

Lost in Translation (Week 6)

March 22nd, 2026

“Tolerance”

English Definition:

- *Allow the existence, occurrence, or practice of something that one does not necessarily like or agree with without interference.*

Synonyms:

- *Let, permit, allow, put up with, suffer.*

Let's Talk Position

Cultural Tolerance:

- *Cultural tolerance refers to the recognition, acceptance, and respect of differences in cultures, traditions, beliefs, and practices. It involves understanding that people from diverse backgrounds may have varying customs and values and choosing to coexist peacefully with these differences. Rather than merely tolerating others, cultural tolerance emphasizes mutual respect and the idea that diversity can enrich society. By fostering an environment of inclusion, it helps reduce prejudice, and discrimination, promotes social harmony, reduces conflict, and builds cohesive communities where individuals feel valued, regardless of their cultural heritage.*

Cultural tolerance has become less about permitting, letting, and allowing, and is more about accepting, approving, and agreeing.

Cultural tolerance is accepting, approving and agreeing with who I am, what I believe, and what I do. If you don't tolerate me then you don't love me, you are bigoted, small minded, and judgmental.

Let's Get Practical

Judging:

Often times Christians get labeled as judgmental when they aren't being “tolerant...”

“Who are you to judge me?”

“Who made you the judge?”

“Only God can judge me.”

“Judge not lest you be judged.”

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV) *“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”*

Jesus is talking about not judging someone in a hypocritical way. He is saying before you judge someone else, make sure you deal with your own garbage first.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV) *⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”*

There is a big difference in how we handle those outside the church (*or the faith*), and how we handle those inside.

John 1:14,17 (ESV) *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

-Grace without truth is *passivism*.

-Truth without grace is *legalism*.

We must show grace and stand firm in the faith!

Let's Make It Personal

1 Corinthians 11:3-4 (ESV) *³But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.*

- What are things you have become tolerant of? (Either things that you are doing or that someone else is doing)
- What are some acceptable sins you have allowed in your life?

-We will not add to the cross and we will not take away from the cross.

-We will not add to the Gospel, and we will not take away from the Gospel.

-We will not tolerate any view or lifestyle that is contrary to what God tells us through His Word.

We will show grace and stand firm in the faith.

-We will call sin...*sin* and we will not tolerate a brother or sister living a life of sin.

Sin is a big deal. God hates sin. God will not tolerate sin. God sacrificed His own Son because of how much He hates sin. He also shows how much He loves us...Grace and truth.

FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Head Questions: Clarifying “*Tolerance*” and Judgement.

- How did this message challenge or clarify your understanding of “*tolerance*” and “*judging*”?
- What is the difference between:
 - Biblical tolerance (*permitting/putting up with*)
 - Cultural tolerance (*accepting/approving/agreeing*)
 - Hypocritical judgment vs. Biblical judgment inside the church (**Matthew 7, 1 Corinthians 5**)?
- Where have you been more absorbed with the culture’s definition than Scripture’s?

Heart Questions: Letting Scripture Confront My Sin First.

- Read **Hebrews 4:12** and **Matthew 7:3–5**.
- What is one “*tolerated*” or minimized sin in your own life that the Holy Spirit may be putting His finger on right now?
- How does it feel to admit that? What fears or excuses come up?
- What would repentance look like at the heart level (*desires, motives, affections*), not just behavior?

Hands Questions: Serving in the Church with Grace and Truth.

- In what ways can we “*show grace and stand firm in the faith*” as we serve in the church (*kids, worship, greeting, groups, tech, etc.*)?
 - How can your current or future area of serving be a place where: Sin is not ignored or affirmed, but people are deeply loved and helped toward holiness?
- Is there a brother or sister in Christ you serve alongside who may need a loving, grace-filled conversation about a pattern of sin? What would it look like to approach them in relationship, not self-righteousness?

Feet Questions: Living This Out at Home, Work, and in our Hobbies.

- Think about one setting: home, work, or a hobby. Where do you most feel pressure to embrace cultural tolerance (*approve, affirm, agree*) instead of *Biblical* love (*grace + truth*)?
 - What is one concrete situation or relationship where you might be called to refuse to affirm sin, but still be patient, kind, and relational?
- What specific words or approach could help you respond more like Jesus with “neither do I condemn you...now go and sin no more”?

Community Questions: Worshipping together for the sake of others.

- **1 Corinthians 5** says we don’t judge “*outsiders*,” but we do judge those “*inside*” the church. How should that shape our posture toward our non-Christian friends, neighbors, and community?
 - What would it look like, practically, for you this week to: Build or deepen one relationship with a non-believer (*grace*), and to be ready, if asked, to speak honestly about sin and the gospel (*truth*)?
- As a group, identify one community context (*school, neighborhood, team, workplace*) where you can together model this: ***refusing to celebrate sin, but refusing just as strongly to withdraw love.*** What is one specific next step you can take this month?

What is one specific, **measurable step** you will take this week in one of these four areas: **Mind, Heart, Hands, or Feet**?

Sermon Series Resources:

