

Talk It Over

Questions are prepared each week by the teaching pastor and are designed to prompt insights, questions, and the life experience of each listener. If these are used in a group immediately following the talk, it would be much the same as what was done in Israel at the time of the early church. They will also be useful to individuals who want a deeper understanding of the message.

LEARNING FROM PELAGIUS

Warm Up

Do you recall an idea or practice from your early Christian experience that you thought was universally believed or followed, but later realized was not as universally embraced as you first believed? What was your reaction to this discovery of differences in ideas and practices among Christians?

Discuss

1. Why is it important to consider different approaches, understandings and applications of the Christian faith? What value is there in listening to people who don't think, believe or act exactly as we do? Can you give an example from your own life of how your faith has been expanded by learning from someone with a different perspective?
2. Pelagius believed in the fundamental goodness of creation. He believed that all of creation gave witness to God. He wrote "The presence of God's spirit in all living things is what makes them beautiful; and if we look with God's eyes, nothing on the earth is ugly." (*The Letters of Pelagius*). What do you think of this statement?
3. Pelagius also believed that people possessed a fundamental goodness because they bore the image of God. He wrote "If it is he [God] who has made the world good, exceedingly good, how much more excellent do you suppose that he has made humanity...fashioned in his own image and likeness" (*Letter to Demetrias*). Do you agree with his assessment of humanity? Would you add anything to his statement to refine or clarify it?
4. Pelagius wrote: "There are some who call themselves Christian, and who attend worship regularly, yet perform no Christian actions in their daily lives. There are others who do not call themselves Christian, and who never attend worship, yet perform many Christian actions in their daily lives. Which of these two groups are the better disciples of Christ?" (*The Letters of Pelagius*). How would you answer this question?
5. Based on what you learned from this week's sermon, which of Pelagius' ideas could have a helpful impact on the present-day church? Which of Pelagius' ideas would you modify or rework?

