



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 05.03.2023

“Harmony and Humility”

Preacher

Pastor Andy Maccallum

Scripture

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*” Romans 12:9-16

Thought

The picture of the Church that Paul paints in Romans 12 is a beautiful thing, and we would likely all want to be part of a community like that - however, it’s also a challenging thing. The default of our culture and indeed our community is that of comfort, but living the life that Christ calls us to (and that Paul reminds us of) is uncomfortable.

The Church that Paul calls us to be is one marked by harmony and humility - not just within ourselves, but outside of ourselves. The Roman Church was



challenged to apply these principles to those outside of their community, even to the point of applying it to those who thought very differently to them, and to those who persecuted them.

This is an extreme action. Persecution is more than someone cutting you off in traffic - it's a prolonged instigation of fear and dread from someone whose one focus and role is to unsettle or harm you. And yet, we are called to bless these people.

Loving an enemy means to engage mind, words, and actions to bring prosperity to another - to think of them as we would our own family members.

Yet this is so radical that we cannot do it ourselves. It's not a matter of simply trying harder, or being better. It relies on us realising that the only way we can truly see the world like Jesus did is to admit that we cannot do this in our own strength. We need the mind of Christ. Our own viewpoint on a matter is never the final authority - Christ's is. When we default to thinking that we're always right, pride sneaks in. But let us look at Christ, let us not place our thinking above others, but be willing to associate with the lowly, to those who don't agree with us, to admit that sometimes our view may be distorted.

This transcends moralism. It's no longer about trying to win arguments or proving points of view. It's about seeing others as Christ sees them, and allowing the love of Christ to so transform our hearts and minds that we have no option left but to truly, deeply love those around us like He loved us.

Discussion Points

1. How did Jesus treat those who were considered enemies of the Jewish people? Can you think of, and discuss examples?
2. What do you think a Christian community that practises harmony and humility would look like?
3. It's been said that transformation is a partnership between us and God -



It's both a divine move of the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, and an action of our will to be willing to change and to ask God for it. What action, and what asking do you think is needed to transform your heart when it comes to truly loving those who persecute you?

Personal application + Prayer

Jesus,

Help me to see others as you see them. Illuminate within me any pride, sweep the darkest corners of self-confidence in my own ways of thinking and understanding, and truly let me be transformed. Precious Holy Spirit, I invite you to renew my mind. Grant me a passion for people, a heart even for those who instil fear and dread. Teach me not to look down on others, but rather to learn the beauty of your redeeming power in all things and through all people.

Amen