

Romans

Scripture reading: Philippians 2:1-10

Sermon Title: Edify One Another in Unity (Part 1)

Sermon Text: Romans 15:1-6

Key verse: Romans 15:6 ⁶ so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

MAIN IDEA: Edify One Another In Unity for the Purpose of Glorifying God



***NOTE:** This manuscript is provided as a courtesy. It is not followed word for word during the message. This document is not developed for publication; there may be grammatical errors throughout. Unfortunately, there is not always time to proof read. I choose to use my available time for studying, finding ways to explain the truths of Scripture while keeping a balance of time for visiting and discipling people in the church. Thanks for understanding.*

Romans 15:1-6 ¹ Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves. ² Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. ³ For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.” ⁴ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These verses are bringing to a close the passage which addresses the Roman church on the issue of the strong and weak brother. The strong brother understood eating non-kosher food was permissible in the New Covenant and the weak brother had trouble understanding how eating unclean food could be pleasing to God. Because the strong and weak brother differed, a division developed in the Roman church. As we study the passage, we come to understand Paul places the responsibility for mending the division upon the stronger brother. The stronger brother did not receive the weaker brother in fellowship. The stronger brother has failed to show grace and understanding to the weaker brother and he must change his behavior.

The actions of the stronger brother did nothing to help the weaker brother, but instead they hurt the weaker brother. The stronger brother was not walking in love, but was instead tearing down the work of the God and not being mindful that Jesus gave His life for the weaker brother.

In chapter 14, Paul taught the strong brother what not to do and now he begins telling the stronger brother what he should do; the right way to respond in the situation the church was facing. This is the beauty of Scripture. God just doesn't tell us what not to do, but God tells us what we should do. A principle all of us can keep in mind.

Paul is teaching the strong brother in this passage how he may, in view of the mercies of God, walk according to love, not hurt, and build up the weaker brother for the glory of God.

This is a two-part message. This week, we will focus on verses 1 and 2 and next week will we look at the remaining verses in the paragraph. Both weeks, we have the same main idea which is:

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EDIFY ONE ANOTHER (v.1-2)

After warning the stronger brother against causing the weaker brother to stumble (14:13) and to be careful not to destroy (14:15) the weaker brother or tear them down (14:20), Paul now tells the stronger brother should bear the weaknesses of the his brother and use his strength for the weaker brother's good and edification.

These two verses portray the very essence of Christian living. It is my prayer and hope all of us grow in our application of this principle. As we unpack these verses, we will see how they encapsulate what is taught in Romans 12: be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in

honor; contribute to the needs of the saints; practice hospitality; be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly; be at peace with all men; overcome evil with good; owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; and love does no wrong to a neighbor.

This applies to all of us

What is helpful about this passage is it applies well to many situations the may face in the course of time. The historically unique situation the Romans church faced, that of choosing to eat or not eat non-kosher food is simply not something we have to deal with. However, in the body of Christ, we will always have people who are weaker in understanding of the scriptures, weaker in resisting temptation, weaker in spiritual disciplines, weaker emotionally, or weaker in some other way.

None of us are without weaknesses and all of us have our particular strengths. This passage helps us relate to others who may not be as strong in those areas.

Husbands in particular need to pay very close attention.

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Every man here who has a wife or desires one someday, needs to understand how to walk in love with someone weaker. We are to treat our wives with understanding, tenderness, and patience. Loving our wife as Christ loves the church requires dying to self.

As a side note, ladies don't take offense at me for saying you are "weaker". This is God's word, not mine. When a husband cares for his wife as the weaker vessel he shows his love for his wife by putting her first. If the hairs go up on the back of your neck by being identified as weaker, perhaps you are being prideful and resisting God's design. Weaker does imply incompetent. In resisting, you may be robbing yourself of the joy of being the "weaker" vessel and cheating yourself of God's blessings.

Each and every one of us have areas of weaknesses and areas of strength. Those who know me well know I am fraught with weaknesses. My wife is stronger than me in some areas and I look to her example. I need people in my life who are strong in the areas where I am weak.

Let me add one more caveat. True strength does not equal being authoritative or proud. In my areas of weakness, I turn to the strong in faith who are understanding and humble. I trust them to help carry my weakness. Next week we will see how Scripture teaches the meek and humble are the stronger brother; not those who lord their strengths over others.

Understanding the verse

Our first step we need to take before getting to application is to understand what this verse is saying.

If we were to paraphrase these two verses with the Greek definitions in view, it would sound something like this.

Now we who are strong, who are able or may have greater ability, ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, those who have less ability or strength. We should help carry them and help bear their load. Those who are strong in faith should look upon those who are weak in faith and, instead of shunning them (not receiving them) as they might be tempted to do out of convenience sake, the strong should instead be willing to bear the weak and help carry them along.

We should not just be taking care of ourselves, making ourselves happy. But, we who are more able should be using our ability and strength for the benefit of the weaker brother and making them pleased rather than feel left out.

To please our weaker brother, means "to set up a positive relation," resulting in making peace. When we seek to please our neighbor, it is not just doing something good for them, we are to do it in such a way which is enjoyable and agreeable to them.

Don't confuse neighbor pleasing with men pleasing. The Bible warns against pleasing men rather than God. So, in our pleasing our neighbor, we are to do so in a way which pleases God. The way we honor God in pleasing our neighbor is by working for our neighbor's good; for their edification.

It is not a general helping our neighbor, but helping our neighbor for their good. Sometimes helping people is not for their good. At times, the elders have been criticized (and the church in general) for not helping others. We intentionally hold back help sometimes because we want to help the person grow. Just as a mom may stop helping their child tie their shoes so they are forced to learn how to do it themselves. This happens in discipleship as well.

To edify someone means to build them up, like a contractor builds a house. Our goal is to build them up. This is what we need to keep in mind during our interaction with the weaker brother.

Jesus died for the weaker brother, and the ministry of the stronger brother is to continue to build upon the work which Christ has started. Jesus is the Cornerstone and we are building upon the foundation He laid.

At the end of the day, we are to use our abilities and knowledge to make others a better Christian; one who walks in a way which is pleasing to God.

Paul identifies himself as one who is strong in the faith. Think of the many ways Paul used his strength for the good of the church. Even today, we are being edified by the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

Our strength should never be used for our own advantage. This world teaches we need to be strong for our own sake. The world teaches we need to take care of #1. This however, is not the Christian way. We are not just to please ourselves. We are to be neighbor pleasing. It is likely Paul specifically uses the word neighbor as a reference to the oft quoted Leviticus passage, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18) just as he did in Romans 13:10.

Romans 13:10 ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor...

What the strong were doing was not receiving their brother, but treating them like an outcast because of their weakness. Sometimes the weaker brother or sister is annoying. "Oh great, here comes weakling

vegetable eater to the church potluck. Who invited them anyhow? How am I ever going to enjoy this beautiful piece of venison whenever they are around?"

We have all seen weaker people in life. They are the last kid picked in gym class. They are the ones who cannot seem to learn how to tie their shoes. They are the ones who dress funny or smell bad all the time. They are the ones who tell the jokes that are not funny. They are the walking pity party. The D student.

The weaker Christian calls all the time for help. With the weaker believer, it is easy for our patience to run out or become tired of dealing with the same problems week after week after week.

Do we want to help them all the time? Maybe at first. But what about the tenth or twentieth time?

In the Romans Church, Paul says the stronger brother did not receive the weaker brother (14:1). In our day and time what are the ways we do not receive the weaker brother? We have caller ID and we start sending their calls to voice mail. Or, maybe we are at Wal-Mart and we pretend not to see the weaker Christian and avoid them. They are the ones who never get invited to the party. They are the ones who feel rejected by others in the church. This type of behavior is exactly what Paul is addressing.

What might edifying the weaker brother look like?

The weaker brother looks like me.

[The Scripture Newbie](#)

Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. (1 Corinthians 8:1)

How do we handle any understanding of the Scripture?

Is there something in Scripture we think we understand well? Does it puff us up? Does it make us unteachable? 1 Corinthians 13 says, If we know all mysteries and have all knowledge and have not love not love, we are nothing....

There are many times in my life I thought I understood the Bible, but I was wrong in my understanding. I was the weaker brother. I can name for you men who have helped me grow in Christ through their patient loving teaching.

Homer Studentroth New Gloucester, Maine; Dr. Petersen in Portland, Maine; Dale Yancy and Mark Gallego in Nashua, NH; Steve Cook in Claremont, NH; Dick Hoff of Westport, NY; Jeremy Kidder & David Golden; Koos Hamman in Potchefstroom, South Africa; and Brian Sayers, Jon Weidman, Neil Petersen, Zane Burke, Paul Biebel, Carl Hall, and Gary Brothers here at Christ Community Church.

They all shared with me their perspectives of how they understand the Word of God and not in a demeaning or argumentative manner. They still help me in many different ways to strengthen my weaknesses and are pleasing to me as they work for my good and my edification.

[The Legalist](#)

My Christian upbringing, the first 5-7 years of being a Christian, I was taught in a KJV only, no card playing, no pants but only dresses for women in the church, no movies, no going to the market on

Sundays, and so forth. Much of that teaching was ingrained in me and it took years to understand the Old versus the New Covenant.

I can think of a number of believers throughout the years that addressed each issue individually and helped me understand playing cards are not from the Devil, a woman can wear pants to church and not sin, the Sabbath law does not apply in the New Covenant, and there are Bible translations that are just as accurate as the King James Version.

What didn't help me was the legalist name calling by some in the body of Christ. That is not bearing my weakness. What did help me is being received as a brother and provided patient teaching to help me grow in my understanding of the Scriptures.

The Emotional Struggler

For those of you who know me, you know I can be somewhat of an emotional person at times. There are things I get passionate about. I think I am someone who wears my emotions on my sleeve.

Because I can become emotional, I can think of a few emotionally devastating situations in my life. One took place in the 80s and another took place more recently. In both situations, I was a basket case.

What didn't help me were those who avoided me because I was wounded. Also, what didn't help me are those who heard of my situation and talked behind my back or spread false rumors. That is not bearing my weakness. What did help me were those who took time to understand what I was going through. They helped me see what ways I was rightly understanding and responding and what ways I was not being biblical. They are spiritually strong believers I could trust to be discrete and honest as I opened up to them and told them what was going on. They are believers who helped me think clearly and not let my emotions cloud my judgment. They came alongside to offer encouragement and biblical guidance. I could not have made it through those times without those believers.

And many more ...

I am not going to stand up here all morning and list off my weaknesses. Suffice it to say, I have them and so do all of you. Thinking you have little weakness is the biggest weakness anyone may ever have. Every new believer is weak in faith. Some believers who have been saved for a long time are still weak in faith. They are weak because their pride hinders their growth.

We are a body of believers. Like a physical body, when one hand is weak, the other hand carries the load until the other hand becomes strong again.

Any successes I have made in my walk with the Lord are not my own doing. I have had more times of weakness than strength. I do not pat myself on the back as is the habit of some. I am thankful God put these stronger brothers and sisters in my life to nurture me and help me be the person I am today. I know I have much more room to grow as God continues to conform me into the image of Christ.

It was never easy for those who helped me. They had to give of their time. They were not seeking to only please themselves, but sought my good and edification. I am overly sensitive to criticism and can be bull-headed in my opinions and be a know-it-all. But, despite my weaknesses they were very patient with me when they could have pleased themselves and avoided me or left me to my own devices.

In turn, I hope I have been able to help others with the areas I am stronger in faith. I know there are times I have been able to help others during their seasons of struggle and weakness. It brings much joy. In helping them, I grow stronger and I trust they do as well.

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Next week, we will look at the remaining verses of this paragraph and see why we should not just seek to please ourselves. We are given four reasons why we should instead seek to edify one another for good.

COMMUNION

Often, for Communion, we read just a few verses from 1 Corinthians 11. Today, I would like to read the entire passage because it relates well with the passage we are looking at in Romans.

Please turn to 1 Corinthians 11

1 Corinthians 11:17-22 ¹⁷But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. ¹⁹For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. ²⁰Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, ²¹for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. ²²What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

The church is not preferring one another

Do we see what was going on in the Corinth church? They were coming together, but not for the edification of one another, but to please themselves. Because they were self-seeking there was factions in the body.

Some were coming to church and eating all the bread and even getting drunk on the communion wine. They were only thinking of themselves. In the First Century church, communion was an ideal time for those who were poor to leave with a full belly of bread. Some believers were not poor and had plenty of bread at home. They didn't think of pleasing the poor for their good, but instead they were concerned with their own personal appetites.

Their lack of preferring others and only seeking their own pleasure is an act of despising the church of God. Because of that, Paul says he will not praise them for their selfish actions.

Celebrating the Lord's Supper Rightly

The word communion signifies spiritual union. This is what the text in Romans is talking about. We are to come together with the goal of edifying one another in unity.

When you and I sit here together, we are celebrating our union with Christ. We are joined together with him as one body. Baptism is the most significant way we can publicly demonstrate our union with Christ. Communion is the most significant way we publicly demonstrate our union as the body of Christ.

Communion is only for believers. Please, if you have *not* put your faith in Jesus to save you, you will eat and drink judgment to yourself. If you take communion, you are saying I profess Christ as my Lord. Your taking communion with the rest of the body of Christ gives the body permission to encourage and admonish you as a fellow believer.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Paul says he received instructions on communion and he passed the instructions along to the church in Corinth. We pass along this same instruction as it has been passed along in the church for centuries. This instruction we pass along today has been passed along all over the world.

What is the instruction we are to observe?

Communion is a time of Remembrance.

God desires us to take time together as a body to remember the death of Christ. We are remembering Christ's death on the cross for our sins. We participate in the Lord's Supper as a sign of the new covenant sealed by Christ's death and resurrection.

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me"

Participate in a worthy manner

1 Corinthians 11:27-28 ²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

We are called to examine ourselves. There are four aspects in participating in a worthy manner:

- Remembering the sacrifice of Jesus
- Walking in obedience to the Word
- At peace in their relationships within the body
- Confessing known sin

Take time to remember the sacrifice of Christ. Let's take a moment to think about our relationships. Contemplate our relationship of being one with the Lord and contemplate our relationship of having been joined together with one another as the body of Christ. Lastly, take time to confess your sins to the Lord and thank Him for being your Savior.

We are going to have a moment of reflection. After a period of time, I will pray.

[moment of prayer and reflection and give thanks]

Communion

(Men come forward)

Our custom at CCC is to wait until everyone receives the element and then we will partake together.

Sing together hymn #

(Pass out the bread)

Sing together hymn #

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 ²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

As often as we eat this bread we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

(Pass out the cup)

Sing together hymn #

1 Corinthians 11:25-26 ²⁵In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Every time we drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

The most beautiful thing in heaven is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The most beautiful thing on earth is Christ's bride.

Rejoice in being the bride of Christ with one another.

ANNOUNCE ELDER/BENEVOLENT FUND OFFERING

BENEDICTION

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.