

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 6 Mar 2022

Sermon Title : Appreciation

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : Romans 16

INTRODUCTION

There is a line that differentiates gratitude from appreciation. To appreciate is to increase and hence, for us to appreciate someone means that we increase the person's worth. Sometimes we take the people or things in our everyday lives for granted, especially those closest to us. Appreciation is something that is easy for us to neglect in our lives as we tend to appreciate them only when we lose or miss them.

Let us learn from Paul's parting words to the believers in Rome in the last chapter of Romans which can be categorized as follows:

A. V1-16; 21-24: Give Appreciation To People

- In this chapter, Paul showed that he was personal, naming the people individually.
- He was specific mentioning the ways that these people had done well.
- He was sincere in showing them how God values them.
- Paul also generously maximised the goodness of God for them as Paul commended them and asked those who read his letter to support and take good care them.

When we appreciate someone, we:

- build up one's confidence in God
- counter negative comments which the person might have received
- value him/her for who he/she is

Reflection: Do we, likewise, appreciate and care for one another by stopping our cynicism which criticizes how things are done instead of being supportive and encouraging in helping people.

B. V17-20: Give Attention To Problems

Whilst we give appreciation, Paul also warned us to be aware of problems.

- a) Division (v.17)
- b) Deception (v.18)

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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c) Divine Protection (vv.19-20)

There are people who are divisive, whilst some others deceive you for their own gains.

- Paul did not tell us to ignore them, but to be wise to what is good and innocent yet knowing what is evil. In that way we may know how to keep away and at the same time be able to guard ourselves and build our community wherever God has placed us.
- God has also empowered us to have victory as He will crush Satan under our feet. We can draw from the resources that God has given us. We can draw from Him and His Holy Spirit who would guide us and teach us about how we can keep our community united and grow them by appreciating their worth.

We can do this in our family, in our church and even in the marketplace where we work. Let us build up the people around us so that they would see their worth and be confident – that whatever negativity that presses them down will not have power over them.

C. V25-27: Give Glory to God

In lay man's terms, when we glorify for example an athlete's achievements, we make them bigger. Similarly when we glorify God, we make Him bigger. We do this by praising God for what He has done, by thanking Him for delivering us, or by our worship to God. We glorify God by expressing and declaring the good things that God had done and when we do that, the:

- a) Gospel message is proclaimed
- b) Scriptures made available to all

We need to give glory to God because when we do so, the gospel message is proclaimed and the scriptures made available to all. We were once sinners under the bondage of the devil, but Jesus took our place and did all the work to die for our sins. He made available the good news and we need to give Him the glory. Jesus did it that we may have life. We appreciate the work of Jesus in our lives by appreciating the people around us, by reflecting His image and likeness so that He is big in our lives. The bigger God is, the smaller our problems – conversely when we make our problems big, it paralyses us and makes us fearful that we are unable to move on.

CONCLUSION

Let us appreciate the people around us, appreciate God and appreciate all the things around us. In Singapore, for example, we have the freedom and safe environment for us to follow Christ and to worship God together and we need to be appreciative of that.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Romans 16 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, "This is the Word of the Lord."

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's Word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Appreciation"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Paul gave appreciation to the people in the Roman church by naming them individually and specified their commendable traits or deeds.
- (i) How has Paul's being intentional in giving appreciation to these people increased their worth?
 - (ii) How has knowing this impacted you when you want to show appreciation for others?
- 2b. Why is it important to glorify God in and with our lives?
- (i) Are you intentional in doing it?
 - (i) What is something that hinders you from showing appreciation to God?
- 3a. How have you shown your appreciation to your family members, colleagues, friends, small group and church members?
- 3b. (i) What is one thing you can do to increase the worth of someone who has received negativity that presses him or her down in the following week?
- (ii) What is one challenge you will face in 3b(i)?
- 3c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 3b(i) above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how God was glorified either when you showed your appreciation for others, or when someone showed his/her appreciation for you.

OR

Give thanks to God for the safe environment that we have which allows us to be able to gather as a small group and follow Christ, and also for each person in your small group for their support and encouragement in your faith journey.

5. Discuss what your group can do to glorify and show your appreciation to God, by reflecting God's love to the people around you when you show your appreciation to everyone around you.

Discuss situations where it would be difficult for you to do so, and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your words and actions each moment of every day, especially in situations where it gets very difficult for you to be Christ-like. Pray and commit to God and to one another that your small group will be a community that encourages and appreciates one another.

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