

VII

*Gracious*  
S p a c e

*Not Infinite Space*

## Review

### Part 1 - Breaking Barriers Between Us

- The first step in fostering gracious space is to recognize the barriers we put up that limit authentic connection.

### Part 2 - Bear (put up) With One Another

- “Bear with each other”, “make allowance for each other’s faults,” “put up with” and “be tolerant with one another.”

### Part 3 - A Place for CHE

- Gracious space promotes curiosity, humility, and empathy

### Part 4 - 1 Truth 7.7 Billion Perspectives

- Do we read the Bible to support beliefs, or discover beliefs?

### Part 5 - 1 Truth Part 2

- The Bible was written *for* us, not *to* us
- The Bible is the source of truth, but also one large story which we are a part of.

### Part 6 - A Big God

- God is bigger than we could ever understand.
- Gracious space recognizes God’s signature (the intrinsic sacredness) in all things.

## *Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space*

Taking some time to “be still” and recognize God is with you, around you, before you and after you, positions your heart and mind to receive the wisdom and discernment of the Spirit.

Now is the time to lessen the distractions, and to recognize the stressors and “to do” lists can wait for tomorrow.

Try meditating on scripture by using the online resource, or maybe you have a favourite Psalm you could read and spend a few minutes praying and reflecting on.

### **RESOURCE: Psalm 46 Meditation (7mins)**

Continue now, giving space for yourself and others to journey into the Father’s Words, the Spirit’s Presence, and the love, grace, and passion of the Son.

## *Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space*

The theme this week is understanding theological boundaries.

Or, another way of thinking about it is,  
what are the things that we need to agree on,  
in order to get along?

What are some stories from your life that could be examples of setting boundaries?

What might be some consequences of not having boundaries?

What about if your boundaries are overly tight and rigid?

## Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space

At KCC we believe that as loyal followers of Christ,  
we not only are called to live a certain way,  
but we are called to live for a certain purpose.  
Sometimes we may disagree on those “certain ways” of living,  
but we may still agree on *Who*, and for *what*,  
we are living for.

What may be some of those “certain ways”  
of living and practising the Christian faith  
that we may not all agree on?

What might be difficult about applying  
specific Biblical instructions on Christian living  
to our lives here and now?

Has your understanding of what it means to foster  
*gracious* space changed at all over the course of this study?



Scripture:

Read Romans 14

You may remember this scripture from week one of this series. Again, the Apostle Paul is commenting on the ethnic & cultural barriers that seem to be causing division in the church in Rome.

Has your perspective on this scripture changed at all over the course of this series?

What do you think Paul is trying to do in this scripture?

Paul may be calling for church unity, but how?

In verse 1 Paul introduces the concept of disputable matters (dialogismōn - matters of one's own reasoning)

Check out verse 17 again, is it any clearer what Paul is trying to teach the believer's in Rome?

## Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space

It seems Paul was trying to help the church in Rome differentiate between matters of primary concern, and matters that are not so black and white.

The Jewish Christians strongly thought that *avoiding unclean meat and circumcision* were primary concerns when it came to practising their faith.

Imagine the Apostle Paul was alive today and writing to us in our current cultural context.

What might be some things that Christians today have made *primary* matters of faith, but that Paul might consider secondary?

Would Paul still hold a position on these matters?

What does Paul point to as the *only* primary concern?  
Maybe check out verse 17 again,  
is it any clearer what Paul is trying to teach the believer's in Rome?

## Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space

Some things we may never fully figure out, it doesn't mean they're not important or that these kind of matters should be ignored.

But we may need to learn how to be comfortable in the "grey" so we don't get bogged down in debate.



Take a close look.

The dress is exactly the same colour in both pictures.  
(This will be especially mind-blowing for committed blue & black-ers)

**RESOURCE:** [What Issues Should Divide/Unite Christians?](#)

**(4mins)**

## *Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space*

*Gracious space is all about giving space for people to journey differently from one another. But gracious space is not infinite.*

Why not?

Based on the entire, whole, big God story found in Scripture, what are some of the primary matters that define our faith?

What can we all agree on about the mission of the church?

Gracious space is built on a foundation of core beliefs.

In another sense,  
these beliefs are what set the *boundaries*  
of our faith community.

What does it look like to have *gracious* space within the boundaries we have set as a faith community?

Why might it be extremely important to place most of our focus and teaching on our core beliefs?

Scripture:

Read Matthew 22:34-40

The Pharisees are trying to trip up Jesus by asking an age-old, long debated question.

Jesus answers the expert Pharisee in a fairly traditional manner. However, what *is* radical, is what he adds at the end.

What could Jesus mean that all the Law “hangs on these two”?

**RESOURCE:** [Secondary Issues & Same-sex Relationships - Why It Matters What Really Matters](#)

**(30 min read)**

The final questions on the next page may not have clear answers. It is REALLY important to take time to ponder and/or discuss them humbly and prayerfully.

It may be a good idea to journal your answers or think about them over the course of a few days.

## Gracious Space: Not Infinite Space

Why might it be important to heed the words of Jesus above other voices from the Bible?

Jesus definitely taught a way of behaving, but what was different about *his* “rules”?

Bring to mind those things that divide the church. Especially the divisive issues that have caused your own believing community tension, anxiety, and emotional debates.

How do differing positions on these issues affect your belief about Almighty God as Creator of the universe?

What about your other core beliefs?

What would it look to have conversations about commonly divisive issues within a church culture of *gracious space*? (same-sex relationships, young earth vs old earth, women in ministry, etc.)

How does condoning & condemning fit into gracious space?

## *Gracious Space*



Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

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