Strive for One Another – November 2, 2014

Romans 15:1-7, 14, 30-33

Introduction:

Good afternoon everyone. Today I would like to talk about me and only me. Wow! Wouldn't this be a horrible way to start a conversation or a sermon! We often focus on how we are to live our own lives as Christians and perhaps we tend to be a little too individualistic. To put it bluntly, in today’s world, it’s more about ‘me’ than it is about ‘we’. Scripture, however, tends to focus more on the body of believers than on the individual. Even in the early church, Paul was laying out some principles for the community of believers and I know that we still need them more than ever today. So let’s look at the principles Paul lays out in his letter to the church in Rome and see how these still apply to us today.

1. We do not live to please ourselves (v. 1,2)
   1. If we really want to live in unity, we need to understand that our goal as followers of Jesus Christ is not to live to please ourselves.
   2. Those who are strong have an obligation to those who are weak.
   3. We need to compensate for one another
   4. We are to build up our brothers and sisters – those stronger in faith have the primary responsibility in the church to maintain harmony
   5. In every relationship we have with fellow believers we need to seek how we can:
      1. Put joy in their lives – for his or her good. Encourage them in the right direction in a manner that maintains a spirit of enthusiasm and harmony.
      2. Build them up in their faith. To their edification (improvement of a person intellectually or morally). Our goal is to bring them farther along in their walk with Christ.
2. We should strive for unity (vv. 5,6)
   1. Disunity – when you decide to follow somebody other than Jesus.
   2. Our responsibility is to be devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Christ and Christ alone!
   3. Unity in the body is something that Jesus puts as a high priority
   4. God’s goal is not that we all sing the same note, but that we all sing the same song.
3. We should accept each other (v.7)
   1. Accept one another then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
   2. When I was lost, Jesus accepted me totally and without conditions
   3. Be of the same mind with one another. Have a heart of unity. This is so important regarding the testimony that the church will have in front of a lost and broken world.
   4. The Roman church was a mixture of Jews & Gentiles, slaves & free men, rich & poor, strong & weak.
   5. God doesn’t want to hear many voices criticizing one another, but one voice focused on the Savior.
4. We are to correct one another (v. 14)
   1. Spiritual maturity is more than knowing the right stuff.
   2. When you’re full of kindness and you’re competent in knowledge, you have a responsibility to instruct, warn and admonish (urge someone earnestly) each other.
   3. This responsibility must be carried out in gentleness & goodness, but with the truth.
5. We are to pray for one another. (vv. 30-33)
   1. How often have we told another believer “I’ll pray for you” only to completely forget within the hour?
   2. If we neglect to pray for one another, we might as well close our doors.

Conclusion:

We are indeed the body of Christ when we put Christ first, at the head of the church. Growing in Christ cannot happen when we are disconnected from His body of believers. As we have seen, this involves more than just getting together on a Sunday to sing a few songs. We need to be intentional about our relationships with each other and committed to living out life in the body according to God’s Word. Be intentional. Be genuine. Be in fellowship.

2 Thess. 3:16, 18

16Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way.

18The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.