

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God," the Apostle wrote.

The two sheep on my door are talking about this passage. "Easier said than done," the one says to the other." That is typically the case with every passage of Scripture that exhorts you to do something, then pointing out Jesus as the example in doing so. The other sheep replies, "It's just that some people are **so difficult!**" "So difficult" probably describes everyone who is not exactly like you—which is...everyone.

Nevertheless, this is what God in Christ exhorts you to do. Receive one another! Of course, the people to whom Paul was writing this were Christians, so the exhortation is first and foremost that you receive one another here, among your brothers and sisters, as Christ received you.

So, how did Christ receive you? You probably know better than me. No, He didn't just receive you as you are; he did make changes. But, He did receive you despite what you were. There's a list that Paul makes of the Corinthians Christians: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Perhaps you heard yourself described in that list; if not, then you know your past and current self well enough to know that you could add something just as atrocious to the list.

But, how did Christ receive you? Knowing well enough who you are, He took you into Himself. For you to receive one another, you may have to overlook some of those difficulties that everyone else has. However, if you are going to follow the example of Christ in receiving you, you can't merely overlook those difficulties, unless they are simply "difficulties," but forgive them their sins. As Paul finished that list, he continued, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11) Hear your own difficulties and sins in that statement, "And such were some of you." Like the Christians in Corinth, though, you were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How did Christ receive you? Well, in order for Jesus to receive you and wash, sanctify, and justify you, He had to be one with you. So, He came—the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among those fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and people like you. Assumed into the divine was flesh and bone and blood like yours, living and breathing as a man, able to be pricked, prodded, beaten, pierced, and bleed. In order to receive you, the Son of God had to become one with you.

And so, in the womb of a lowly maiden in Nazareth, cells began to divide, and a body began to form. Head and torso, arms, legs, a face, eyes, ears, nose, a heart, a brain, lungs, stomach, and kidneys—everything perfectly in place and borne as the Savior of the world in the little town of Bethlehem. Oooh, ahhh, ten fingers, ten toes—in a word, perfect, and Jesus really was!

Now, God can be touched. The ordinary person can look upon Him, talk to Him, receive instruction from Him, eat with Him, have Him as a guest in his house, be a guest in God's house. This changes everything, and to Himself, then, He received the Christians in Corinth and Rome, and every one of you. You were washed, sanctified, and justified in a most holy flood in the name of Jesus, and

there were given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and God in Christ received you as one of His very own sons—an heir with Christ of eternal life!

Jesus won that for you with His own flesh and blood. For since God could be pricked, pierced, bled, and killed, He gave His life for you. On the cross, the very same body that formed in the womb of Mary shed His blood and gave His life over to death for you. “And for your life He died!” That, then, made those waters at the font the blessed flood that they were, for it was into the death of God on the cross that you were baptized. You died with Christ on the cross, for in Baptism, you were received by Him in order to die with Him.

But you were also baptized into His resurrection. As much as Christ received you to His death, He also received you into the life from His grave. And so, from that blessed flood, what you were was drowned, and what you are now rose from those waters—a new creation in Christ Jesus, your Lord.

This is how Jesus received you. This is why you are exhorted to receive one another, because despite the difficulties of everyone else, and for their sins, they were also received to the very same Jesus that you were. They also were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God. Dear baptized, this is all of you. “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God,” because you are forgiven for all of your sins.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.