

Called to Belong

Power to Benefit from Differences

Power to Accept from Differences

One of the greatest giants – rel prob – one key rel prob

You have problem in accepting **differences**

Diff (ma or bro/sis rel) – prod **heat** – heat can **either** burn or bake cake

Only per – no heat – **dead** people

How to **profit** from diff?

Set many **free**

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Be wise in the way you act towards those that are different; don't miss but redeem and make the most of every **opportunity**. 6 Let your words be **always full of grace and kind**, seasoned with **SALT (tasty and interesting)**, so that you may know how to **respond** to everyone. JY

MSG

Make room for differences

State your differences graciously

Get over the differences

1. Make room for differences

Realise: diff – God's **appointed**

1. Differences because of different **calling** and are unique

1 Cor 12:4-6

3 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. NKJV

Psalms 133

2. Differences because of different **perspective**.

Acts 15:38-40

Paul – Bar – big **argu** – whether bring Mark – next mission trip

Paul – no this time – mission trip very challenging – need reliable – not proven reliable this time – deserted them

Can und – conc enough enemy – don't want to have to watch over own team

BARNABAS – give him ano chance

4. Differences because the situation is **imperfect**.

Exodus 1:19-20

19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." 20 So God was **kind** to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

Real perplexing situation: choose lie or save life - God bless lie?

Two common evangelical(Bible believing) ethical systems:

Choose the lesser of the two evils. OR

Prob: Christ broke the Sabbath – if a lessor evil – did Christ sin?

Choose the greater of the two goods. (Graded Absolutism)

Graded Absolutism *does not mean making subjective choices (based on feelings) but choices based on values from the Word:*

Not **simply** choose what is greater good – based on **feelings** – **Bible value**

No making subjective choices by feelings - no condoning of: premarital sex; adultery; abortion, etc

Higher **norm** not higher **end or result**

(not the end justifies whatever the means)

Matthew 23:23

... more important or weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Matthew 22:37-39

The first and greatest commandment: Loving God above all.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Greatest of the greatest virtues: Love over faith and hope.

Matthew 12:1-7

Corn fields – Sabbath – breaking!
David – hungry – eat consecrated bread – not lawful to them but priest

7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have **condemned the innocent**.
You may use these guidelines: Love for God over Love for Man. Mercy over veracity.

Veracity – truthfulness, accuracy, conformity to law

Mercy over sacri - People over thing

Actual people over potential people

People that promote relationship(people) over people that don't

The lower moral laws are not cancelled but **superseded** by a higher law.

Gravity – midwives guilty?
Jesus guilty - doc

Allow grace to **cover** the imperfect situation and move on in peace.

Exodus 1:20 Kind

*So God was **kind** to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.*

Sometimes, no perf choice – situation is imperf

*Allow new believers to grow up first – be **strengthen** in the word of His grace – God will with time – lead them to sort out things from the past.*

2. State your differences with grace

Acts 15:38-40

38 but Paul did not think it **wise** to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a strong **disagreement** that they **parted** company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, **commended** by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

Notice that **even** men of God - diff – **notice how** react.

How they react with grace?

Paul didn't **attack** with Barnabas personally – **FOOL!**

*Didn't call him – **YOU** - foolish*

*Just – **it** not wise thing to do*

Barnabas **didn't** – **bang** – explode – you **hypo** - **STIR** – attack char - quietly go

You – not pract what you preach – grace – bitter historian

*Barnabas also did not **bang** the table and **explode** into tears.*

*Barnabas did not try to **stir** a church split and air his disagreement publicly or privately.*

*He went on **quietly** to what he **thought** God was calling him.*

A Quaker owned a cow.

Disagree without becoming disagreeable

It is never right to be judgmental

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time ... Numbers 12:1

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.

2 "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD **heard** this.

Numbers 12:8

With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Why Miriam judged so severely?

Why was Miriam judged so severely?

May be right but wrong reaction

Judged Moses - taken God's job

She had taken over God's position in Moses' life.

If I can **accept** Moses' weaknesses – if I can use **imperfect** people - **who are you to stir** up issue

God: I **know** how to handle – give me **time** – **not finished with him yet**

Moses' weakness was real, but God says, "I am well able to handle my own servant without you interrupting.

Leprosy – kept away – **isolated** – kept from infecting people

Stirring up – division – discredit leaders – to God as **disgusting** as leprosy – as infectious as leprosy – got to be isolated – otherwise can rob us of our inheritance – 2 million people robbed – becos – listen to negative report of 11 spies

Romans 15:7

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

FACT – God has accepted us **completely**

But the **level** of acceptance we feel – depends how we accept others

Level we Exp **favour**

*Wait for the right **timing** and atmosphere to air your differences.*

Prepare the **atmosphere** for major discussions.

Set up a 'dialog place' where constant dialogs may be held without interruption. If problems

arise elsewhere, postpone dealing with the issue till you reach the 'dialog place' and discuss in a good atmosphere.

Major issue – arrange best time No interruptions

If things get too **hot**, one party can say: can we pray quietly. Spend some time praying and hearing from the Lord and **restart** the dialog at a time when you have peace in your heart.

Appreciate differences and not be controlling Romans 14:5-10

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, **eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God**; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

What are the ways we tend to control others?

Why can't a person enjoy a different type of **music** and be spiritual?

Why can't a person enjoy the **blessings** of God and not be judged as worldly?

*Who says it is **unspiritual** to have nice things*

-the **car or house** they can afford

I prefer not – I rather give to poor Just because one prefer not to, doesn't mean others can't or shouldn't.

We don't know what he has been giving and may be that God is

allowing him to reap. Who are we to stand in the way of God's blessing?

Why did God set differences? **Differences release sparks and strength.**

Battery – need + and the – for sparks to fly

Prob any rel & ma – where we are all **alike** – same **weakness** – same **strength** – **naïve** couple – dress alike

That's **why** God made: Male and female **different**
Diff – bring **bal & strength** to a rel

Can't eat w 2 **knives** or forks
Copstick – need go opp direction to work

One is always on **time** – late
At least house properly bef leaving

Struggle – inevitably quarrel – read the Word – PDA saviour

Greater the diff – greater productivity & efficiency

Man focus on what he **thinks** – wo – focus on what she feels – bak kut the – not want to eat – but feel like eating

Man: wonder why god made girls so **dump**

Girl: god made us dump so that we would marry man

Learn bit more **sensitive**
If girl ask: how's **dress** – OK lah

How's **match** – any how lah – wonder why – rest of day – moody – your dumb

Say: **turn** around – wao – your **skin** color really match - gorgeous

3. Get over the differences

Don't get stuck but move on and be **blessed**

Acts 15: 39 They had such a strong **disagreement** that they **parted** company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but

Paul chose Silas and left, **commended** by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

Here – **saw** the **bigness** of Barnabas

*Didn't cause a split
Did he gather a group and leave? No no name calling
no char assassination
Don't bang the table
If you can't flow with a church or ministry, the best thing to do is to move on peacefully. Maybe, another place **needs** you more.*

God eventually **blessed** both Paul and Barnabas

*Whether we are right or wrong, God's blessings can flow when we react in **grace***

Not who right or wrong – right **reaction**

It appeared that **Paul's** decision was **right** after all. Subsequently, all ACTS (of the Holy Spirit) **talks** about is the work of Paul.

There was no more mention of Barnabas.

The **church** was solidly behind Paul (v 40).

BUT no **condemnation** on Barnabas

Miriam – may be right but wrong rxn – judged

Barnabas – may be wrong but blessed and not judged – becos he reacted with grace

Often the best thing to do is to hold back **comment** or judgement.

Why?

Fact: don't know everything – we don't know all the facts

One time – **joke** - pun – someone sleeping - later told – flu – taking tablets – sleepy – felt so bad

Often ask: what do you **think** of this – that man of God doing this that – *oh why are they doing jumbo sales for fund raising – ans - none of our business*

We don't practise that – it does not mean others can't – we don't know all the facts

Acts 5:34-39 Counsel of
GAMALIEL

34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honoured by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

35 Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.

36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing.

37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: **Leave** these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.

39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

Why was Paul right?

Reason Paul right – saw

big pict

He was not controlled by emotion or relationships. - timing

Mark was cousin of Barnabas

It is not that Paul rejected Mark forever. He felt that at that point in **time**, best to leave Mark alone. Like the prodigal son – better leave him in the pig sty – learn lesson. Worst thing to do is to rescue him from the pig sty.

Later on Paul did re affirm Mark.

2 Timothy 4:11

11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

We see things differently because of our calling

Big pict – CEO or Senior Pas – see big picture

Eg. **Café** – people laugh – loosing business – long term

Mark 14:6 Leave her alone! Why are you troubling and **distracting** her? She has done a BEAUTIFUL thing FOR ME. You always have the poor and you help them whenever you **want** or **feel** burdened. But you will not always have ME. She did what she **COULD** and has anointed MY **BODY** for burial. JY

Don't give anything just to needs or **burdens** or feelings; one thing **NECESSARY**;

give LED by God's **purpose**;
see Big picture – otherwise – distracted by emotion

most important purpose: build His **Church**, Christ's Body; Build **LIVES**, Matthew 16

1 John 2:2-3

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. NKJV