

## Good evening! Welcome to 2010!!

Tonight I thought we would begin the New Year by taking a look at the foundational scripture of 'Living Sacrifices'.

Dawn and I had been asking God to lead us in the direction He would have us take this ministry, and He impressed Romans 12 upon my heart. As we studied this part of scripture, it was apparent the entire chapter dealt with what we believe He would have this ministry to be:

- We are to present ourselves wholly to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ ([Rom 12:1-4](#));
- We are to serve others, as God has given us the gifts and talents to share and serve ([Rom 12:6-13](#));
- And we are to learn to be content with our present state ([Rom 12:18-21](#)).

We should understand, right from the start, this is not something we can do on our own, or by ourselves. God- in the person of the Holy Spirit- must do it in us, and through us. As the scriptures say:

**Php 4:13** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

So, with that before us, let's open our bible, please, to Romans 12, and let's look at this together. We will not get the entire chapter covered tonight, but that's okay- it gives us something to look forward to, as we work our way through this very important chapter.

Romans, chapter 12, from verse 1:

**Rom 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

**Rom 12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**Rom 12:3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

**Rom 12:4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

**Rom 12:5** So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

**Rom 12:6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

**Rom 12:7** Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching;

**Rom 12:8** Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it in

simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Rom 12:9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

**Rom 12:10** Be tender loving one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

**Rom 12:11** Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

**Rom 12:12** Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; constant in prayer;

**Rom 12:13** Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

**Rom 12:14** Bless them who persecute you: bless, and curse not.

**Rom 12:15** Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

**Rom 12:16** Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

**Rom 12:17** Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

**Rom 12:18** If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.

**Rom 12:19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay**, says the Lord.

**Rom 12:20** Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head.

**Rom 12:21** Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

To give you a little history, Romans was written by the Apostle Paul between the years 52 & 53 AD, during his three-month visit in Corinth ([Act 20:1-3](#)). He was about to close his work in Asia ([Rom 15:19](#)) and go to Jerusalem with his love gift from the churches of Asia ([Rom 15:25-26](#)). His heart's burden had always been to preach at Rome, and this long letter was his way of preparing the Christians for his coming.

Romans is the first of three letters in the NT based on one verse of Scripture - [Hab 2:4](#), "The just shall live by his faith."

This verse is found in

**Rom 1:17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

(the theme of Romans is *the just*),

**Gal 3:11** But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

(the theme of Galatians is how the just *shall live*),

and

**Heb 10:38** NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; BUT IF ANYONE  
DRAWS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM."

(the theme of Hebrews is living *by faith*).

Romans is the first epistle in the NT. Please take note- the order of the NT letters follows **2Ti 3:16**, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for...":

- *Doctrine* - Romans (the great doctrinal book)
- *Reproof* - 1 and 2 Corinthians (where Paul reproves sin)
- *Correction* - Galatians (where Paul corrects false teaching)
- *Instruction in righteousness* - Ephesians and Paul's remaining letters (where Paul teaches holy living based on Christian doctrine)

So here we are, in the final section of Romans- the section on "Service." Up to this point Paul has taught on Sin, Salvation, Sanctification, and Sovereignty. In this chapter, he is telling us how to put our learning into practice- through Service.

**Rom 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*

According to Webster, that word "beseech" means: "To entreat; to supplicate; to implore; to ask or pray with urgency."

Wiersby wrote: "The motive for dedication is love; Paul does not say, "I command you" but "I beseech you, because of what God has already done for you." We do not serve Christ in order to receive His mercies, because we already have them (3:21-8:39). We serve Him out of love and appreciation."

As we all know from Pastor Ray's teachings, whenever we see "therefore" in scripture, we are to look to see what it's "there for." According to one commentary, the word "therefore" is one of the most underrated in the English language. "Therefore" is like a hinge on a door that acts as the link between the wall and the door and enables the one to relate to the other. In Scripture, "therefore" holds together doctrinal principles and practical application. It is therefore vitally important when we consider the dangers of theory unrelated to practice and practice unrelated to theory. Paul's use of the word is pivotal in the Roman epistle.

In this case, he is wrapping up his doctrinal exposition to the Romans, in Chapter 11. Back in those days, they didn't have chapter and verse numbers. So chapter 12 is a continuation of the letter Paul wrote. I found it interesting, as I studied on tonight's message, that St. Augustine was converted through **reading** Romans; Martin Luther launched the Reformation on Romans 11:17: "The just shall live by faith." And John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was converted **while listening** to someone *read*

from Luther's commentary on Romans. So some of the greatest Christian theologians became such as a direct result of Paul's epistle to the Romans. So much for the argument others may use that the Bible is outdated, or no longer applicable to daily life!

Now, according to Romans 12:1, the very first thing we are to do is to "present" our bodies. Webster defines this term this way:

(quote) To set, place or introduce into the presence or before the face of a superior, as to present an envoy to the king; and with the reciprocal pronoun, to come into the presence of a superior. (end quote)

When anyone enters the military, they must go through "boot camp" or "basic training." I joined in 1979, and one of the first things we were taught was that we were to present ourselves to the drill instructor when they called us, or we wished to make a request of the drill instructor. We were to present ourselves before this superior, and it was a "formal" thing- not slothful, or lackadaisical, but with respect, and a respectful fear for the position of the one before us. In all honesty, the fear a lot of us felt was genuine "fear" though- there wasn't as much respect as there was trembling because of what the DI "might" do to us! Anyway...

Folks, we are called to do the same thing before God- we are to present ourselves- and our bodies as a "living sacrifice."

Dawn bought me this beautiful MacArthur Study Bible for Christmas. Although he does have some different views than those we hold dear here at Koinonia, he outlines this point very nicely. He writes,

"Under the Old Covenant, God accepted the sacrifices of dead animals. But because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, the OT sacrifices are no longer of any effect. For those in Christ, the only acceptable worship is to offer themselves completely to the Lord."

Another commentator wrote:

"Confession of sin in itself is not enough to enable the believer to automatically walk in the Spirit. One must become a yielded instrument for God's service. What is to be yielded is simply one's own self. This involves both the body and the mind, since it is with the body that actions conceived in the mind are carried out and with the mind that they are formulated. Stated another way, that which is conceived in the mind is carried out in the body; thus, one's whole being must be presented by a decisive act of the will to God for His service. Yielding must not be thought of simply as a willingness to do some specific thing. Rather it consists of dedication by a person to do whatever God commands."

Another important point we need to understand: as Pastor Ray has said, "If He is not God **of all**, He is not god **at all**." We are to be *totally* surrendered to God. There can be nothing between us and Him. So if He is not your Savior, if He is not your Lord, if He is not your Master, and if He is not your King- if you are not totally sold out to Him- you

cannot present your bodies- period! If He is not King and Lord over everything in your life- your All-in-All totality, you're ripping yourself off and cheapening God by trying to stuff Him in a box. I know a couple people in particular who live their lives this way, and they are experiencing an unfruitful life. They profess God, but they are not surrendered to Him, they do not follow Him, nor do they worship Him in Spirit and in truth. They call out to Him when they are in trouble, or when they swear or exclaim, but there is no fruit in their lives. It breaks my heart. They believe they are heavenbound, when they die, and won't accept the truth that unless they accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and become regenerated, they are truly Hell bound.

So we are to present our bodies, a living sacrifice, "holy, acceptable to God." The Levitical law required that every man bring a sacrifice, without blemish, to be presented as an offering. The way to God is only through blood sacrifice. Leviticus 17:11 states:

**Lev 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

The blood of the innocent sacrificial animal becomes the substitute for the life of the guilty offerer. "without the shedding of blood there can be no remission" Hebrews 9:22. Jesus Christ came to be our sacrifice for sin, because He was the only sacrifice which would fulfill the Father's requirements to remove the defilement that separates the people from God.

John 1:29 reads:

**Joh 1:29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

To be "holy" means to be "set apart" or "separated." The Israelites were "set apart" to be God's people. Some of the Levites were "set apart" to serve God and serve the people as priests. We are "set apart" to worship Him and live our lives according to His will and Word, and to proclaim the Gospel to others. This is not to say "holier-than-thou" but set apart for the Master's use. Separated *from* others *unto* God.

**Eph 1:4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

The concept of separation involves being "unfashionable" in spirit, thought, values, and actions according to the world's standards. And as we grow closer and closer to Jesus' imminent return, we see those standards continue to erode and deteriorate. I am so thankful we have been set apart, to be called Home before the great tribulation, at the Rapture of the church!

**Rom 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We walk a very fine line between living worldly, and being Christ-like. We have all the right attitudes, all the right actions, and all the right words when we are in church, because we should be, not to mention we feel a bit of an obligation to be accountable while there. But does that carry over into the other 6 days of the week? Or do we have one life in church, and another outside of it? Are we, as the song by Casting Crowns says, "happy plastic people under shiny plastic steeples? Scripture tells us we should have one life, and one focus- the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul stated, in 1 Corinth 2:2, we "want to know Christ, and him crucified." That should be our primary focus and goal. That isn't always the easiest thing. I admit I have problems with it on a minute-by-minute basis. That's why I am so grateful God is loving, and long-suffering, because I deserve so much worse than He is giving me! My thoughts, my actions and oftentimes my words don't always reflect my heavenly father- but rather the earthly fleshly side that He is still working out of me.

**Rom 7:19** For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice.

**Rom 7:20** Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

We are not to be conformed to this world. Albert Barnes, in his commentary, wrote:

"The word rendered "conformed" properly means to put on the form, fashion, or appearance of another. It may refer to anything pertaining to the habit, manner, dress, style of living, etc., of others."

We are not to be conformed; we are not to "do as they do" because "everyone else is doing it" or because we don't want to stick out as a freak, a geek, a goof, or "God Lover!" We are to stick out because Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for each and every one of us. God has been very clear on that point.

**Deu 14:2** For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

**Tit 2:11** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

**Tit 2:12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

**Tit 2:13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

**Tit 2:14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

**1Pe 2:9** But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

"World" here speaks of this present "age." The present age that has pushed God out of almost everything. The present age that embraces things such as abortion, homosexuality, and fornication as "normal" and acceptable; things that God calls "abominations." This present age that sees nothing wrong with lying, cheating, stealing, and worshiping anything and anyone other than the true and living God. This is the same present age that condones ordaining homosexuals and women as church leaders and allowing homosexual marriages- they obviously don't read God's word, or follow God's laws and commands.

**We** are to obey the laws set over us, unless they contradict scripture.

**Act 4:18** So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

**Act 4:19** But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

**Act 5:29** But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

I've started reading a morning devotional, by A.W. Tozer. Let me share with you what the devotional was for the 3rd:

It's entitled "Man has lost God"

(quote) The average person in the world today, without faith and without God and without hope, is engaged in a desperate personal search and struggle throughout his lifetime. He does not really know what he is doing here. He does not know where he is going.

The sad commentary is that everything he is doing is being done on borrowed time, borrowed money and borrowed strength- and he already knows that in the end he will surely die! It boils down to the bewildered confession of many humans that they have lost God somewhere along the line.

Man, made more like God than any other creature, has become less like God than any other creature. Created to reflect the glory of God, he has retreated suddenly into his cave-reflecting only his own sinfulness.

Certainly it is a tragedy above all tragedies in this world that love has gone from man's heart. Beyond that, light has gone from his mind. Having lost God, he blindly stumbled on through this dark world to find only a grave at the end! (end quote)

We are to be "transformed" or "changed in form" by the renewing of our minds. Not by a mere outward disconformity to the ungodly world, many of whose actions in themselves may be virtuous and praiseworthy; but by such an inward spiritual transformation as makes the whole life new - new in its motives and ends, even where the actions differ in nothing from those of the world - new, considered as a whole, and in such a sense as to be wholly unattainable save through the constraining power of the love of Christ. We are to allow God to transform us through the renewing of our minds, through His word. We

are not able to do it by ourselves, or of ourselves. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about that change within us.

John Darby's commentary reads:

"This was for man personally. As to his outward relationships, he was not to be conformed to the world. Neither was this to be an outside mechanical nonconformity, but the result of being renewed in mind, so as to seek for and discern the will of God, good and acceptable and perfect; the life being thus transformed."

We are not to be conformed, but rather transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We are to "prove" or test. Albert Barnes, in his commentary, writes:

The word used here **δοκιμάζω** dokimazō is commonly applied to metals, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc. Hence, it also means to explore, investigate, ascertain. This is its meaning here. The sense is, that such a renewed mind is essential to a successful inquiry after the will of God. Having a disposition to obey him, the mind will be prepared to understand his precepts.

**Psa 19:7** The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

**Psa 19:8** The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

**Psa 19:9** The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

**Psa 19:10** More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

**Psa 19:11** Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

**that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;** which does not mean the secret will of God, which cannot be searched into, proved, and known, till time and facts discover it: but the revealed will of God, both in the law, as in the hands of Christ, which contains nothing but what is good; and which when done in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God, is acceptable through Christ; and is perfect as a law of liberty, and rule of walk and conversation; and which is to be proved and approved of by all the saints, who delight in it after the inward man.

We are not to be anything like we were before God got ahold of our lives, and heart. We are to, as scripture tells us

**Eph 4:22** that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

**Eph 4:23** and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

**Eph 4:24** and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Let's pray