

ROMANS

WELCOMED BY GRACE

Welcomed by Grace

**Finding Unity, Peace, and Joy
in a Divided World**

Introduction

The Mercy That Changes Everything

The world has never lacked opinions.

Every generation has wrestled with disagreements about beliefs, traditions, priorities, and personal convictions. Today those disagreements spread faster than ever. Conversations that once happened around dinner tables now reach millions through social media, podcasts, and online communities. As people gather around voices that reinforce their existing beliefs, differences can quickly become divisions.

Yet the greatest threat to the church has never been differing opinions alone. It has always been allowing those differences to overshadow the unity found in Jesus Christ.

The gospel tells a remarkable story. Humanity stood separated from God because of sin, unable to restore the relationship through personal effort or religious achievement. Yet God, rich in mercy, sent His Son to bear the penalty of sin so that everyone who trusts in Christ could be forgiven, justified, adopted into God's family, and given new life.

That mercy changes more than an eternal destination.

It changes relationships.

After explaining the riches of God's grace throughout the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul turns to the practical question of how believers should live together. His answer reaches beyond theology into everyday life, showing that the mercy received from God should shape the way believers treat one another.

Romans 14 begins with an invitation that remains just as relevant today:

"Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but don't argue about disputed matters." Romans 14:1 (CSB)

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The church becomes strongest not when everyone agrees about every preference, but when everyone chooses to love one another because Christ first loved them.

Chapter 1

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Every believer shares one remarkable truth.

No one enters God's family because of personal goodness.

No one earns acceptance through perfect obedience.

Every Christian stands before God on exactly the same foundation—the grace of Jesus Christ.

That reality changes the way believers should view one another.

Paul addresses disagreements over food, holy days, and personal convictions. These were deeply important issues for many believers in the early church, yet Paul refused to allow them to become barriers to fellowship.

Instead, he reminded believers of a greater truth:

"One who eats must not look down on one who does not eat, and one who does not eat must not judge one who does, because God has accepted him." Romans 14:3 (CSB)

God's acceptance becomes the model for Christian acceptance.

If God has welcomed someone into His family through faith in Christ, fellow believers are called to welcome that person as well.

Biblical welcome is far more than polite hospitality.

It is the willingness to receive another person with genuine love, patience, and kindness.

It recognizes that every believer is growing.

Some mature quickly.

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Others struggle longer.

Some possess strong confidence in Christian freedom.

Others develop those convictions more slowly.

Yet God continues working patiently in every heart.

Healthy churches become places where people experience both truth and grace.

Truth protects the gospel.

Grace protects relationships.

Together they create an environment where spiritual growth can flourish.

Chapter 2

Holding Convictions with Humility

Not every disagreement carries the same importance.

Scripture clearly identifies foundational truths that cannot be compromised.

- The deity of Christ.
- His death and resurrection.
- Salvation by grace through faith.
- The authority of God's Word.

These are essential doctrines.

They define the Christian faith.

Other issues require wisdom rather than division.

Personal convictions about worship styles, educational choices, cultural traditions, recreation, dietary preferences, or countless other matters often fall into a different category.

Faithful Christians may reach different conclusions while sincerely seeking to honor God.

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Paul encourages believers to approach these matters thoughtfully:

"Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind." Romans 14:5 (CSB)

Christian maturity is not measured by winning arguments.

It is measured by pursuing Christ.

Strong convictions should always be accompanied by humble hearts.

Humility recognizes that growth is a lifelong process.

It listens before speaking.

It seeks understanding before criticism.

It remembers that every believer answers to the same Lord.

Paul writes:

"Who are you to judge another's household servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand." Romans 14:4 (CSB)

Confidence in biblical truth should never become an excuse for pride.

Instead, it should produce gratitude, gentleness, and compassion.

Chapter 3

Choosing Love Over Personal Rights

One of the greatest demonstrations of spiritual maturity is not insisting upon personal freedom.

It is willingly limiting personal freedom for the benefit of someone else.

Modern culture often celebrates individual rights.

The gospel celebrates sacrificial love.

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Paul reminds believers:

"For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking according to love." Romans 14:15 (CSB)

Love asks a different question.

Instead of asking, "What am I free to do?"

Love asks, "What will help someone else grow?"

Jesus modeled this perfectly.

Though He possessed every right and privilege, He willingly humbled Himself to serve humanity.

His life demonstrated that genuine greatness is found in sacrificial love.

The same principle transforms Christian relationships.

Sometimes love chooses silence instead of proving a point.

Sometimes it sets aside personal preferences for the sake of unity.

Sometimes it willingly sacrifices comfort to encourage another believer.

This is not weakness.

It is strength shaped by the character of Christ.

The kingdom of God is not ultimately defined by external practices.

Paul explains:

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17 (CSB)

When righteousness, peace, and joy become the priorities, personal preferences naturally take their proper place.

Chapter 4

Becoming Builders of Peace

Unity rarely happens by accident.

Healthy relationships require intentional effort.

Healthy churches do as well.

Paul gives a clear challenge:

"So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another." Romans 14:19 (CSB)

Notice the active language.

Peace must be pursued.

Encouragement must be built.

Unity requires daily choices.

Believers strengthen one another through words that encourage rather than discourage.

They choose forgiveness over resentment.

They assume the best instead of the worst.

They speak directly rather than spreading criticism.

Every conversation either strengthens the church or weakens it.

Every action either builds trust or damages it.

The gospel calls believers to become builders.

Just as a skilled craftsman carefully lays each brick to strengthen a building, Christians strengthen God's family through kindness, patience, honesty, and grace.

The goal is not simply avoiding conflict.

It is actively creating an environment where people can grow closer to Christ together.

Chapter 5

A Church That Reflects the Gospel

One of the greatest testimonies the church can offer the world is genuine unity.

Not uniformity.

Unity.

People from different backgrounds, cultures, personalities, and experiences become one family because they share one Savior.

This unity does not eliminate differences.

It transforms how differences are handled.

Jesus prayed for this kind of unity before His crucifixion:

"May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me."
John 17:21 (CSB)

A united church becomes visible evidence of the transforming power of the gospel.

People notice when forgiveness replaces bitterness.

They notice when compassion overcomes criticism.

They notice when love triumphs over division.

Every act of grace points beyond human kindness to the mercy of Christ.

Healthy churches become places where broken people discover hope, struggling believers find encouragement, and growing disciples learn to reflect the character of Jesus.

Such communities do not exist because everyone thinks alike.

They exist because everyone has been changed by the same grace.

Conclusion

Living as People Who Have Been Welcomed

Romans 14 ultimately points believers back to the gospel itself.

Before anyone welcomed Christ, Christ welcomed sinners.

Before anyone demonstrated love toward God, God demonstrated His love through the cross.

Paul reminds believers:

"For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord.

Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."

Romans 14:7–8 (CSB)

Because believers belong to Christ, they are called to reflect His heart.

They welcome others because He welcomed them.

They extend grace because they have received grace.

They surrender personal preferences because Christ surrendered everything to save them.

In a culture increasingly divided by opinions, the church has the opportunity to display something radically different.

A community marked by humility.

A family united by grace.

A people committed to peace.

The mercy of God does more than reconcile people to Himself.

It teaches them how to live together.

And when believers choose love over pride, peace over division, and grace over judgment, the church becomes a living picture of

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the gospel—a place where the welcoming heart of Christ is seen by a watching world.

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