

Series: *Seeing **how** Jesus is your salvation will stir your love for him.*

**VISIBLE UNITY FLOURISHES ONLY WHEN WE WELCOME OTHERS  
AS CHRIST WELCOMED US.**

15.1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak... 5 May God... grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For... Christ became a servant... to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9... that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy... 10 ... 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.'

**ONE: Justification by faith in Jesus Christ gives standing, peace and joy in the presence of God (14.17)** whose kingdom has now come in his Son--but not all believers see and agree on the implications of this faith (15.1-2).

The strong & the weak (14.1ff, 15.1)

Who is strong and who is weak? 3 BRANCES in the P.C.A.:

Center: **Doctrine** (confessionalist; sacraments; objective)

Center: **Piety/Devotion** (spiritual renewal; holiness; subjective)

Center: Engaging the **Culture** in Deed & Word (kingdom; reformist)

Read the helpful article by Pastor Tim Keller:

<http://www.pcaac.org/2010GeneralAssembly/WhyILikePCA-Tim%20Keller.pdf>

**TWO: Our fellowship is created by and modeled by Christ who willingly bore the insults (15.3) of those who insult his Father's ways;** Scripture shows Christ to be the way, the truth and the life (15.4-5; John 14.6).

**THREE: Welcome one another in Christ (15.7) without despising or passing judgment (14.3);** we stand by our Lord's judgment, and he has welcomed us (14.3).

**Questions for thought/discussion/prayer?**

1. Where does your inclination most center: doctrine, devotion or deed & Word engagement of culture? Which emphasis do you most delight in [or tend to be most critical of] in your reading or listening to preaching?
2. Where can each emphasis be found in Gospel and Scripture?
3. What are the dangers from a believer, a church, or a denomination's becoming unbalanced by over/under emphasizing any one focus?
4. What scruples/issues keep you from zealously welcoming/embracing others who need to see Christ's welcoming grace that he has shown you?
5. How much credibility do you think the U.S. churches lost by our general failure to apply the gospel to slavery and name it as evil?
6. Spend some time praying for CPC and the PCA (and other churches) that we might grow in our strengths and reform in our weaknesses.