



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 123

Receive one another with understanding

Romans 14:1-12

Romans 14:1-12, *Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. ²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³Let 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. ⁴Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He 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. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. ⁸For 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. ⁹For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹For it is written: "As I live, says*

the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.”¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

The Unity of Strong and Weak Believers.

There are two believers focuses on: the weak and the strong.

A weak Christian as a believer who because of some preference, or his experience or orientation cannot understand and fully enjoy his freedom in Christ.

He tends to be narrow.

He tends to be somewhat legalistic.

He tends to be rather intolerant of spiritual liberty.

He is confined because of some preferences that have been bound to him through some experience.

A strong believer is one who does understand his freedom and not constrained by ceremonies or traditions or rituals, or any kind of non-moral externals.

- The strong believer tends to just live his liberty to the fullest.
- The weak believer tends to be extremely confined.
- The weak believer looks at the strong believer and accuses him of being abusive of freedom.

- The strong believer looks at the weak believer and accuses him of being too narrow and not understanding what Christ has really provided.

There is a potential conflict.

The disharmony then comes when the strong despise the weak as being small-minded, untaught, and narrow.

The weak condemn the strong for abusing their liberty.

The church at Rome obviously faced this problem because it had in it many Jews.

The Jews who had come out of a very strict Judaism background with laws that touched on every area of life.

- What you ate,
- How you cooked it,
- What you wore,
- The days you celebrated certain festivals and feasts.

Myriads of rules, laws, rituals, and routines had been built into their culture to the extent that they were almost an involuntary behaviour.

They came to Christ. Of course, in Christ all those external ceremonies, rituals from the Old Testament and tradition were fulfilled.

It may not have been a problem for the Gentiles so they might have celebrated their liberty and greatly offended the Jews. The Jews having faith in Christ were unable to understand their freedom from the laws of ceremony that were so much a part of their heritage.

Those laws were ordained originally by God.

It was the norm for converted Jews to hold on to Mosaic tradition, and in some cases to want to bind that externalism to the Gentiles as well.

On the other hand, there were some Gentiles who came out of a wild, pagan, religious background. They were used to certain things that were a part of their background such as feasts and festivals to the various gods and idols.

Those feasts they would offer food to their idol.

What food wasn't consumed in a feast or eaten by the priests would show up in a marketplace and be sold for money to support the temple operation.

Possibly they might buy meat that had once been offered to an idol. If you served that to a Gentile who used to worship that

idol, it would offend him greatly because he would see it as having been desecrated.

Possibly even Gentiles were very narrow in some areas of their Christian experience and unable to enjoy the fullness of their liberty in Christ.

An idol is nothing, Paul says in **1 Corinthians 8**, don't worry about it. But at the same time, we don't want to be offensive to one another.

Paul writes this section Romans 14:1-15:13.

Paul gives some principles.

Receive one another with understanding. (Romans 14:1-12)

Build up one another without offending, Romans 14:13-23.

Please one another as Christ did, Romans 15:1-7.

Rejoice with one another in God's plan, Romans 15:8-13.

1. Receive one another with understanding.

First one directed towards strong believer.

V 1, Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

The strong are to receive the weak and the weak are to receive the strong.

Weak is not weak in saving faith but weak in the sense that he is unable to believe that he really has the freedoms he has.

This is holding onto some old religious taboos, external behaviour patterns from a former religious experience.

The strong ought to embrace intimately into your own love and communion and fellowship.

These are not Judaizers, these are not people who are making Mosaic ritual and ceremony a matter of salvation.

These are people who know salvation is by grace through faith in Christ.

But they are hanging on to some old patterns that are external. This is the reason why Paul doesn't condemn them here as he does in **Galatians and Colossians**. In those churches they made the Mosaic ceremony the means of salvation.

They are not doing that here.

They are just holding on to some old tradition.

Those who are strong receive the weak.

Not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions, not to doubtful disputations, not to receive him just so you can argue with him, just so you can condemn him for what he believes or look down on him.

Galatians 5:13-16, *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! ¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

We embrace the weak, not for the sake of arguing with them, not for the sake of passing judgment on them, but for the sake of unity and love within the fellowship.

Why have we got to do this?

Four reasons we are to receive one another.

a) God receives them.

The Lord receives them.

V 2, *For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.*

Who would be?

The strong.

He believes he can eat all things.

One person believes he can eat anything.

He doesn't have any dietary constraints.

He is not bound by the old Mosaic ceremony, dietary laws.

On the other hand, there are others who being weak eat only vegetables. They are vegetarian.

Now the one who believes he can eat everything is strong.

Is that right?

Can he eat everything?

Yes!

1 Timothy 4:4-5, *For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

In response to those who are forbidding people from eating certain foods.

No, everything is to be received with thanksgiving.

In **Acts 10** the Lord cleansed all things and said to Peter, "*Don't you call unclean what I have cleansed.*"

The strong is right in eating anything.
Of course, that is not injurious to your body.
But there are no dietary restrictions.

We are not under the laws of Moses. Occasionally I hear this being propounded around in churches, saying you shouldn't eat pork and you shouldn't eat anything that is considered unclean in the Old Covenant. That is not so.

The one who believes he may eat anything right here is right, you can eat anything. There are no ceremonial dietary restraints in the New Covenant.

This particular person may be a Jew.
He may be a Jew who is not burdened by eating pork.
He may be a Jew who's not concerned that it be cooked a certain way.

He is free.
He understands his liberty.

On the other hand, it could refer to a Gentile. It could refer to a Gentile who doesn't think an idol is anything, who now understands that things that are offered to idols are offered to nothing because an idol is a nothing.
He is not hung up by that either.

So, it could be a Jew, it could be a Gentile.

Then you look at the weak one.

He is weak and he eats only vegetables.

Now this is kind of an interesting illustration because it is reasonable to believe because of what we know in history that neither Jews were particularly circumscribed to vegetables or Gentiles.

Vegetables could just as well be offered to idols as meat could be, and vegetables were offered to idols.

So, just eating vegetables didn't necessarily mean that you wouldn't be eating something offered to an idol. Vegetables could be offered to idols.

So, it seems that this might best be seen as a sort of a Jewish perspective.

Although some say that those who were known as the **Pythagoreans** were vegetarian and had some kind of unique twist.

Some Jewish group who were fearful of eating either meat offered to idols or meat that was unclean by their Jewish standards and so they opted out for nothing but vegetables.

They have good company among the Essenes and some segments of the Essenes in Judaism appear to be vegetarian.

In verse 17, it talks about food and drink.

Apparently, there may have been some as well who abstained from drink all together. Abstaining from drink would not be a Jewish issue because the Jews drank a wine diluted with water as a part of their culture. It may well have reflected a Gentile who had been converted out of a drunken stupor throughout his worship, and because of that wanted to abstain.

From historical viewpoint, that some of the Essenes practiced total abstinence as well.

Whether they are Gentile or Jew and for whatever reason in their tradition, there are those who aren't worried about what they eat and there are those who are.

They don't need to be, but they are.

They don't need to be restrained by some old dietary law.

V 2, a general perspective on the fact that some are free to enjoy their liberty, and some are bound and cannot enjoy it.

V 3, *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.*

Don't despise the one who doesn't eat.

The word "despise" means,

- to treat someone as nothing,
- to belittle them,
- to disregard them,
- to scorn them,
- to look at them with contempt.

Don't have contempt for one who doesn't fully understand his freedom just because you do.

This is so important in the church because there are always those liberated brethren who want to condemn the people who are much more confined in their thinking.

When you see someone who wants to lay a whole lot of rules that are not moral at all, but external rules that have come out of their own orientation. Your tendency is to look at them with a certain sense of contempt because they don't understand their true liberty in Christ.

and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats;

- The strong don't look with contempt on the weak.
- The weak look with condemnation on the strong.

It's a tendency on the part of the weak to condemn the liberty of the strong because they do not understand that freedom.

There are people afraid to get outside the bounds of legalism. They are so afraid not to operate on rigid rules for fear everybody will go crazy.

Within the church of Jesus Christ, there are those who do not understand their freedom in Christ and they condemn those who do.

There are those who do understand and they tend to despise those who don't.

The potential problem with which Paul wants to deal for the sake of unity in the church which is such a burden to him.

Romans 15:6, *that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Why we are to receive each other?

V 3, *"For God has received him."*

The word "him" represents both the weak and strong.

- The one who eats let him not despise the one who doesn't eat.
- The one who doesn't eat let him not despise the one who eat.

Let not him who eats not judge him that eats for God has received him.

Certainly, each is received by the Lord.

Not just the strong.

Not just the weak.

If you are free and you understand your liberty in Christ, when you tend to condemn someone else for being narrow-minded and legalistic.

Despite all God has received him by faith in Christ.

When you see someone who doesn't have all those rules and all those bindings on his life, don't condemn that person because God has received him, too.

Remember we are dealing with non-moral issues.

These aren't even matters of sin.

If God has not made this a point of fellowship, should we?

Of course not.

- If the Lord receives the weak, then we ought to receive the weak.
- If the Lord receives the strong, then we ought to receive the strong.

We must learn to work together.

b) The Lord sustains each believer.

The strong tend to despise the weak.

The weak tend to condemn the strong.

To justify our concern, this would be sort of a typical scenario. We sort of feel that the other person is in danger of falling away.

The strong say look at that poor, legalistic, narrow-minded person, can't enjoy freedom in Christ, they are going to despair of the Christian life with all its rigidity.

They just may fall away because of the lack of joy, freedom, and ability to enter all the things that God has provided. They are constrained by all this stuff.

- They might just fall away.
- They are going to drift off.
- They are going to be useless to God.
- They will never make it.

On the other hand, the weak person looks at the strong and says that they are going right out the other end.

- They are going so far away from what God wants.
- They don't have any rules in their life.
- They are breaking all the ceremonies.
- They are going to fall.
- They are going to fall because of license and liberty.

The strong are saying they are going to fall because of unbelief and weak faith and narrow-mindedness. They are not going to really discover the riches in the power of God.

The tendency is to want to justify our concern because we are afraid that it's going to lead to a spiritual disaster.

V 4, *Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*

Who do you think you are?

This isn't your problem.

Who are you to evaluate another man's servant?

Oikets, a household slave.

To his own master he stands or falls.

Who are you to sit in evaluation and say that brother, look at that liberated brother, I can see it coming, big sin.

Or look at that narrow-minded, bigoted person, they are going to shrink up, no use to God, big sin.

What right do you have to evaluate somebody else's servant?

You have no right to evaluate someone else's servant.

Your opinion of someone else's servant doesn't improve or impair that servant's position before his own master.

You are not in the position to make the evaluation!

Judgment by an outsider is utterly irrelevant.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5, *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. ³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. ⁵Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

We can't judge somebody else.

To his own master he stands or falls.

Now who is the master of the weak brother?

The Lord.

Who is the master of the strong brother?

The Lord.

It is going to be Christ's own evaluation of a believer that matters. Lord will see whether that believer stands or falls.

What will be the result?

V 4, *he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*

If he belongs to the Lord, you don't need to worry about him.

I am liberated and I worry about these legalists.

Don't worry about them. Their master knows how to keep them up.

Can someone stand and be useful to God with all these constraints?

Yes.

You may not enjoy the fullness of your liberty but the Lord's able to make you stand.

Why?

Part of salvation.

Nobody is going to be redeemed and then lose that redemption either because of being strong or being weak. His own master is able to hold him up and make him stand.

He will be held up.

He will be made to stand.

You don't need to be so concerned and be so sort of spiritual about your concern worrying about the collapse of this individual.

God will make him stand.

God will hold him up.

Mind your own business.

He uses the word here, when it says the word "is able," uses a form of ***dunamis***. God is powerful to cause him to stand.

John 10:27-29, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*

Romans 8:31-39, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

John 6:37, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

Jude 1:24-25, *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.*

God is able to make them stand.

1 Peter 1:5, *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

We don't need to look on the legalist and have some ultimate fear that he's going to fall out.

We don't need to look upon the person who's free and have some ultimate fear that the same could happen.

c) Lord is sovereign to each.

Even though the practice in these non- moral areas of ceremony, custom, and tradition the goal and motive is the same.

Why does a weak brother keep the law and the tradition and the ritual and all the things that he keeps?

Because he believes in his heart that he is pleasing the Lord.

Why does a strong brother enjoy the freedoms that he has given in Christ to the full?

Because in his heart he believes that pleases the Lord.

The motive is the same in both cases.

A weak believer can be spiritual.

At any moment in your life, you are either spiritual or you are fleshy. The moment you were saved, if you walk in the Spirit, you are spiritual minded.

If you decide to disobey, you are operating in your flesh. That has nothing to do with maturity. Maturity is a relative thing.

Maturity is the end product of the times of spirituality because carnality is no growth.

But spirituality or being fleshy is not synonymous with weakness.

There are weak Christians just coming out of some religious past tradition who are spiritually minded, who want to serve God with all their heart and soul. They just don't understand yet.

On the other hand, there are very strong believers who fully understand their freedom who can be very fleshy because that's an absolute that can be and is a reality at any given point in your life.

So, we don't want to say that just because someone is weak in the faith and just because they tend to be a bit legalistic or a lot legalistic, they are necessarily then not desiring to please the Lord.

V 5, *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*

If you came out of Judaism, you might think that there were some days more important than other days.

Sabbath, feast days and festivals and holy days.

If we study the history of the Sabbath in the Old Testament, it is important for you to know that the Sabbath did not always fall on a Saturday.

There were all kinds of Sabbath configurations. But they were set apart as holy days, festival days, feast days and the worship of those days was a part of Judaism.

It may well have been a part of paganism as well. There may have been some pagans who were hanging on to remnants of some old, special days.

Now the worship of these days is a weakness. It is a weakness. Paul says in Colossians that don't let anybody bind you to new moons and Sabbaths and feast days.

Galatians 4:9-10, *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in*

*bondage?*¹⁰ *You observe days and months and seasons and years.*

Sabbath is a beggarly element. It is a part of a dead system. So, some people are concerned about days. Some people want to sanctify certain days. They want to hold on to those.

Other people look at every day the same. Many wonderful, godly Christians who would never ever want to do anything to violate the Lord's Day. There are other ones out playing football.

Some people regard the day. Some people don't.

How do we respond to this?

V 5, *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. **Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.***

Just do whatever you think you ought to do.

How could he say that?

Because it's not a moral issue.

The Sabbath is nothing. That's a dead issue.

Paul doesn't care about it. His concern is not at all related to that. He has no concern at all with Sabbaths, feast days, and festivals and all of that.

If their conscience says, you better keep that day.

Because if you train yourself to ignore your conscience, you are going to have a problem.

Because the Spirit of God leads subjectively, and the Word of God moves its way in the power of the Spirit through your subconscious mind which is your conscience.

Paul does not want for a moment to train people to ignore their conscience.

1 Timothy 4:2, *speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*

A scarred conscience that is insensitive to truth and the prompting of the Spirit of God.

Paul doesn't want any scar tissue over your conscience because then when it is time for God to prompt you, you are not going to be responsive.

Don't train your conscience to do wrong.

If your conscience tells you that you need to abide by certain preferential traditions, then do it. If it's in your heart to do it, and you believe it pleases the Lord, then do it. Don't let anyone come along and tell you that you shouldn't do it and despise you for doing it.

The Scripture teaches how important it is for you to keep a clear and a pure conscience so that the Spirit of God can subjectively move you by His power.

1 Corinthians 8:7, *However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.*

If it defiles their conscience to eat that, don't make them eat that.

1 Corinthians 8:9, *But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*

If it bothers your conscience to do something, don't do it. You can actually force someone to do something that will wound their conscience.

- It will defile their conscience.
- It will bring guilt on them.

- It will drive them deeper into their legalism.

Because it will accuse them when they do it. We must be patient to allow the Spirit of God through the conscience, through the Word of God, through the community of believers to bring the person to maturity where they can fully understand.

1 Corinthians 8:11, *And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

Are you going to destroy some weaker brother, pushing him deeper into his weakness because you force him to abuse his conscience?

Of course not!

Conscience is a very important tool.

Acts 23:1, *Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."*

What does Paul mean?

I not only obeyed the Word, but I did what I felt the Spirit of God was prompting me in my conscience.

V 6, *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.*

- If he is concerned about maintaining this day, it is for the Lord. If he that eats, then eats to the Lord for he gives God thanks.
- If he does not eat to the Lord and he gives God thanks.

The strong brother has eaten everything in sight and he's saying, "Thank You, Lord, thank You for this freedom, I am enjoying this. Thank You, Lord, for this."

The weak brother is eating his little ceremonial diet, and he is saying, "Thank You, Lord, that I can sacrifice on Your behalf. Thank You, Lord, that You have given me at least this much to keep me alive."

But in either case, he is thanking the Lord.

- One who eats says thanks,
- Other who doesn't eat says thanks,

The motive in both cases is the same!

V 7, *For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.*

Whether we are weak or strong, we don't do what we do for our own sake. We do what we do because we believe it pleases the Lord.

What every true believer's pattern of life is to do things pleases his Lord.

Some people who want to hold on to the Sabbath laws and these various things, they do what they do to please the Lord.

Some people who enjoy freedom do what they do to please the Lord.

We don't do what we do for ourselves.

We do what we do for the Lord.

- We live to Him and someday we will die to Him.
- We have submitted to His lordship.

When we became Christians, we left the self-centred life. We confessed Jesus as Lord.

We live to Him, and we die to Him. Our most basic truest desire is to serve Him.

V 8, *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.*

To the Lord we live, and to the Lord we die.

We live for Him, someday we die for Him, whether we are weak or strong.

Whether we are new-born Christian infants or very mature, we live for Him, we die for Him.

We are the Lord's.

Do you belong to you?

Who do you belong to?

To the Lord.

Every Christian is involved in a situation of unconditional sovereignty.

This may be the greatest statement in the Bible on the lordship of Christ and His relation to the believer.

- ✓ We are the Lord's.
- ✓ We are His possession.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a*

price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

We are His!

I am not my own, so I don't live to myself, and I don't die to myself.

I am His so I live to Him, and I will die to Him.

We are all in the same relationship to the Lord.

We are all concerned to serve the sovereign Lord.

We have embraced Him as Redeemer.

If we are weak and we conscribe ourselves to certain lives, it is because down in our hearts we believe it is living to Him that we are doing.

If we are strong and free to enjoy, we enjoy because we believe we are living to Him as well.

We both have the same motive.

Since these matters are simply matters of preference and not sin, let's not make a rift in the church over them.

When Christians do what conscience tells them, with a desire to serve and honour Christ, we shouldn't condemn that.

This verse also affirms the deity of Christ.

If He is the supreme object of the Christian's life, then He must be God. If we live to the Lord and we die to the Lord, and whether we live or die we're the Lord's, then He must be the supreme one Himself.

The single greatest injunction to holy living: We are the Lord's.

- You don't belong to you.
- You belong to Him.
- Weak or strong you belong to Christ.

It is a matter of the believer's conscience.

I know who rules my life.

He is Lord.

V 9, *For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.*

He died to be Lord.

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

To be the Savior.

To be the Savior and Lord.

Every Christian, weak and strong, knows whose Lord and conscience tells him he's doing what he's doing to please his Lord.

So don't sit in judgment on him because all of us know, even weak and strong together, we know that we live to the Lord, we die to the Lord. The very reason Christ died and lived again that He might be Lord.

I cannot conceive of how people come up with the fact that someone can have a Savior and not have the sense of submission to His lordship.

Jesus died and rose to be Lord.

Not only Lord of the dead but Lord of the living.

Not only Lord of the living but Lord of the dead.

The dead refers to saints already in glory.

He died to be Lord.

He died to reign over believers in His presence and still on earth.

The sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ over everything affirmed.

He is Lord here and He is Lord beyond the grave, and He has dominion over all creation and has a special mediating dominion over His own believers.

None can deny the lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of the believer without denying the work of the cross and the grave.

V 3 the word is God

V 4, the Lord is able to make him stand.

V 6, he regards the day unto the Lord. He eats, eats to the Lord.

V 8, The Lord.

The interchange of the Lord, the name of Christ and God are one of the great pieces of evidence.

The deity of Jesus Christ who is spoken of interchangeable with God through this passage.

God receives us.

The Lord sustains each.

The Lord is sovereign over each.

d) Lord alone will be judge over every believer.

The Lord alone will be the judge.

This is a strong rebuke.

V 10, *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.*

First question:

Why are you condemning that strong believer for what you think is an abuse of his freedom?

Why are you despising that weak believer for what you think is a narrow-minded state of unbelief?

Why are you judging your brother?

Why are you weak ones judging your strong brother?

Second question:

Why the strong one, why are you despising?

The weak first, why are you condemning your strong brother?

The strong brother, why are you despising your weak brother?

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God."

We will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

2 Corinthians 5:10, *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

This is called the judgment seat of Christ.

Another of the evidence of the deity of Christ where He is spoken of interchangeably with God.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15, *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation,*

and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Our works will be measured whether they are gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble.

1 Corinthians 4:5, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

We are all going to stand before the judgment seat of God.

Paul quotes **Isaiah 45:23**.

V 11-12, *For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

Philippians chapter 2, Paul uses it there, but it's taken from Isaiah.

Every one of us at one point in the future is going to bow the knee in the judgment of God.

So, beloved, when we get prone to judge people, we are really playing God, aren't we?

A blasphemous thing.

We are all going to have to come before Him and our works are going to be examined and then we will receive the praise and the reward that God has planned to give us.

Why do we open our arms and receive each other?

- ✓ Because God receives us,
- ✓ Because the Lord can hold us up and does,
- ✓ Because the Lord is the sovereign over each of us and
- ✓ Because He is the only one who has the right to judge.

Now we are not talking about sin.

We are talking about these preferential areas.

We want to receive each other.

Many conflicts in the church can arise over non-moral, non-essential things. They can be stopped if we will open our lives and our hearts to receive each other.

Drop the criticism!
Let the Lord be the judge.
Let us love one another.