

Genuinely Accepting Each Other

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bibles and open to Romans 14. Thank you for that song. Thank you for all you did this morning as we worship the Lord.

Take your Bibles and go to Romans 14. Before that, I want you to imagine with me a couple of brothers in Rome, and they meet outside the market. And one brother has his arms loaded down with grocery bags, and the other brother is coming out and they meet in the street, and they're talking, and the first brother says, Man, what you got there? You've been at the market. What you got?

He said, Man, they're running a special on meat in that market you wouldn't believe. He said, The meat is just cheaper than it's ever been. And he said, I got ribeyes. I got prime rib.

I mean, I'm loaded down, buddy. I'm telling you, you've got to go in there and get some meat. And the other guy looks at him and says, I don't eat meat, all for doddles. I love Jesus.

And that's... I just don't understand it. And he turns, and he walks away, and there's this division among the brothers.

[1 : 08] One, he's like, Glory to God! They're running a special on meat. I'm having all my buddies over this weekend, and he wants to be a member of the First Baptist Church of Carnivorous Christians.

Amen? The other guy wants to be a member of the First Baptist Church of Vegetarians, and they both happen to be going to the same church. The one guy's eating vegetables because, well, maybe he was brought up in Judaism, and he got saved out of that, and there were lots of rules.

Or maybe he actually attended the idols, and he feels like, Man, if you eat that meat, been offered an idol, you're offering your approval and your acceptance and you're agreeing with it, and I'm just really not comfortable with you eating that meat.

Now, that's not much of what goes on in our society today. The majority of us in this room are... How do you say that word? Help me out. Yeah. What? He said it different. Carniv...

Yeah. We eat meat. Amen? And I eat meat, and I love it. After I had my surgery a little over a year ago, Jonathan Clapp brought over...

[2 : 13] I just know this because Betty told me I liked it. But anyway, because I don't remember much of what happened. But anyway, brought over a ribeye that had been smoked and grilled and all this stuff. I'm a meat eater.

But that's not our issue here. That's not our issue. We've got other issues in our church that could cause division. And in Romans chapter 14, he is working on helping the church learn how to get along.

How to deal with other brothers that might not agree with you. And so I hope you'll take the time to really listen and learn and enjoy Romans 14. It's sure done a work in my heart.

The real problem in the church here is disunity or division. And it's not just the church at Rome. The Corinthians were divided. They were fighting over who their leaders were.

Peter, Paul, Apollos, Jesus. They had cliques in the church. There were Corinthians that were even known to be fighting each other in court. They would take another Christian brother to court. The Galatians were told to quit biting and devouring one another.

[3 : 10] And when he writes the Ephesians and the Colossians, he says, I need to remind you of the importance of unity. The Philippian church had two ladies that were fighting and splitting the church. In Psalm 133, 1, the Bible says, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

Much of the disunity was caused by their different backgrounds. The Jews had come from very strict religious backgrounds. They had rules about everything. They had rules about what you ate.

They had rules about when you ate it. They had rules about washing your hands before you ate. They had rules about being circumcised. And they had rules about religious holidays. The Gentiles had no biblical background at all.

So they had no rules. They had found that God loved them and even in their sin and saved them by grace. And they're just excited, man. Can you believe this? I got saved by grace. And this is a wonderful God.

And there's much freedom here. And so there was a difference. They might have had religious holidays, but they were pagan. And they knew it. The problem appears on Romans 14. It doesn't talk about meat offered idols.

[4 : 14] Paul writes this from Corinth. And it seems that Paul's talking about meat offered idols. That's the basic problem probably behind this. The others were, some are glad it's meatless on sale.

And others are like, you shouldn't eat it. 1 Corinthians 8.1 says, Now, as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge, and knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies.

He said, I want to talk to you about, some of us are, we know a lot, and we got big brains, and that puffs up and causes us to have a different attitude. But love is what edifies. In verse 7 he said, Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge, for some with conscience of the idol, unto this hour, eat as it is a thing offered to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

1 Corinthians 10.19 says, What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that which is offered to sacrifice as the idols is anything? Verse 20, But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.

I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. There's a big issue among these guys. They're discussing it. They're fighting about it. They have meat that would be taken out and placed in front of an idol. After they're sat there in front of the idol for X amount of time, they pull it out in front of the idol, and they put it in the grocery store, wrap it in cellophane, and give a discounted price.

[5 : 34] It sat out in the open. It had been sat in front of an idol, and it was discounted meat. Some people are loving eating that meat, and other people are like, I'm not eating meat if it's been offered an idol. It comes up a lot in the different passages.

The church had believers judging each other over issues that the Bible wasn't clear about. Eating meat or not, keeping special religious days or not, drinking wine or not.

As a missionary and as a pastor, I've had these problems and dealt with these issues. God's Word is going to help us greatly. I've had big problems. I personally have had big problems. I followed after how I was raised.

I followed after my culture. I followed after other men and what they thought. I've accepted the prevalent thought. I've hurt and seen many brothers hurt in Christ, and I've been hurt by others. This chapter deals with the right attitude.

Read with me again, if you would, Romans 14.1. Let's work our way through this chapter over the next few weeks. Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

[6 : 33] For one believes that he may eat all things. Another, who is weak, eateth herbs, eats only vegetables. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth.

For God hath received him. So if you're taking notes on this message, I want you to write this down. We are going to learn how to genuinely accept each other. Genuinely accept each other.

Let's have a word of prayer, and then we'll work our way through this passage. Father, I love you, and I thank you for your word, and I pray that you would apply it to our lives today. God, I pray you'd help Vision Baptist Church to be a church of sweet, loving kindness one to another, a church filled with charity and benevolence, a church that cares about you and cares about each other.

And I pray, God, that you'd help the brethren in the church to accept each other today in you, and I'll give you praise for it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's read verse 1 again, and I want you to write this down somewhere.

The imperative verb in these first two verses is receive. You got your Bible open, put a circle around the word receive. The imperative, the command word in these first two verses is receive.

[7 : 42] If you had a Bible, like I have a Bible program, and it puts the imperatives, it highlights them in the fiery red. So when I'm reading a passage and it says receive, it's like there in front of me.

It's like, bam, it's off the page. And the imperative word in Romans 14, 1 and 2 is receive. The Bible said, Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.

The weak in the faith mentioned here might surprise or shock you. I really believe when we hear about the weak in the faith, we think of the guy who has less rules than we have, who does more doubtful things than we do, who's not quite as good about keeping the Sabbath, who's not quite as good about doing what we think is right, who's kind of slipping in some areas in our lives.

We say that guy's weak. But in this passage, the weak in the faith was the vegetarian. Look at verse 2, Romans 14, 2. Look at what it says. For one believes that he may eat all things, another who is weak eateth herbs.

Look at the verse. Another who is weak eateth herbs. Another who is weak. Underline, who is weak. Who's the weak guy being talked about in the passage of Scripture?

[8 : 52] It's the guy who, for conscience sake, can eat the meat. He is weaker in the faith. The weak one here was the stricter one, not the one that had more freedom. There were actually immature believers who felt obligated to keep rules and obey rules about what they ate and when they worshipped.

The weak Christian was clinging to the law and condemning those that did not. This chapter isn't about accepting people that do not have standards, but rather about us accepting them that do have standards.

Listen to this. There's an amazing thing going on among independent, fundamental, quote-unquote, Baptists. The young people of our day have gotten, and they've pulled out and they've said, I don't like them. They're all legalists.

But if you watch Facebook and you watch Twitter and you keep up, they're blasting all the churches. They're saying they're too strict and they've got too many rules and I hate them and I hate this and I can't believe they say all this ugly stuff and this ridiculous stuff.

And they've become uglier than the guys that were saying the other stuff. And here's what Romans 14 is about. Stop it! Stop doing that. Receive the brothers.

[9 : 53] Receive the brothers. This chapter isn't about accepting what the people that do not have standards, but those that do. The most morally upright one. The most rigid in discipline. The one that has the highest standards of conduct.

The one with the longest list of do's and don'ts. The more religious person. The one you think of as uptight. Do not receive him that is weak in the faith. Once you decide that you do not like or agree with a certain standard, then if you are not careful, you become judgmental yourself of having a rule.

It's amazing. One group's judging the other group. The other group's judging the other group. And so the group that's got rules are judging them because they don't have rules. The ones that don't have rules are judging them because they do have rules.

And so you got a group of meat eaters and vegetarians in a church. But they're fighting. And Paul's saying, stop it, guys. This is ridiculous. Receive the weaker faith.

You say, I can eat ribeye all I want, bless God. They got an old sale down at Kroger because it was all for Donald and I'm planning on having ribeye. I'm going to eat ribeye for breakfast. I'm going to eat ribeye for lunch. And I'm going to eat ribeyes for supper.

[10 : 55] And I don't really care what Mr. Vegetarian, brother vegetarian has to say about it. He said, stop that. Stop it. Quit having that attitude. Receive him. Receive him.

That was the first command. Second thing, we're told how to receive him. Look in your Bible, if you would, verse 1. We're told how to receive him. We were told to receive him. And then we're told how to receive him.

The Bible says in Romans 14 and 1, him that is weak in the faith, receive you. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you. But not to doubtful disputations. Number one, receive him.

But don't receive him to fight with him. Don't receive him to fight with him. We're not to welcome him into an argument. We're not to plot and scheme to change his position.

We're not trying to help him get mature on this. We will wait on God to do that. We're not to despise him for his convictions and his standards. Look if you would at verse 3.

[11 : 49] Romans 14, 3. You're not to despise him. Now, wait a minute. Before you read, look this way. Wait a second. I want you to understand. Who's doing the judging here? The meat eater is judging the vegetable eater. The meat eater is judging the vegetable eater.

You see, that vegetable eater, he won't eat meat because he is not going to take a chance. He's not going to do what's wrong. He's not going to eat meat that's been offered to an idol. And he is like, hey, I'm not going to do it. I'm not eating pork.

I'm not eating pork. Boy, I'd hate to be that guy, wouldn't you? But he said, I'm not eating pork. No bacon. And there's only one way to make bacon better. And that's right, bacon and bacon. Say amen there. But anyway, he said, I'm not going to eat pork.

And I'm not going to eat any food that's unclean. And I know all those Old Testament rules. And then that meat's been offered to idols. And I'm not going to eat meat. And he kind of walks into church saying, I'm a vegetarian. Because I don't want to eat meat that's been offered.

And there's other guys in the church. And he's a vegetable eater. He's a meat eater. And as he walks around, he's like, I can't believe brother so-and-so is so strict. He denies himself the most exciting things that could possibly go on.

[12 : 46] I mean, who can imagine a ribeye wrapped in bacon? Can you say amen? Get you a shrimp. Get shrimp and wrap it in bacon and stuff it with cheese. That's going to be something great to eat.

Amen? And so the meat eater's over there saying, yes, I eat meat. And the vegetarian's over there. He's criticizing. So he said, hey, receive him. But then he said, don't receive him to fight with him. That's what the young preachers are doing.

I can prove this to you in a heartbeat among independent Baptist young preachers. And they all hate every old preacher. Because that old preacher says, bless God, a woman ought to dress this way. And you ought to worship this way.

And you ought to do this. You ought to do this. They got all these rules. And so the new guys are all up in arms. They never read Romans 14. Because in Romans 14, it said, hey, you looser guys, quit judging the stricter guys.

That's what it's about. You looser guys, quit judging the stricter guys. So look at verse 3. He says, receive him. And not to arguments. And not to fight with. In verse 2.

[13 : 40] And by the way, he called them doubtful disputations. Excuse me, that's verse 1. Not to doubtful disputations. We're not firm on these things. By the way, we're going to take a very firm stand on biblical issues like Jesus is God.

We're going to take a big strong stand on that. We're going to take a very strong stand on the fact that God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Godhead. We're going to take a big stand on that. We're going to take a big stand on eternal, important things.

There are some things that are just not that clear. Heaven agreed on them all through history even. For example, when I was a kid, I was raised in a home where we could play with playing cards. You know, poker cards.

That's what you call them. But you want to buy them. You go in the store. You don't say, I want playing cards. I want poker cards. And you go, but we played solitaire. Don't, that's, I know. Don't judge me. We played solitaire. All of y'all do it now. It's on the computer.

You just wouldn't touch them filthy cards before. Amen. But I was raised to play cards. And I play cards. And I didn't play poker. And I wouldn't have done that. No way. But I mean, I played every other game. And other people didn't.

[14 : 36] And some people couldn't play Monopoly with dice. We played Monopoly with dice all the time. I learned how to roll the best way I could roll. If I could have loaded those dice, I would have loaded them. But I mean, I knew, I grew up that way.

And other people were stricter. And that's what's going on. These are issues among us. And look at it. So don't, you don't receive him to fighting and fussing and arguing with him. But you also don't despise him.

Look at verse 3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not. Put a circle around the word despise. You're not supposed to receive him to arguing and fighting. And you're not supposed to despise him.

You're not supposed to despise him. Let him not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth. For God hath received him. That means, see, we're not going to despise him. We're not going to make fun of him.

We're not going to reject them. We're not going to think of them as being unworthy or less than others. We're not going to have that attitude. That's what Paul's telling them. When we started the church, when we first started the church, there were all kinds of rules maybe that you don't know about.

[15 : 37] One family who I love deeply, they came to our church on a Sunday morning. And we were having a Matthew's banquet. And the whole auditorium was full of tables. And everybody came in, and they brought all their friends. And I was going to preach to them.

So they bring their friends in, and we sang, and we're all sitting at the table. And as soon as we get to eat, we're going to have a meal. And this guy came that Sunday morning. And he was in the church. And he left that day, and it took over a year for him to visit again because he couldn't believe that we'd eat in the auditorium.

But, you know, our problem has been ever since we started the church, we ain't got but one room. So you either eat in this room or you don't eat. Amen? So we set up the tables. That was a big issue with him. And how am I going to treat him? Am I going to respect him?

Am I going to make fun of him? Am I going to argue with him? Am I going to try to change him? Or am I just going to love my brother? That's what's going on in Romans chapter 14. There was another fellow I was teaching, and I said, well, we start the church on Sunday afternoons.

If we've got visitors there, you all divide up. Everybody take them out to eat. You take them out to a restaurant after church, and you go out and have a meal with them and be friends with them and try to gain their confidence and get them in church. And this one guy came to me after church, after the service, he said, now, brother, he said, I don't eat out on Sundays.

[16 : 45] I don't believe you should eat out on Sundays. I believe it's wrong. So don't be asking me to do that. I said, brother, you can take him to your house. That'll be fine. I don't care where you take it. Just spend some time with him. Maybe you can just fix an extra meal.

You don't have to do that. So the attitude here is, how do you receive him? Number one, you are to receive him. You are to receive him. Did you hear that? It was a command. So the guys who are looser, the meat eaters, are going to receive the vegetarians.

You're not going to come in and say, oh, you're vegetarians. Go start your own church. You're going to receive them. But you're going to receive them the right way. You're not going to make fun of them. You're not going to pick on them. You're going to talk bad about them.

You're not going to try to convince them or argue with them or change them. You're just going to let God handle that. That's what the teaching is. Third thing, if you will, look at this with me. The third thing. Go with me to verse 3 again.

He is not to judge the others who do not have his convictions. So the vegetarian is also supposed to not judge. So we're all going to stop the judging. That's basically what's going to happen. We're going to stop the judging.

[17 : 43] So read with me verse 3 again. Verse 3 says, Romans 14, 3 says, Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not. All right. You got that? If you eat meat, don't you mistreat the guy who doesn't eat meat.

And then it says, And let not him which eateth not, let not the vegetarian judge him that eateth. So vegetarian, you don't judge either. For God hath received him.

The judging and despising is to go both ways. Both of us are to receive the other. Both of us are to have a good attitude in the church. Both sides of the equation are to have a good attitude.

Both should be doing it for the Lord Jesus. That's why you do or don't do what you do. You should be doing it for the Lord Jesus. Look at Romans 14, 6. Romans 14, 6.

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it. Would you say the next three words with me? Are you ready? Unto the Lord. Can you say that? He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.

[18 : 43] And look at this. And he that regardeth not the day. Ready? Three words. To the Lord. You ready? And he that regardeth not the day. Say it. To the Lord. He does not regard it. He that eateth.

Eateth. Help me. He that eateth. Eateth. Not to the Lord. For he giveth God thanks, and he eateth not. To the Lord. He eateth not, and giveth thanks. You've got two groups of people here.

You know what? Mr. Vegetarian is not trying to walk around. He's not just trying to have a bunch of dumb rules in his life. It's easy for you to think that. You're like, that guy's a meathead. He won't eat meat, so he must be an idiot.

That would be the prevailing attitude. And he said, no, no, no. He doesn't eat meat because he's trying to honor God. He says, leave him alone. He's trying to honor God.

Then he says to the guy that doesn't eat meat. He said, Mr. Vegetarian, and don't you judge the guy that eats meat. Because he doesn't eat meat for the Lord. You don't eat meat to the Lord. He doesn't eat meat. He does eat meat to the Lord.

[19 : 38] Both of you are trying to do what pleases God. You might not agree. I challenge you to go back to Romans 14.1 and underline doubtful disputations. There are things that just aren't that clear.

Do you eat out on Sunday or don't you eat out on Sunday? Is Sunday the Sabbath day or Saturday the Sabbath day? Or does it not exist today? These are big issues that churches fight about.

I grew up in a blue law state. I grew up on Sunday. You couldn't buy anything. My daddy on a Sunday morning gave up smoking. He had two packs of cigarettes. One in each of his two button up blue collar farm man suit.

And after the church service, he walked out, took the two packs of cigarettes. This story he tells me. I wasn't there to remember it. I was there, but I couldn't remember it. He pulled out the two packs of cigarettes and threw them up under the church. It sat on rock pillars.

He threw them up under the church. And by Sunday afternoon, he had changed his mind on the new conviction. The nicotine was really hitting him. So he drove back to the church and crawled up under the church in his suit and tie looking for his cigarettes.

[20 : 35] And a deacon must have told him they were gone. Or maybe the pastor got them. Who knows? But they were gone. So my dad went everywhere he could trying to find cigarettes. And nobody's open on Sunday. And he couldn't buy cigarettes on Sunday.

And so he eventually got over the habit. So that, I mean, he never smoked to you. It's a rule thing. He said, hey, vegetarian don't judge the meat eater. And meat eater don't judge the vegetarian.

That's what he's saying here. Verse 6. I'm going to read it to you again. You get it straight in your mind. He said, he that regardeth the day regards it unto the Lord. And he that doesn't regard the day to the Lord, he doesn't regard it.

And he that eateth, he eats to the Lord and giveth thanks. He gives God thanks. And he that eateth not, to the Lord eateth not and giveth God thanks. Verse 10. You see, you're going to receive him and you're not going to judge him.

Verse 10. Never act like your brother in Christ isn't important or worth something to you as he is to Christ. You see, you were commanded to receive him. You were told how to receive him. And both of you are supposed to stop the judging.

[21 : 33] But sometimes if a guy has less standards than you, you act like he's no good. And if he has more standards than you, you act like he's no good and you mistreat your brother. Look at verse 10. Romans 4. Hey, the Bible's pretty practical, isn't it?

Say amen if it is. Amazing. Right here in your life. Romans 14. 10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why wouldst thou set it not thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Now look at verse 10 if you would. Why do you judge your brother? That's a meat eater shouldn't judge him. And the meat eater shouldn't and the vegetarian shouldn't. Both of you stop judging your brother.

Quit walking in the house and there's tension. I mean, there's tension in the air. Because the meat eater's going, having ribeye wrapped in bacon today, bless God, with a skewer of shrimp wrapped in bacon while we're doing it.

I mean, we're having a good meal. The other guy in the vegetarian looks up and says, I'm having salad, no meat. And there's tension. He says, stop it. Don't judge your brother.

[22 : 30] Or why do you set it not? Why do you act like your brother's a nothing, a nobody, a non-important person? Don't you realize we're all doing it for the Lord? Or we're not doing it for the Lord?

And we're all going to stand before the Lord? We're all going to talk to the Lord? We're all going to receive rewards before the Lord? So that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Now look, let me see before I get you the last thing this morning.

Let me see if you got this. You got two groups. You got the strict side and the loose side. You got the guys that say, bless God, I do not eat meat.

I'm not eating shrimp because that's a bottom feeder. It's a buzzard of the sea, bless God, and I am not eating it. And the other guy said, I ain't eating pork either. That's a buzzard. It eats its own mess. I ain't messing with that. No way. You got the other guy saying, I don't eat beef either.

And then you got the meat eater and he says, I like my vegetables processed and packed in beef. Amen. That's how I want my vegetables. And I'm going to eat them.

[23 : 30] If you got this tension between them, the church, they're coming in. There's church, there's tension. There's fighting. Amazing what goes on in a church like ours. Amazing what goes on in your heart and your mind.

That's what Romans 14 is about. Some of you came out of a really strict church. You come here and say, man, these people are loose. I see people dressed in ways that I ain't used to. And others, if you come in this room and you're like, a lot of people wearing dresses around here.

I think, man, we ought to be going more naked than they are. I mean, there's just these arguments going on. And that's what he's talking about. He said, wait a minute. Receive. Accept your brothers. Quit having that attitude. Get off Twitter blasting every preacher and saying, I'm in the grace of God now.

Stop it. Stop it. That's what Romans 14 is about. Accept each other. Accept each other. Genuinely accept each other. Receive them. Don't receive them wrong.

Neither one of you judge. Last thing. Hey, if you don't receive them, God did. That's the next thing I want you to see. Look at Romans 14.3. Look at Romans 14.3.

[24 : 30] It says, let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth. Colon. For God's received him. That's pretty wrong.

This is a rough verse. I mean, this is like the trump card. I mean, we don't believe in cards. But if you did play rook, and you ever use the trump card, you know, the other guy's got a winning hand, and you plop out the red one or the rook card, whichever way you play that game, and you plop it out, and you played the trump card, and you win.

Here's what Paul does. He said, receive him, and receive him right. Quit judging each other. And just let me throw the trump card down. I don't like your attitude, because God already did receive both of them.

We're going to read some verses, but get this. Brother Vegetarian and Brother Meat Eater are talking. Brother Vegetarian is looking at Brother Meat Eater, and saying, you stinking liberal. Number one, you're eating dirty meat.

And number two, number two, not only are you eating dirty meat, you're eating meat's been offered tonight. I just can't believe it. God is not pleased. And then Brother Meat Eater is looking at him, and saying, you big meathead.

[25 : 35] I cannot believe you're dumb enough. We got grace. Let's enjoy meat. Let's have a good meal here. And they're fighting, and there's tension. So Paul says, receive him. Receive him with the right attitude.

Quit fighting and fussing. And then he says, by the way, God received them both. Read verse three, the last part. For God hath received him. Let me give you some verses. Let me remind you of this.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Certainly not another Christian. Romans chapter eight, and verse 31. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall we, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.

I want you to check out that verse. Paul says, I want y'all to start accepting each other, welcoming them, receiving them, treating them right. I don't want you to try to change them. Don't want you fighting and fussing.

[26 : 33] Don't want you acting like your brothers are nothing. I want you to quit judging each other. Stop it. Just stop it. I'll not be going on to church. And let me throw the trump card. The trump card is, God received them.

Verse 31 said, what shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? You know what brother meat eater had going for him? God's for him. You know what brother vegetarian had going for him?

God's for him. You know what brother vegetarian looks at him and says, God ain't for you. Brother vegetarian said, a brother meat eater says, y'all ain't read Romans eight yet. We're in Romans 14. We already went over Romans eight.

In Romans eight, I found out he was for me and nobody can be against me because he's for me. But another verse, if you would go me to chapter 12 and verse four, we realize he's not our servant. And so neither of us has the right to judge the other.

Romans 14, four, who art thou that judges another man's servant to his own master? He stands or falls yet. He shall be holding up for God is able to make him stand. Now let's, let's get something straight.

[27 : 31] Who's running the show here. Who's the servant and who's the leader? Well, the pastor's in charge, right? No, he's not. I'm a servant and you're a servant.

And by the way, Mr. Meteor, you're a servant. And Mr. Vegetarian is a servant. And all of us serve the same God, the same Lord Jesus. He's the King. And he said, and who are you to go around judging each other?

I'm in charge. You're not in charge. You can't judge people unless you're above them. You can't be a judge at athletic event. If you're me and you're both running a race at an athletic event. And as we're running, I said, I'll win because I'm the judge.

Not exactly the way it works. He says, stop the judging. You're servants. You're both running in the race. Mr. Meteor, Mr. Vegetarian, you're both running in the race. Stop judging each other.

Each of us stand or fall before the Lord. Look at verse four. Who art thou that judges another man's servant? Another man's servant. What if I came over to your house and disciplined your children?

[28 : 24] I think I'll just pull up in my little red pickup, pull up in front of your house, walk in the door, grab one of my kids, slap him and say, I'm about tired of it. Well, Brother Miles would be whooping me. He'd be beating me. I'd be on the way out of the driveway.

The police would already be there. All the other Miles boys done shot me. I'd be gone. I mean, you know, the whole clan would rise up and kill me. That's exactly what he said in the verse. That's exactly what he said in the verse.

Who are you to judge another guy's servant? You're not in charge. Pastor, you're not in charge. Don't tell most pastors that. But you're not in charge. And more spiritual Christian, you're not in charge. And less spiritual Christian, you're not in charge.

Stronger brother and weaker brother, you're not in charge. Don't be judging each other. We're to be striving to please God in all we do. Look at Romans 14, 7. Romans 14, 7. For none of us lives to himself.

And no one, no man dies to himself. Hey, you're not an island. It's not all about you, Mr. Meat Eater. And it's not all about you, Mr. Vegetarian. In fact, it's not about you at all.

[29 : 24] It's about Jesus. That's what the chapter is about. It's about Jesus. And so he says to the vegetarian, stop it. You don't live by yourself. You ought to quit having this attitude. You're not in charge. It's not about you.

You say, well, I just am uncomfortable. So be uncomfortable. It's not about you, Mr. Meat Eater. Well, I'm uncomfortable with Mr. Meathead over here. And I'm just, he said, stop it. Nobody lives to themselves. Look at verse, look at verse 8.

For whether we live, or whether we, whether we live, we live unto the Lord. And whether we die, we die unto the Lord. And whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's. I wish you verse 8 would underline this, unto the Lord, and unto the Lord.

And then underline, we are the Lord's. You see, you don't eat meat, well, do it for Jesus. You do eat meat, well, do it for Jesus. We're the Lord's. Verse 9, for this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he could be the boss.

That's what the verse says. So he could be the boss. Guess who gets to be the boss in our church? The one who died, and was buried, and rose again. Anybody else in here qualify for that except Jesus? No, you don't, so stop it.

[30 : 28] That's basically what he said in verse 9. We live, and we die, for Jesus. We should all be seeking to please him. We recognize that it's not about us, but about him. We return to the story, and then I'll give you some questions as we end.

There's a brother, coming out of the market, and his arms are loaded down, man, he has got ribeyes, he's got prime rib, he's got Boston butts, I mean, he's bringing the whole, he's got bacon, he's got shrimp, he's got every kind of meat, you can imagine, he's walking out the door, and the other Christian walks up, and the other Christian says, man, what in the world did you buy while you was in there?

And he said, why don't you help me with this, brother? I got my arms loaded down with meat. He said, meat? I'm not touching that nasty meat. That meat's been offered to idols. That's unclean meat. I'm not touching that. And there's a judgment going on, and so Paul says in Romans 14, hey guys, receive the weaker brother.

You guys who eat meat, receive the guy who won't. Because here's what we say, we walk off, and we turn to each other, and we say, he can't eat meat. What an idiot. And we have this attitude.

It goes on in church all the time. Boy, the young, restless fundamentals, and they're all like that. They love to type out little things and blast the other guys, and then the other guys are blasting them back.

[31 : 36] They all ought to read Romans 14. Because in Romans 14, he said, you're not in charge. Stop it. Receive him. What's your attitude towards other believers? What if they don't agree with you?

And I'm not talking about agreeing with you on major stuff. We're not talking about that. We're talking about doubtful disputations, things that aren't as clear. What if they don't agree with you about those? Do you take a judgmental and critical opinion of others?

You know, man, we are famous for that. And we don't judge them about whether or not they believe in Jesus. We don't judge them about whether or not they believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. We don't judge them about whether or not they believe that God left his word.

We judge over that guy went to a movie theater. He can't be saved. Well, we got rules, man. We got rules and rules and rules. We got rules about our rules. I mean, we got rules about our rules that are about our rules.

And so, that's actually the weaker brother in the story. And the other guy says, well, I go to a movie theater and eat popcorn and bacon while I'm in the movie theater. And he says, stop it. Stop it.

[32 : 32] What's your attitude? Do you wholeheartedly accept other believers regardless of their stand on certain issues that are not so clear as we might all like to say that they are?

I'm pretty sure what I think is clear is clear. It's clear to me. Very clear to me. I read this week as I prepared for this message, I read the story about an American Christian and he was over in Russia.

They were sitting at the same table eating and they were discussing the Bible and the Word of God and the Russian guy looked at the American guy and he said, do you play cards? He said, I'm just astounded that some Americans would play cards.

If you touch those things and he said, could you bring me a glass of vodka? And so, they're both sitting there and one of them saying, I might play cards and I'm not drinking vodka, bless God. And they're both just eyeing each other.

The guy wasn't getting drunk and the guy wasn't even playing poker. I mean, come on. But that's where we are and he says, stop it. Are you obeying the command to receive and welcome or accept other brothers? Are you living your life with a heart towards the Lord Jesus and trying to please him?

[33 : 37] You ask the Lord for help and begin changing your attitude towards your brother today. Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

For one believes that he may eat all things and another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him which eateth not. Let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth. For God hath received him.

Father in heaven, I pray you'd work in our lives and I pray that you'd save anyone who doesn't know you this morning and I pray you'd make this passage of scripture come alive and I pray you'd help our people to go home today saying, I'm going to put that in practice.

I'm going to practice that. I'm going to apply that to my life. I'm going to be more accepting. I'm going to quit judging people who are stricter than I am. I'm going to quit judging people who are stricter than I am and I'm going to have a right attitude towards other brothers.

I'll give you praise for what you do. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.