

## Sermon Series: Living Out Your Mission

### Week 1 – “The Welcoming Church”

#### The Who, the How, and the Why

**Monday:** Read the Sermon text again. After hearing the sermon this week and reading the Bible passage, is there a section, a verse, or even a word or two that are standing out? How is God speaking to you? Which point of the sermon was most impactful to you? Why? Spend some time in prayer asking God to work in your heart, to build your faith, to bring you to repentance, to continue to speak to you this week.

**Tuesday:**

*The Who: “Welcome one another...”*

We know from our knowledge of the book of Romans the group that Paul is addressing was very diverse.

In what ways is APC diverse?

The Bible teaches that the goal is unity, not uniformity (Ephesians 4:1-6). Welcoming one another requires unity.

In what ways do you find it challenging to not insist on uniformity, rather than unity, on matters that you care deeply about?

**Wednesday:**

*The How: “As Christ welcomed you...”*

How did Christ welcome us into His family?

Look at verses 3 and 4. What role do the Scriptures play in our obeying this command? What role does Jesus, as an example, play in our obedience?

Is there someone you are struggling to accept/welcome? Is the enemy driving a wedge between you and them in ways that do not honor Christ? And has “this issue,” whatever it is, become an essential (versus a non-essential) to the Christian faith in a way that you are not sure you can defend?

A couple of weeks ago Pastor Tom used an illustration, real life, from post-World War II Germany where there was deep division among the brothers and sisters in Christ. The division was between those who went along with the Nazis for the sake of peace, and those who stood up to the Nazis for the sake of purity in the church. There was hardly a family in this latter group who did not lose at least one family member through martyrdom. The two groups were deeply divided. At last, they met together, asking God to reconcile them to one another. You may recall that they spent the first three days alone, seeking the Lord’s direction as to their own attitudes and asking the Lord to show them if they had anything to repent of. Then they came together and discovered that the Holy Spirit had been working powerfully in them, preparing them to begin speaking to each other. Asking forgiveness from each other for their attitudes toward one another. The body of Christ in Germany was united in a new way.

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What can we learn from our German brothers and sisters about their inviting God to speak into their own lives prior to entering into conversations with Christians they disagreed so strongly with? It seems clear that they relied on the Holy Spirit working powerfully to strip them of their pride, self-reliance, strength, and power. In what ways are you relying on the Holy Spirit to welcome others as Christ has welcomed you?

#### **Thursday:**

*The Why: “That together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (v6)”*

Why should we even care so much about these matters? Especially when it seems so few do today. Perhaps we have missed “the why” – *for the glory of God* – the glory of God being our motive for the Christian life. Has it become more about your glory in ways that you have not recognized? If so, ask His forgiveness and empowering to live in the strength only Christ provides so that we might bring glory to the Father in new ways, especially today when the church is being divided and torn apart.

Let’s spend time praying about this. Let’s pray together that we will make every effort to “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

Perhaps we will have a new set of eyes and ears when we meet together with our church family. Not only toward the visitor who worships with us, who very much longs to be welcomed, but also people that we have known for some time where we have felt the tension.

Let’s ask God to do a deeper work in these ways in all of us.

**Friday:** Read the Sermon text for the upcoming Sunday’s sermon and look at the title of the Sermon (found on the APC website and Friday email). After reading the Bible passage, is there a section, a verse, or even a word or two that are standing out? How is God speaking to you? What do you think He wants to say to you about this passage? Spend some time in prayer asking God to prepare your heart for worship and pray that your heart will be transformed by the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the sermon.