



# transformed

studies in Romans 9-16

SCPC term 4 2007

## sunday 2nd december 2007

### study 7 transformed unity Romans 14:1-15:13

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. **Romans 12:1-2**

This passage continues to expand on how God's mercy affects his church. In the Roman church (which was made up of both Jews and Gentiles), there were some who would not eat meat. More than likely it was Jews who because they could not get kosher meat decided to abstain altogether. It was these vegetarians who were weak in their faith because they were still bound to Old Testament law. However, Paul contends that the strong in faith must accept the weak. The one who eats meat and the one who doesn't must not condemn each other. There are many things that can divide us as a church, but we must remember we belong to God through the blood of Christ. Therefore we must heed the call to, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Rom 15:7) God's mercy re-orders our whole lives – we no longer live to please ourselves but to please others.

#### some notes on questions

Q1. Acceptance and non-judgmentalism seem to be the big 'heading' over this section.

Q2. The 'weak' issue raised in verse 1 turn out to be those who eat only vegetables (in verse 2). We shouldn't be thinking in their context of vegetarians as such—but Jews who are worried about unclean meat (the whole context of Romans has been the coming together in one body of Jews and Gentiles in one church family—and that gets especially focused in matters of table fellowship). So notice also the 'day' issue in verse 5 would arise from Sabbath keeping.

Q3. There's two different ways of looking down on someone!

Q4-5. Notice that, while this passage can have application to issues we might differ on in our context, all the issues in their context (e.g. the broader unclean food issue in v14-15) arise from the unique moment in church history where the people of God is now made up of Jew & Gentile (think of the whole discussion in Romans 9-11—one tree with original branches—Jews and new branches—Gentiles). There was a lot to sort out in matters of food and holy days for them to live together. It seems that some Jews were happy to stop following the OT food laws to join with the Gentile believers, while others didn't as a matter of conscience (which Paul describes as weak on the one hand, but not to be called wrong on the other).

Q6-8. Work hard at discerning the few issues we must agree on from the many we might consider 'disputable matters' (14:1). Would be good to do so while maintaining unity though!

**digging deeper:** Jesus knew there were tough times ahead for believers to maintain unity!



remember that once the talk goes up on the website you can always post a question/observation by leaving a comment—it's easy to do and then others will also be able to see the response when it goes up and leave their thoughts too.

#### coming events

carols in the shops: sat 15 dec  
carols at lismore high: sun 16 dec  
christmas day at lis. high: 9:30am

small group bible study leaders' notes