

We are our Brothers' Keepers

by Anton Bosch

This sermon from Romans chapter 14 addresses the importance of handling differences in beliefs and practices within the church with love, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes setting aside personal rights for the sake of building up and not causing others to stumble, focusing on essentials of faith rather than non-essentials like eating meat or personal choices. The key message is to pursue peace, edify one another, and prioritize love over personal preferences or freedoms.

Scripture: Romans 14:13, Romans 14:19, Romans 14:20, Romans 14:21, Romans 15:1, Romans 15:3

Topics: "Unity in Diversity", "Love Over Liberty"

Description

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Transcript

So let's go straight to the word, and I want to speak this morning from Romans chapter 14. We're going to go back to Luke one of these days, maybe next week we'll see, but I want to address a very real problem in the churches at large. I don't believe we have much of a problem here, but it is something which is insidious and which affects many, many Christians and can have its impact upon us as well.

So let me give you the introduction before we read the passage so you understand the background against which we're reading the passage. In Romans chapter 14, Paul deals with the issue of eating meat. Now when he speaks about eating meat, you'll find the word idols doesn't appear anywhere in that passage, but clearly what he is referring to, because you have to read this together with 1 Corinthians chapter 8, he's referring to meat that has bought in the butcher shop, which in those days could have or could not have been offered to idols.

And so there were some Christians who were saying, we can't eat meat, because there it may have been offered to idols. And there were others who said, well we don't have any problem with it, because the meat is nothing. It is just, it is just food.

And so this was a controversy, this was something that people argued about. This is something that some judged others for, and something that others looked down on others because they were weak and not able to eat or have liberty to eat meat. And in fact, if you read Corinthians, you'll find that it was more than just eating meat.

In Corinthians, he speaks about eating in the temples of the idols, where they would obviously have, they would obviously put up like a restaurant, and you could go there and eat from the way I understand it. So how does that apply to us today? Well obviously we don't have a big problem as far as that's concerned now, certainly not here, because there is not a lot of that kind of idolatry going on. The closest you'll get to this is if you maybe go to a Thai restaurant, and you find that they have a little shrine up there, where they offer food to their, to their gods.

And should I eat in a Thai restaurant, because they have a little shrine, or, or shouldn't I? And that's the closest we get to that reality. But at the same time, we have other issues that have become divisive, or divisive in the church, and amongst Christians. And of course they relate to politics, and they relate to the virus.

And the, the issues really have to do with who you vote for, or whether you vote at all. There are some who are saying, if you vote for this party, then you cannot be a Christian, and others on that side who say, if you vote for that party, you cannot be a Christian. And Christians are judged based on their, on who they vote for politically.

And for that reason, I believe it's not wise for anyone to know who you vote for, because it just creates a problem. There are others who say, Christians shouldn't vote at all, because we are not part of this world, and its systems. And I understand that argument as well.

And so Christians shouldn't, shouldn't vote. And so again, they, those will judge those who do vote, and those who do vote will despise those who don't vote. Then of course we have the problem of the mosques.

And it has become a very divisive issue, not just in the world, but it's become a divisive issue in, amongst Christians. And as you probably know, the, the church I mentioned last week, Bethel and Reading, one of their so-called evangelists was in our city in these last few days, holding campaigns. But he wasn't here to preach the gospel.

He was here to preach against mosques. Now, now what has the church come to? That we are, that that is our message. But there are some who feel comfortable to not wear a mask, and there are others who don't feel comfortable to not wear a mask.

And they become divisive issues. They become issues over which Christians will get ugly with one another, and will divide from one another. And now of course we have the vaccine.

And so there are those who believe we should take the vaccine, and those who say we ought not to take the vaccine. Now in all of these things, they are issues that you need to decide for yourself. And, and I want to address that this morning from a scriptural point of view.

What does the Bible say about these things? Now before we read the passage, let me also say that there is a difference, and we need to understand the difference, between what we call essentials and non-essentials. What we mean by the essentials is those things that are fundamental to the faith, that we cannot change on, that we cannot provide leeway on. For example, one of the essentials of the faith is that

Jesus is God, that He is divine.

We, we, that is not negotiable. You don't have an option to say, well I don't think Jesus is divine. If you want to be a Christian, and you want to be part of this church, and if you want to have fellowship with me, then you need to accept that Jesus is God.

And there are other essentials like that. But there are other issues that are not essentials. Things like whether you wear a suit this morning or not, whether you, you know, whether, whether you eat in a Thai restaurant or not, whether you have the vaccine or not.

Now the problem is that while these things are non-essentials, people turn them into essentials. People will turn the smallest little thing into an essential of the faith. But you, you, you don't have the prerogative.

Not one of us has the prerogative to say, I, I think whether we meet at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning or 10 o'clock is an essential, we must meet at 10 o'clock because, because of some obscure scripture in the Bible. You, you don't have those options. What are the essentials has been defined by Orthodox Christianity over the centuries.

And we understand what those things are. They have to do with the nature of God. They have to do with the infallibility and the all-sufficiency of scripture.

They have to do with the basis of atonement, of the basis of our salvation, that we are justified by faith through the finished work of the cross of Calvary. These things are, are predetermined. You cannot add to them as you go along.

Even in Paul's day, and as we read the passage, you'll see that he makes eating food offered to idols a non-essential. In other words, you can exercise your own conscience as to whether you're going to eat meat or not eat meat. But at the same time, whether you worship an idol is not a non-essential.

That is an essential. And right from the Old Testament right through the New Testament, the scripture is clear that the worship of an idol is anathema. It is, it is not acceptable.

You cannot be a Christian. You cannot serve God and idols. There is no leeway on that.

There is no negotiation on that. Now, you can see how close these two things are together. Eating meat offered to idols and worshiping an idol is very, very close, but they are not the same.

And the one is permitted, according to Paul. The other one is not permitted. And so all of these things that we are going to talk about this morning, and I'm not going to get into the vaccine and all these things in much more detail, because I want to get to the scriptural principles.

But at the same time, we can easily violate certain scriptural principles and certain essentials, even though it's in areas of non-essential. Last week, I said to you that you can vote for who you will. Now, I know that many think that this is heresy, and I've had all sorts of terrible comments on that, on that message.

But I find nothing in the Bible that says you must vote this way or that way. You must vote according to your conscience. But when you make your political party an idol, and you worship that, you have crossed the line.

Can you see the difference? When you believe you should take a vaccine or not take the vaccine, that is your prerogative. But when you make that the gospel, in other words, when I go to your Facebook, those who have Facebooks, and that's all that's on your Facebook is anti-vax or pro-vax or whatever the other side is, and there is nothing about the Lord Jesus, there's nothing about the gospel, there's nothing about the goodness of God, I have a concern. And I believe you've crossed the line.

And you've turned something into your God, into your idol, into your focus, which ought not to be. Yesterday, I think it was, I received a message from a brother in another church that I preach in sometimes. The message had to do with a conspiracy theory that has to do with numbers of deaths.

I'm not going to get into it in more detail. You say, well, what's the big deal? Here's the big deal. This brother has never, ever emailed me or sent me a message reminding me that God is good, reminding me that Jesus loves us.

He has never sent me a text from Scripture. In fact, he's never sent me anything. But he sees it's important enough to send me this message, and I have to say, where is your, where are your priorities? What is it that is important to you? When an evangelist has to tour the country, a so-called evangelist, and his purpose is to preach against masks, that is heresy, because our gospel is not for masks or against masks.

Our gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ. You have crossed the line. So we must understand the difference between those things that are not essential and those things that are essential.

Now, having taken half my time, let's go to the Word, and we'll read from 1 Corinthians, from Romans chapter 14. And I'm going to read verses 1 through 13. Romans 14, 1 through 13.

Sorry, another one I think I need to just mention before we read is, you'll see in the first verse here, receive one who is weak in the face. I want us to set that idea of the weaker brother aside right now, because that is a difficult one to understand and to interpret. I have several books on my shelf, and there are endless books written on the question as to who is the weaker brother.

So let's not get into that. Let's see the principles in this passage that have to do with those who have a different opinion. That's really the bottom line.

All right, so verse 1. Receive one who is weak in the face, but not to dispute over doubtful things. Now, I don't think I need to preach anymore. I mean, that answers the question.

For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him. Who are you to judge another servant? To his own master he stands or falls.

Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another, another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

He who observes the day observes it to the Lord, and he who does not observe the day to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks, and he who does not eat to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, for it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another any more, but rather resolve this not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in your brother's way.

So it would be, we would need many Sundays to go through this whole chapter, and the whole chapter is relevant, so I would encourage you to go home and study the chapter. I'm going to select some verses, about half of the verses, and I'm going to deal with those simply because I really don't want to spend another Sunday on this, and yet I believe that this is important. You see, what Paul acknowledges here is that there are differences.

There are differences of opinion. There were differences of opinion then, and there are differences of opinion now. The problem is not the difference of opinion.

The problem is how do I deal with those differences? How do I deal with those differences? We can't all think exactly the same. There are those who try to do that, and what we, what we, and we call those cults. One of the, one of the characteristics of a cult is that everybody is forced to think exactly the same way.

Everybody has to dress the same way. Everybody has to, has to eat the same stuff. Every, you know, it's, the, the rules just are endless.

No, we, we have liberty, but in Galatians, Paul says, let's not use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh, and, and here's the, here's the challenge. You see, one of the problems we have in western countries is this emphasis on my liberty, and we speak about legal liberty. We are all well familiar with the first amendment.

It gives every fool the right to say whatever is on his mind, what it comes down to. Now, I, I think that's an important right, but I'm very grateful that the first amendment does not require of me to listen to every fool, and so I have the choice to listen to who I want to listen to or not, but, but here's the problem. Because we have liberties, we want to exercise those liberties even if they infringe on the rights and the liberties of others, and that's where the church and the world part ways.

Yes, we both emphasize liberty, liberty in Christ and in the gospel, liberty in the country. In the world, you can exercise your liberty. It doesn't matter what it, how it affects anyone else.

You can say these days, you can say whatever you like, and people say the most ridiculous stuff, the most vicious stuff, and the church has taken its cue from the world and said, well, you know, that's, that's the, that's how, how things happen now, and so I can say the same thing to my brother and to my sister. I can say, say whatever I like. No, you cannot, because your liberty is limited by the rights of someone else, and that's the essence of what Paul deals with here in, in Romans 14, and so I'm going to take three main points out of these scriptures.

The first one in Romans chapter 14, verse 7 and 8. None of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself, so you're not an island. You are living in a context, and the first context that he is dealing with here is my

context, or my relationship with God, and so verse 8 then says, if we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we die to the Lord.

Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. So the first place where your liberty as a Christian is limited, is that you are the Lord's. Whatever you say or do, is, has to be in the context of the fact that there is a Lord, and the word Lord means a master, and as we'll see in a moment, we will give an account to Him.

You see, the idea today that exists amongst many people in the world and many people in the church is that, is that I can just say whatever I like. It doesn't matter. No, we will give an account for every idle word.

Now folk, I think that if people realize that everything they post on Facebook, or on Twitter, or on email, or everything they pass on, they will be called to give an account on the day of judgment. I believe that. Nothing that you put on Facebook, nothing that you say to somebody else, is just said.

As a Christian, we are the Lord's, and He's going to call us to give an account for what we have said. Now if what we have said is misinformation, we will give an account for that. If what we have said has broken down the work of God, has destroyed the faith of a brother, we will give an account for that.

If on the other hand what we have said has built up the body of Christ, we will receive a reward for that. So your Facebook page isn't your Facebook page to do whatever you want. And I think that if we had to think for a moment before we hit the send button, or whatever the button, post button, whatever it is, I think that we would post half the stuff that we do.

We are the Lord's, and we are accountable to Him. I'm going to skip verse 9 and go to verse 10. Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? Because we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Now quickly here are two issues, they're two problems. Why do you judge or show contempt? In other words, those who see themselves at a higher level, look down on those who are the weaker, and they have contempt for them because they don't have liberty to eat meat, because they don't have faith to trust God and therefore have to get the vaccine. They don't have faith to trust God and have to wear a mask, despising someone else because of something they do, which is clearly not an issue of sin here.

Or why do you judge your brother? Oh, he has liberty to do this. No, we are not one another's judges. Folk, here's one of the points that you must take home and remember.

When I look at the comments I get on the messages, when I look at what people post on Facebook and elsewhere, I get the impression that everybody thinks that everybody else is judge. No, we are not one another's judges, not even in this church. And while there is eldership and leadership in the church and certain things need to be, sin needs to be dealt with and there needs to be spiritual discipline and all of those kinds of things.

When it comes to the non-essentials, I am not your judge, and we are not one another's judges, but we will all appear before Christ's judgment seat. And so there are two things he's saying here. The one is don't judge one another because you are not the judge.

But the second is remember that He will give an account and you will give an account. So nothing that we do is without consequence. You may be able to get away with it in this world, but you're not going to get

away with it before God, if what you're doing is wrong.

Verse 11, For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Now remember also that Paul balances this or Peter balances this in saying that those who are leaders in the church will give an account for those that have been put in their care.

But other than that, each one will give an account for himself. So when you do stuff because you read some conspiracy theory, and that has serious consequences, you can't stand before the judgment seat on that day and say, well, God, the internet told me, QAnon said. No, you will give an account for yourself.

So don't be led by every Tom, Dick and Harry. Make sure that you're being led by God and by His Spirit. And that when you make decisions, they are decisions that you are willing to defend before the throne of judgment.

All right, now the next aspect in verse 13. And this really is the heart of what I want to try and convey this morning. Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore.

So were these Christians judging one another? Yes, they were. He says, stop doing that. Do Christians judge one another today? For sure.

Stop doing that. And folks, it seems to just become so natural for us to judge one another today, because that's the environment and the spirit of this age. And so everybody wants to criticize everyone else.

But he says, stop it. Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this. So it's the beginning of the new year.

Here is a resolution you can make. Interesting that the word appeared there. Resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or cause to fall in our brother's way.

Now he's going to deal with that issue. So the first thing I need to remember then, he says, is that I am the Lord's. The second is that each one will give an account for himself.

The third thing now is that we need to determine or resolve that we will not cause our brother to stumble. Verse 14. I know when convinced by the Lord Jesus, there is nothing unclean of itself.

But to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Now remember, he's not including the essentials. He's not talking about worshipping idols as being a matter of choice.

But it's the non-essential issues. And in those non-essential issues, nothing is clean or unclean. Whether you meet at 10 o'clock in the morning or 11 o'clock in the morning, whether you wear a suit or not a suit this morning, none of those things are essentials.

And they are not clean or unclean in themselves. But to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. In other words, if you go against your own conscience, it becomes sin.

You say, well, that means that there are double standards. Well, I guess in a sense there are. Because what would be sin to one would not be sin to another.

But the sin is not in the stuff that you're doing. Murder is sin. It doesn't matter what your conscience tells you.

We know that there are people who have no conscience. Still doesn't make any difference. Oh, I felt I had every right to kill the guy.

No, you didn't have every right. It remains sin. But whether you have the vaccine or don't have the vaccine in itself is not sin.

It is not sin. But what becomes sin is if you go against your conscience. In other words, you are convinced you should or should not take the vaccine.

And you then go against your conscience. It becomes sin. Because you're acting disobedient, not necessarily to God, but disobedient to your conscience.

Can you see the point? So to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet, but if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Here's the next point.

We are not governed. Folks, and here's really the heart of what I want to share this morning, or am sharing. We are not governed by my rights or by even my conscience.

We are governed by love. And what we do needs to be based on my love, not for myself, but my love for my brothers. And if we have to stay outside here because there are brothers amongst us who are not comfortable to go inside, and we have to stay out here for another two years, we will stay out here because we love one another and we don't want to offend those who don't have liberty.

Put it that way. You may not like to wear a mask. I don't like wearing a mask, and I'm glad I have an excuse because I'm preaching.

But I will wear my mask, not just because I believe that it has merit, it has value, but because I love my brothers, and I don't want to pass anything on to them in the case that I may have the virus. And for me to say, well, you know, I have liberty. I trust God, and I do trust God.

I don't believe I'm going to die until my work's done. At the same time, we don't test the Lord, attempt the Lord. Remember that principle.

So I can go around, I can come and speak to everybody here, you know, and I can hug everybody, and we can shake hands again, and because, you know, I'm trusting God. Yeah, I may be trusting God, but I'm not loving you. Because you may have scruples that I may not have.

And so my decisions are not just based on my rights. They're not just based on what I want. My decisions must be based on our love for one another.

So you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food, and let me use that word food, your liberty, the one for whom Christ died. Folk, we are our brother's keeper.

And you remember that was the problem right at the beginning. Cain, God says, where's Abel? I'm not my brother's keeper. He's not my problem.

Well, he was your problem until you killed him. Folk, we are one another's keeper, and we are to look out for those who are weak amongst us. And in this sense, there's a play on words, because when it speaks about those who are weak, it's not just those who are weak in faith, but there are those amongst us who are weak physically, who are predisposed to that if they get the sickness, it could very well kill them.

So we need to consider the idea of weakness in that sense. Then in verse 16, therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

And if we apply it to our situation today, the kingdom of God is not to vaccinate or not vaccinate. The kingdom of God is not whether you wear a mask or don't wear a mask. The kingdom of God is not Democrat or Republican, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

You see, they had forgotten what it was all about. And I believe that much of the church today has forgotten what this is all about. It's not about the virus.

It's not about the elections. It's not about anything that's going on in the world. What the church is about is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And I'm going to just spend a couple of minutes on those three things very quickly. Righteousness. Folk, this is not our righteousness that we got because Jesus died on the cross and we gave him our sin and he gave us his righteousness.

What he's talking about here is righteous judgment. That when we make decisions, they are righteous decisions. They are decisions that are right, not just for me, but they are right for my brother and they are right before God.

They are decisions that will stand the test of the Supreme Court. What I mean by that is that every judge, when they make a decision, one of the things they should bear in mind in making a decision is, will they stand up at the Supreme Court? And one of the decisions you and I need to make, consider when we make decisions, is will my decisions stand up, not before the Supreme Court in DC, but the Supreme Court in heaven? You can make any decision you like, but is God going to back up your decision? That's really, so those are righteous decisions. Does God agree with your choices? Righteousness and peace.

Folk, we've spoken endlessly this last year about the lack of peace amongst Christians in the world today, in the churches at large. And I thank God for the measure of peace that we have in our assembly, because that's what the church is about, is that God, Jesus on the cross has broken down the division between Jew and Gentile, between man and God, and he has made peace. And in the church, above all else, there should be peace.

And when we allow the devil to bring disruption and enmity and arguments and debates and fights and division into the body of Christ over stuff that has nothing to do with the church, that has nothing to do with the Word of God, that has nothing to do with our salvation, that is purely the stuff of the world, we have given the devil everything he's wanted. There must be peace. And there are Christians who say, well, you know, the word compromise is a dirty word.

Yes, we don't compromise with sin. We don't compromise with the world, but the very essence of the passage here is that we compromise with one another. We give way to one another.

And that's the only way we can have peace. If we're going to wait until everybody here thinks exactly the same about whatever, it's never going to happen. There needs to be mutual respect.

There needs to be mutual acceptance of one another's differences. And there needs to be peace amongst us and joy in the Holy Spirit. The world has become a joyless place, not just because of the virus, but because of the spirit of the time in which we're living.

It's just ugly, fighting, animosity, everyone trying to get one up on the next guy, and nobody's happy. Folk, we need to have peace amongst us, and we need to know that deep joy that comes because of the work of the Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about a sensual, emotional, temporal kind of joy, but a deep joy, knowing that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, knowing that our fate doesn't lie with the CDC or with the president or with anyone else, but our fate lies in the hands of a gracious and a merciful Heavenly Father, knowing that we don't know what the future holds, but we know, as the cliché says, who holds the future.

We don't have a clue what's waiting for us in this next year, and we're all hoping for a better year. But there's one who knows, and we can be at peace, and we can have joy, knowing that our lives, our future, this year coming, lies in His hands. Verse 18, For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

What are these things? Let's go back. Righteousness, peace, and joy. What Paul is saying is these are the issues.

The issues are not whether you eat meat or don't eat meat. The issues are not whether you vax or don't vax. The issues are righteousness, peace, and joy, and he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God.

God doesn't care. I really say this with respect. I don't believe that God cares one iota whether you take the vaccine or don't take the vaccine, but He cares whether we're acting in righteousness, whether we have peace in our own hearts and peace amongst ourselves, and whether there's joy of the Holy Spirit, and these are approved by men.

Now, you say, well, how does the world approve of that? At the end of the day, when all the dust settles, and when Jesus comes, the world will recognize that the church, the true church, was right all along. Verse 19, Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace, and the things by which one may edify another. Chase after these things.

For Christians are chasing after this conspiracy and that conspiracy. Christians are chasing after this political thing and that political thing. Christians are chasing after all sorts of stuff, but he says chase after, pursue.

Pursue is used in the context of hunting or of war. When there's someone that you're hunting down until you get him, whether it's an animal in the hunt or whether it's men in the war, hunt down, chase down, put everything that you have into pursuing the things that make for peace and the things by which we may edify one another. I'm not seeing a lot of that these days.

We're looking for, people are looking for things that they can get one up on the next guy, things that they can make the next guy look bad on. Folks, can we make this a resolution this year to chase after those things that will make peace amongst us and that will build one another up. The vast majority of stuff on

Facebook is not there to build anyone up.

I thank God there are people who use it for the right purpose and who post things that are encouraging and upbuilding and uplifting. And some of it is a little kitsch and a little trite, but they're still trying to bring a positive message. But others are just looking to make war and looking to fight.

Folks, we need to be marked by the fact that we are different, that we are not like the world. And this is one of the problems we have today is that the church has become just like the world. We don't pursue peace, we pursue arguments and debates and war.

Verse 20, do not destroy the work of God. I need to rush through. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.

Don't destroy the church. Don't destroy your relationship with your family over stuff that is not important. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

Verse 21, it is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine or do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. In other words, submit your rights to your concern for your brother. And you may not like to wear a mask, but wear a mask for the sake of your brother.

Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith, for whatever is not of faith is sin.

Now chapter 15, verses 1 to 3, quickly. We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak and not to please ourselves. Paul is a good preacher, because he says the same thing a dozen times, just in different ways.

And so he's saying the same thing again. Don't please yourself. Look out for the cares and the concerns of others.

Let each please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification, to building up. Oh, but it's my right. No, please your neighbor.

Look out for what will help them, not what you want to do. Verse 3, for even Christ did not please himself. There's the bottom line.

But as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. When he went to the cross, it wasn't for himself. It was for us.

He surrendered his rights. He surrendered his power and his position in glory. He gave up everything for us.

And he's saying now, can't you set your rights aside for a bit for the sake of your brother? And then let me close with verse 3 again from chapter 14, going right back, because I believe this is of all of these verses what sums this whole thing up. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat. And let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him.

Can we find grace to separate ourselves from the world and the way the world is doing stuff and the way that other churches are doing stuff? And so we want to live God way. We want to have a godly attitude

towards one another. We want to have a godly attitude to these things.

And we want to make sure that we're doing things based on love for one another rather than love for me and for my rights. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus who showed us an example and didn't look out for what his rights were, because his rights were just to destroy us, just to destroy this world and consume it with a word of flame.

And yet he set aside his rights, and he died for us, the just for the unjust. And Lord, I pray that you would protect this church, and Lord, that you would protect each one of us from the spirit of this age, which emphasizes me and I and myself. Lord, that we would not be looking out for ourselves and our own rights, but that we would be looking out for one another.

Lord, that in our speech with one another we would be saying those things that would be helpful. Lord, that in our posting on the internet, whether it be on Twitter or Facebook or wherever, Lord, that we may be posting those things that are helpful, that are building up, that are encouraging, because Lord, there's enough bad news in the world, and the world doesn't need the church to help it in its mission of destroying. And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us, Lord.

We've not said anything new this morning. These are things that we know, and yet, Lord, we are so easily swayed by the things around us. We ask that you'd help us, we pray in Jesus' name.

We pray as we come to your table now, Lord, that you would that you would be present amongst us, and Lord, we pray that we may be meeting together in righteousness and in peace and with the joy of the Holy Spirit, knowing that our names have been written in that Lamb's book of life, and that Jesus died for us. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/m4-faJFtUzc.mp4>

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