



Sermon Text: Romans 14:13-19

Sermon Date: August 14, 2016

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the priority of loving one another within the local church. Sadly, however, churches often overlook these important commands. The church at Rome was no different. In their disagreements over Christian liberties they were no longer walking in love (15). How can we guard against the tendency to allow our disagreements to divide us and, in turn, dry up our love for one another? The Apostle Paul lays out five principles churches should heed.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR WALKING IN LOVE

1. We walk in love by refusing to criticize one another (13a).

Here Paul concludes his instruction to the “weak” who were criticizing and condemning the “strong.” Often we begin to stop walking in love when we find our hearts growing sour with criticism or when we begin dismissing those who disagree with us as inferior. While we must hold one another accountable, as Scripture commands, often when we find our hearts consumed with criticism we have stopped walking in love.

2. We walk in love by resolving never to hinder one another (13b-16).

While Paul agrees with the perspective of the “strong” he corrects them for causing the “weak” to stumble. We can be right in what we believe and wrong in the way we go about believing it. We must love one another more than exercising our Christian liberties. In love, we must consciously resolve never to be a stumbling block to one another, even when we are right.

3. We walk in love by laying aside our preferences for one another (17-18).

Paul wants the “strong” to lay aside their Christian freedoms for the spiritual good of the “weak.” Instead of clinging to their rights, they should hold tightly to what really matters in the kingdom—righteousness, peace, and joy. We too must gladly lay down our rights for one another by remembering that doing so is an acceptable service to Christ that delights God.

4. We walk in love by pursuing peace and edification with one another (19).

Instead of pursuing our individual agendas, we pursue that which will make for peace and build up the Body. Walking in love requires us to think of others as more significant than ourselves.

5. We walk in love by remembering the staggering reality of Christ’s love (15:1-3).

As Paul begins to conclude this section, he turns to the example of Christ’s sacrificial love. We walk in love by repeatedly returning in worship to the beauty of Christ’s love for us. Christian love is only fueled by Christ’s love. If we are not filled-up with wonder at Christ’s love, sacrificial Christian love will not be able to flow out of us to others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?**
- 2) Why do we as Christians often overlook the enormous importance of loving one another?**
- 3) Of the five principles pastor Justin emphasized, which one do you find the most difficult? Why?**
- 4) How can you regularly remember the staggering reality of Christ’s love?**