

Love One Another

There are so many churches today that it is easy to forget that there is just one church; the Church, the Body of Christ. And there is just one gospel—the Gospel of Christ—that saves everyone who believes it.

Romans 1:15-16

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;** to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Here is the gospel that saves believers, regardless of which church they attend. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and then rose again.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto you the gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved,** if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he**

was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Christ died to save everyone, while all of us were sinners!

Romans 5:8-9

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Forgiveness was a free gift, and it came upon all men. No one asked for it, yet everyone's sins were forgiven!

Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; **even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

There is still one thing that can keep a person from being justified before God, and that is refusing to accept the free gift! You must believe

in Jesus Christ's saving work on the cross to receive the forgiveness! Christ saved everyone but, like any gift, only those who accept the forgiveness can receive it.

1 Timothy 4:10

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in **the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.**

Paul constantly reminds us that as believers (in Paul's gospel,) we are all members of one body, the Church, the Body of Christ.

Colossians 1:16-18

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. **And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

Ephesians 5:30

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Paul tells us that since we are all part of the same body, we should care for one another, rejoice with each other, and if someone is suffering, we should help that person. We are all “in it” together.

1 Corinthians 12:18, 20, 25-27

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

²⁰**But now are they many members, yet but one body.**

²⁵**That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Paul tells the Colossians how we are to work together in the Church, the Body of Christ.

Colossians 3:12-17

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; **Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.** And **above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.** And let the peace of **God rule in your hearts,** to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.** And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

We are to do our best to live at peace with all men.

Romans 12:12-18

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless

them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.**

We are to do good to all men. We should be especially respectful of people who are laboring in the church. We are not to do evil to those who do evil to us.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, **be patient toward all men.** See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that

which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Even though believers are part of the same body, people have set up endless denominational and single-focus churches that divide members in the Body of Christ. Since God wants everyone to be saved, we, too, should want all men to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; **Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**

Paul mentions that we should particularly try to do good to fellow believers. Yet, sometimes,

those are the people it is most difficult to be good to.

Galatians 6:9-10

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. **As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

It is much easier to say that we should love all men, than it is to do in real life. Paul tells us how; we should not judge each other or set out to trip up our brothers in Christ. Don't do things that others will find offensive. Follow after things that make for peace.

One thing Paul mentioned can cause division is "meat." This can also mean just "food" when used in the Bible. Some churches have rules about eating meat and eating food in general.

Romans 14:13, 15, 19

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a

stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

¹⁵**But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.**

¹⁹**Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.**

Paul tells us that we walk uncharitably (without love) if we insist on telling people that rules about food do not apply. He reminds us that Christ died for everyone and we should not try to destroy another's faith if we don't like it.

It is easy, when we think we know something, to tell it to others that do not. That is pride. We should show charity—love—when teaching others. Paul reminds us that if we think we know anything, we don't know anything like we ought to.

1 Corinthians 8:1-2

Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.** And if any man

think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

We know only in part while we are here on earth, and away from our Lord. When we are with Him, we will know everything.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: **now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

Teaching others, who do not know what we know, without patience or kindness, is not how we help with God's mission. Paul tells us how to act as servants of the Lord. We should not get into foolish questions that people may ask to trip us up. We are to be gentle to everyone, ready and willing to teach, being patient and meek with those that do not know what is good for them (oppose themselves.) This is not easy to do!

2 Timothy 2:23-26

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. **And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be**

gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

With the huge number and variety of churches and beliefs, other believers are sometimes the most difficult to get along with. Many believers attend churches with ideas different than the ones you know to be true. Things can get very heated when you challenge their beliefs. The most difficult person to teach is the person who already “knows” the subject.

Paul became like the person he was speaking to, so that he would be able to relate to them, and use this to save some. People are more likely to listen to you if you let them speak. Paul’s focus is always on the gospel of salvation and saving people.

1 Corinthians 9:19

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

He tried not to give offence to people.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

If you love others, then you want them to be saved.

Romans 13:8-10

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for **he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.**

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**

Our apostle Paul had a difficult time with the unbelieving Jews during his ministry. He had been given a mystery by the Lord Jesus Christ and he was charged with taking the information about salvation to the Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:1-7

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: **How that by revelation he**

made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Unbelieving Jews, who had rejected Christ as King, followed Paul everywhere to tell new Gentile believers that the information Paul was giving them was not true.

Acts 13:43-45

Now when the congregation was broken up, many of **the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas:** who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. **But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they**

were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Acts 17:13

But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

Ironically, Paul (who had been a Pharisee called Saul during Jesus' earthly ministry) himself had previously severely punished anyone who believed that Jesus Christ was the promised Redeemer and King of Israel!

Acts 8:3-4

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 9:1-2

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went

unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that **if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.**

Paul wrote many times about his past, and God's mercy toward him.

1 Timothy 1:12-14

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for **that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love** which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul knew that there are a lot of people who want to argue against sound doctrine and cause divisions and strife among believers. Sometimes you find out someone is not interested in listening to sound doctrine from you and wants to cause division. Paul tells us to avoid people

like this. They may deceive the simple, but we shouldn't be involved in this kind of behavior.

Romans 16:17-18

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and **by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.**

Paul wrote to Titus to tell him that if someone continues to ask foolish questions and strive about the Law, he is a heretick and after he does this twice, you should reject him.

Titus 3:8-11

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that **they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.** These things are good and profitable unto men. **But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first**

and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Once someone shows himself to be an unbeliever and not interested in sound doctrine, we should disassociate with him. We should be separate from the world of unbelievers. We are the temple, dwelling place of the living God and have no part with the world.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as **God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be**

a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Some of the most challenging of people for believers to associate with are other believers. The only Church that matters is the Church, the Body of Christ, consisting of people who believe that the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ paid for everyone's sins. Now, the only thing anyone has to do to be saved is accept Christ's forgiveness. Anyone who does that is saved.

Some churches today require additional things from their members, either to be saved or to keep their salvation. Some have membership requirements. All of these things are personal preferences, not commandments from our Lord. Disagreements often occur between people who are members of different churches because they may have been taught and believe differently than someone else. We simply need to recognize believers in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, accept them as fellow members of His body, and respect their right to practice their faith as they see fit.

