



## Sermon Discussion Guide

### Relationships in a Polarized World - Tim Knipp

March 2nd, 2025

#### Hook - Getting to know one another

- *How is everyone doing this week? Add other questions to get to know one another, especially ones related to the topic in the sermon.*
- What is an issue you have a difficult time understanding how people feel differently than you?
- What was your experience of the 2024 election season, and the discourse around it?
  - Were there any moments where the divisiveness of the discussion stuck with you?
- Are there any relationships in your life where politics has been a strain on your connection?

#### Book - Scripture

- *Read the scripture passages and discuss to understand **what the text is saying**:*
- Read Romans 14: 1-4, 17-18. Also, read Romans 13:8-10.
- What is the context for this passage? What divisions in the body of believers is Paul speaking to and about?
- What does the text say about the inclinations of people towards those who they disagree with?
  - What pitfalls to relationship does Paul mention?
  - How does Paul instruct Christians to treat others in the face of disagreement?
- Consider revisiting some readings from our study of Ephesians this fall:
  - Ephesians 4: 1-6
    - How does the call to unity from Paul in Ephesians work together with his writing about Love in Romans?
  - Ephesians 6: 10-12
    - How does Paul's description of our enemy as not flesh and blood, but spiritual powers, relate to the reality of political polarization in our world today?



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#### Look - Connections to our world today

- *This section focuses on implications about **what this text means** about what's wrong in the world, about trusting God, about who God is, etc.*
- What is encouraging about the call for our allegiance to be first and foremost to Christ, and for our ethic to be love of our neighbor?
  - How does this differ from the common view in our society?
- What are some ways you have seen people living out this call in our polarized world?
  - What are some challenges to living these ideals out in our world today?
- If you were talking with someone who was feeling frustrated with politics and the world today, and you wanted to explain what Jesus had for them, what would you tell them?

#### Took - Personal Application

- *This application focuses on **how God is calling us to respond**. This could be personally, as a family, small group, or church. It could be something to believe, to meditate on, to say or do this week.*
- How do you feel Hillcrest does as a community that fosters a healthy approach to disagreement, conflict, and politics?
  - Are there any steps you wish our church were taking to spread the qualities of intentional relationships in the midst of today's polarization?
- Where is a place you feel the weight of polarization in our world today? (This could be in your workplace, your family, or a single relationship). How could you love your neighbor in this place this week?
  - Through action?
  - Through listening?
  - Through prayer?

#### Time of Prayer