad

All human beings in the world today are classified as homo sapiens. Scientists today admit that, biologically, there really is only one race of humans.

—Ken Ham (CEO of Answers in Genesis, Creation Museum, Ark Encounter)

Race is a social construct derived mainly from perceptions conditioned by events of recorded history, and it has no basic biological reality.

—C. Loring Brace (Biological Anthropologist, University of Michigan and Speaker, American Association for the Advancement of Science)

According to the human genome project, our DNA is 99.9% the same and differences between people constitute less than .1% of our DNA. Those are scientifically proven, widely accepted facts regarding human biology.

Ethnicity is our cultural identity, is has to do with our geography (where we're from, cultural expression). Diversity was born out of Adam and Eve's sin. God created us to live in one place, a perfect place (Eden). Culturally and genetically, we would all be the same.

Because of sin (because of diversity) we classify people in our heads, segregating them into groups – sometimes without thinking about it.

- You can choose to let diversity SEPARATE you or UNITE you

Paul faced this problem in many first century churches (and we face this problem today, almost 2,000 years later).

Paul Explores Diversity

Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)

4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,

5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Review from last week:

- You are SPECIAL in God's eyes
- He created us to be ONE body

Three points in vv4-5 to note:

- unity (together we are stronger, together we are better)
- diversity (we are all different)
- mutuality (we all belong to each other)

- If you're disconnected from the body, you are SPIRITUALLY DEAD

Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)

6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well.

8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

We're different - we bring different talents and gifts to the table - that's what makes the body of Christ so effective! Knowing this, God gave us different gifts for doing things well (cf. Romans 12:6).

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (NLT)

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all.

5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord.

6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

Ephesians 4:7-8 (NLT)

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people."

- God has given you a SPIRITUAL GIFT
- The source of the gift is the HOLY SPIRIT of God
- Your gift is used to HELP each other

Paul Wants You to Serve

You are given at least one spiritual gift to serve God... and by serving God, you serve others. Paul urges us to press on for the kingdom!

- Your giftedness identifies your QUALIFICATIONS for where you should be serving

Romans 12:9-10 (NLT)

9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

- REALLY LOVE each other with genuine affection

Romans 12:11 (NLT)

Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.

- Commit and work HARD for the kingdom
- Commit and work with ENTHUSIASM for the kingdom

Romans 12:12 (NLT)

Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.

- Keep on keeping on – it means you ENDURE
- Keep on keeping on – it means you PERSEVERE

Romans 12:13-18 (NLT)

13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.

15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

How do you live in peace... in unity, Paul says...

- DO ALL THAT YOU CAN
- Unity depends on YOU

Romans 12:19-21 (NLT)

19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

The key to unity is...

- Conquer EVIL
- By doing GOOD