

CEC Bible Study: Romans

Session 8: Romans 14 – 15
Sept. 23, 2020
Christ Episcopal Church

Opening Question: How should churches deal with differences within their congregations?

Romans 14: Embracing Difference within the Church

- Do not quarrel, but embrace difference and remember that God is judge of all ([14:1–12](#))
- The “weak” vs. the “strong” ([14:1–4](#))
 - Paul uses similar rhetoric in [1 Cor. 8:1–13](#).
 - “Strong”: Eating anything ([14:2](#))
 - “Weak”: Eating only vegetables
 - “Strong”: Observing the Lord’s Day on Sunday ([14:5–6](#))
 - “Weak”: Observing the Sabbath on Friday/Saturday (or vice-versa?)
 - Paul counts himself among the “strong” ([14:14](#), [15:1](#), compare [1 Cor. 8:4](#))
 - AND YET: “If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.” ([14:15](#), [20–21](#), compare [1 Cor. 8:7–13](#))
 - Be careful not to let your “strength” become a moral weakness ([14:16](#))
- Since all are judged and all receive grace equally in Christ, so we ought not judge one another ([14:10–12](#)).
 - Dispensing with individualism: “We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves...” ([14:7–8](#))
 - The work of the Church is “peace and mutual building-up,” even among differences ([14:19](#))
- Righteousness of an action based on one’s conviction? ([14:22–23](#))
 - Martin Luther: “If you’re going to sin, *sin boldly*.”¹

Romans 15

- “Strong” vs. “weak,” cont’d ([15:1–6](#))
- “Welcome one another”: The Gospel belongs to both Jews and gentiles ([15:7–13](#))
 - “As it is written...”: Rapid-fire scripture references
 - [Rom. 15:9](#) ([2 Sam. 22:50](#))
 - [Rom. 15:10](#) ([Deut. 32:43](#))
 - [Rom. 15:11](#) ([Ps. 117:1](#))
 - [Rom. 15:12](#) ([Isa. 11:1, 10](#))
- Benediction/Conclusion of Moral Exhortation (*parenesis*) section ([15:13](#))
- Summary and purpose for writing the letter ([15:14–21](#))
- A Final Personal Note ([15:22–33](#))
 - Paul’s desire to visit Rome on his way to Spain ([15:22–24](#))
 - The “Ministry to the Saints”: The Jerusalem Collection ([15:25–29](#))
 - Paul requests prayers that his collection may be acceptable to the Jerusalem church ([15:30–32](#))

¹ “Be a sinner, and sin boldly, but trust in Christ even more boldly, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world.” — Martin Luther, in a letter to Philip Melanchthon, Aug. 1, 1521.