

WEEKLY SERMON

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Who are we to judge others?

How many times have we been guilty of judging others; maybe knowingly or perhaps inadvertently?

Have we looked at someone's appearance and judged them on their dress sense?

Have we made assumptions on perceived stereotypes that couldn't be further from the truth?

Have we judged other Christians about the sort of church they go to, the way they worship or about differences in doctrine? I find reading the passage from Paul's letter to the Romans in this week's Epistle particularly challenging.

Paul is addressing real life issues in the church in first century Rome. It's an age-old, human condition that we make comparisons and judgements of others whilst perhaps baulking at the thought that we too may be judged and, even worse, unjustly so.

In Rome the new Christians were not seeing eye to eye over food requirements and observance of special days.

The question of whether they should 'eat only vegetables' and be judged by those who also eat meat is an issue that chimes with today's society and our own many dietary requirements and preferences!

However that is not the root of the problem. The question is are we creating barriers between those who view life differently by our judgmental attitudes?

Are we focusing on ourselves as both 'judge and jury', rather than acknowledging that: 'We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves,' but instead '... whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.' (Romans 14:7,9)

As Christians, whatever our differences, we must never forget the greatest commandment, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Mark 12:30-31)

If we live our lives according to these commandments, judging others is irrelevant, because our focus will solely be on loving God and then loving others.

For who are we to judge others, when we know full well that we too can so easily be judged?

One day we will all be judged by God; His judgement is the only one that counts.

It is sobering to think what I will be judged on, so there will be no temptation for me to look around and compare myself with others.

'For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God ... each of us will be accountable to God.' (Romans 14:10)

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