

“Let my People... Grow”

It is so good to be back with you, Laury and I have been on quite the journey, which by the way, you are a big part of. We are now getting the opportunity to plant some churches, work with new leaders, help pastors that are dealing with some issues and coming alongside to encourage and help men and women who have answered the call to pastor.

Some ask us when we are going to retire, honestly, as much as we loved pastoring this church, and as much as we miss being here each week, we are having the time of our life in this new season. That God, would allow us in this season of our lives to be of value and some small impact in the lives of churches throughout the Northwest, is humbling and we wake up each day, stunned that God let's us be a part of what He is doing...

So thank you, for praying and sending us; keep praying and know that we love you and are so excited to still be a part of this great church...

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

The Law of Love

¹⁴ I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Romans 14:13-19

1. Is it righteous to judge others?

I think all of us are aware that it is Jesus who will judge us Himself and as such, it is unnecessary for us to judge other people. Of course we have a obligation to judge doctrine and for the church to judge immoral behavior of leaders and others... there are doctrinal truths that if distorted or lost will prevent people from getting saved, and there are categories of immoral conduct that if they are practiced over and over will prevent a person even though they may say they are a believer from going to heaven.

Paul is not expanding his argument nor should we to include all principles, he is addressing “nonessential” matters, where a person’s conscience is the deciding factor.

One of the things I appreciate about Foursquare is that we want to major on the majors and minor on the minors...

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things Romans 14:1

Paul was saying there are things that we are aggressively standing on but there are also things that are not worth having dissension over and it takes a level of

maturity and honesty to know the difference between the two; in Paul's day it was meat, can meat be sold and bought in the market place or should certain days be better for worship than others, are one more holy than the other...

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

¹⁹ Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. ²¹ It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.
Romans 14:14-21

Now it isn't to say that these aren't issues that don't need to be discussed, many such issues do need to be talked about, but what he is saying and what I happen to agree with, is that many times we spend too much time on issues that detract from what Jesus has called us to do.

Some think that if you are not worshipping on Saturday, you are not worshipping, I think most of us would agree that worship on any day is a good day because everyday is a holy day...

When Laury and I were younger we attended a church that really had a hang up with long hair and women in pants, it was a conviction that was very important to them, not to us. It was not worth fighting over... I'm pretty sure Jesus is not concerned with the length of my hair or the lack thereof.

Now, that is also not meant to say that I have no obligation to my brothers and sisters to not help them fall into temptation, what might be a freedom for me, might be death for them; alcohol for example...

To me the bigger thing here is for the church to understand what it means and how to disagree and still maintain unity, how do I disagree with you on the minor things and still keep Jesus and love the main thing?

Maybe this will help'

1. **Don't judge.** If I discover a deep sin or a doctrinal error, I will deal with it biblically and privately. Don't go to others unless it is your pastor, don't spread gossip and don't judge.
2. **Don't abandon.** It took me a long time to learn some lessons, if I get out of relationship with someone, what good does that do? I think we have learned to abuse the words "boundaries" and we use shame to try to get people to behave like we want them too. We abandon people and call it "taking a righteous stand" abandoning people is not God's way.
3. **Don't push.** Our desire is to please Jesus in every area of our life and to follow Him, when He convicts you of a certain behavior, He tells you to leave something behind, we need to do that and not necessarily put that on everyone else around me....
4. **Don't be cynical.** The point is to let the Holy Spirit work the change in people at His pace, I have realized that most times when I think I need to

“fix” someone, I am not even focused on what Jesus is doing but what I think needs to be done. God is at work, even if you can’t see it!

Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. Romans 14:4

Trust takes time, but there is a difference between caution and cynicism!

5. **Don’t mislead.** People are watching us, people see a lot more than they hear and in whatever I do, I have to consider people who are weaker in an area than perhaps I am. I may think that drinking is my freedom, but if it causes someone to fall... there are people who count the days that they are clean and sober, there are those that have been raised their whole life to believe something is wrong. Is it possible that my example might cause someone to fall back into unbelief?
6. **Don’t forget.** People are who Christ died for and they are profoundly loved by God.

Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Vs. 15

2. A radical reorientation.

Following Christ is not a matter of small steps, it is a radical reorientation of everything I do and who I am. No longer do I live for myself, I now live my life to win every person possible to Jesus and to freedom. This is no longer an option, it is what Jesus demands.

Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. Luke 9:23-24