

Sermon #136 — Romans Series

Title: **“YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE”**

Text: *Romans 12:1-13*

Subject: *Living for God*

Date: Sunday Morning — November 26, 2017

Reading: *Psalm 84:1-12*

(Psalm 84:1-12) “How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! (2) My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. (3) Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. (4) Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

(5) Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of them. (6) *Who* passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. (7) They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God. (8) O LORD God of

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hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

(9) Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. (10) For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (11) For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (12) O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.”

INTRODUCTION

God’s servant David wrote many hymns about worship, worshipping God in his house with his people. In the 5th Psalm, the sweet singer of Israel said...

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“As for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple” (Psalm 5:7).

David, the man after God’s own heart, found great pleasure and satisfaction in daily prayer and meditation.

Daily, private, personal worship was a characteristic of his life. With the rising of the morning sun his heart was lifted up to God. Every morning he directed his prayer to the throne of grace and looked to his Lord with a heart of faith. Every evening he gave thanks to God and laid his head upon his pillow in the sweet rest of faith.

That is the way to begin and end every day! Blessed is the man or woman who worships God in private. Let all who know and trust the living God worship him daily.

Let all who follow Christ in the path of faith and obedience follow him also to the solitary place of private prayer. I would do everything within my power to promote and encourage private worship among the saints of God.

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Let every priest of God offer the daily sacrifices of prayer and praise to the Lord. **But there is something even more important than private worship.**

Does that last statement surprise you? I know that most people who are genuinely concerned for the glory of God and the worship of God rank personal, private worship above all things in the life of faith. But I am convinced that public worship, if it is true worship, is even more important than private worship.

David, a man after God’s own heart, gave the highest possible regard to the matter of public worship. Without neglecting private worship, he

said, — **“As for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”** He could not force

others to worship God, and would not if he could. “But,” he says, “as for me, I will come into thy house.” That is to say, “I will come into the place of

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public worship in the assembly of God’s saints, to worship the Lord my God.”

And when he came into the place of worship with the saints of God, David was determined truly to worship the Lord. He says, *“In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”* **David was resolved in his heart, at every appointed time, to come with God’s saints into the place of public worship, so that he might worship God in heaven, in the temple of his holiness.**

Listen carefully to David’s words, words inspired by God the Holy Ghost, and ask the Spirit of God to apply them to our hearts, so that David’s words may become the expression of our own hearts’ resolve.

“I will come into thy house.” — The house of God is the congregation of the saints, wherever they gather in public assembly to worship God.

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“I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy.” — It is not enough merely to “go to church”.

We must come into the house of God in faith, trusting the Lord’s mercy. **And there are a**

multitude of mercies with God in Christ. Sinners need mercy. We must come to the place of public

worship as sinners trusting God’s abundant mercy and grace in Christ. **If we do not come as sinners**

seeking mercy, we will not worship. But sinners looking to Christ for mercy always find a

multitude of mercies in him (Luke 18:13-14). In him we find:

- Everlasting, Covenant Mercy (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- Sin-Atoning, Redeeming Mercy (Romans 3:24-26)
- Effectual, Saving Mercy (Micah 7:18-20)

“Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

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19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

(Micah 7:18-20)

- Immutable, Preserving Mercy (Malachi 3:6)
- Daily, Providential Mercy (Romans 8:28)

Truly, “*It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*” (Lamentations 3:22); and every worshipper in God’s house finds it to be so.

“And in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”— If we would worship God, we must come to the house of God with reverence and godly fear. We must come into the house of God seeking to see him, to hear him, to adore him, to praise him and to obey him. This was David’s resolve. May it ever be

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yours and mine. May God the Holy Spirit give us grace to make public worship our delight and truly to worship him in the assembly of his saints.

Nothing on this earth is more important and more needful for our souls than the worship of God in the public assembly of his saints.

- Here God meets with men.
- Here God sends forth his Word.
- Here the family of God gathers.
- Here the children share their lives.
- Here we remember our Brother who gave his life for us.
- Here we sing his praise.

I received an email om a friend early this morning. He asked, “Is it right to have a Xmas day service or a good Friday service ?” I replied, “I have never done so, because I see no benefit in it and much possible evil. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the people who talk about getting excited about having a Christmas day service, or a Toad day service, or a Gay day

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service, were even a little bit interested in having a Lord's Day service? This you can read from the pulpit as my opinion.” **Would to God men and women were as interested in worshipping God as they are in playing religion!**

With that said, I want you to turn with me to the 12th chapter of the Gospel of Romans. As God the Holy Spirit enables me, I am going to try, once more, to preach to you about what he here calls — **“YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”** That is the title of my message. — **“YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”** Our text is Romans 12:1-13.

In this 12th chapter of Romans, Paul is talking to us about living for Christ. He is calling for devotion to Christ, consecration to Christ.

Proposition: Though few seem to catch it, if you will read the chapter carefully, you will see that the devotion, consecration, and service to which Paul here calls us is devotion, consecration, and service to

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God’s church. — **We present our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ, our dear Savior, only as we present our bodies to God in his house, to worship him and serve one another.**

(Romans 12:1-13) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (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 hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (5) So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another. (6) Having then gifts differing

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according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; (7) Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; (8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (9) *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (10) *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (11) Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; (12) Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; (13) Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.”

GOSPEL REVEALED

Throughout this Epistle, the Apostle Paul, writing by Divine inspiration, has been declaring the Gospel of

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God our Savior, Jesus Christ and him crucified. Here is the revelation of the Gospel we preach.

1. **The Gospel is the glorious good news from Heaven that there is a Savior for sinners, God’s own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ** (Romans 1:1-17). — *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief”* (1 Timothy 1:15).

(Romans 1:1-4) “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto **the gospel** of God, (2) (Which he had **promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,**) (3) **Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,** which was **made of the seed of David** according to the flesh; (4) And **declared to be the Son of God** with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

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2. **You need this great and glorious Savior** (Romans 1:18-3:19). — *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven!”*

- You are a lost, doomed, damned, depraved, dead sinner, cursed, and under the wrath of God.
- You are full of sin.
- You have no ability to perform righteousness.
- The wrath of God is upon you! — *“The wages of sin is death!”*

3. **The only way you and I can be saved is by God saving us; and the only way God can save sinners such as we are is by his free grace, through blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ** (Romans 3:20-5:21). — Only in Christ can he be both *“a just God and a Savior!”*

(Romans 3:20-26) “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (21) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the

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law and the prophets; (22) Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (23) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

- Salvation is by grace alone.
- Salvation is through faith alone.
- Salvation is in Christ alone.
- Salvation is altogether without works. — Abraham and David (Romans 4).
- Salvation is by the doing and dying of Christ, the sinner’s Substitute (Romans 5).

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4. **If God has saved you by his grace, you are a new creature in Christ** (Romans 6-8:27).

- You’ve been raised from the dead. — That is what you confessed your baptism ((Romans 6:1-12).
- The Lord God has released you from the law. — In Christ we are freed from sin, freed from its guilt, freed from its curse, freed from condemnation, freed from the law, and full of grace (Romans 6:13-7:13).
- This new life of grace has brought us into a state of perpetual war (Romans 7:14-25).
- This new creation of grace is life in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-27).

5. Then, in chapters 8-11, Paul was inspired of God to explain the mystery of providence to us, revealing to us a secret that no one could ever know, except by this word of Revelation. — **If God has saved you, if God is pleased to save, he ordained and uses everything to accomplish**

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your eternal salvation, to the everlasting praise of the glory of his grace.

(Romans 8:28-34) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? (32) He that spared not 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 lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even

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at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.”

THEREFORE

Looking back over all that, in the light of all that grace, all that you have experienced, all that salvation, as one who was himself utterly overwhelmed by it, Paul says to you and me — “*Therefore...*”

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(Romans 12:1-3) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (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 hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

What was the very first thing you were convinced of after God saved you, I mean the very first thing you just knew, knew (really) without anyone telling you? — “I need to be in the house of God.” That is what Paul tells us here. Since God has been so gracious to you, it is the most sensible thing in the world for you to commit yourself to the church and

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kingdom of God. — If you would serve Christ, serve his church.

Make it your business, child of God, to be in the house of God, worshipping God with the people of God (Psalm 84:6-8).

(Psalm 84:6-) “*Who* passing through the valley of Baca (**The Valley of Tears**) make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. (7) They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God. (8) O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.”

John Gill, commenting on this Psalm, rightly observed...

“The way to Zion, or to the house and ordinances of God below, lies through the valley of weeping; none come rightly thither but who come weeping over their sins and unworthiness;

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or by repentance towards God, and by looking by faith to Christ whom they have pierced, and mourning for it.”

In Romans 12:1-3, the Spirit of God calls all who are joined to Christ in life to make it our business to worship God, to make it our business to be in the house of God with the people of God when they are gathered to worship God. — What could be more reasonable?

- Here we are transformed and renewed by the Spirit of God.
- Here we are taught **how to avoid being conformed to this world.** — Through the Word of God faithfully preached, we learn to worship God in Spirit and in truth and learn how to live in this world always looking to Christ.
- Here we learn **what the will of God is.** — The Gospel — The Salvation of His Elect — The Glory of His Son — Faith in Christ

We give our bodies a living sacrifice to God when,

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trusting Christ, we devote ourselves to the church and people of God, “*not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is*” (Hebrews 10:25).

The only way under heaven by which we can serve God is by serving his people! — If we would do that, we must think of ourselves as God teaches us to think of ourselves (v. 3), as sinners saved by grace (1 Corinthians 4:7).

ONE BODY

Then, Paul tells us that we are “*one body in Christ.*” Obviously, all the Inspired teaching of Holy Scripture with regard to public worship and the ordinances of Divine worship are specifically addressed to local churches, like those spoken of in Revelation 1-3. But, in verses 4 and 5, Paul who was not a resident of Rome spoke of himself as being in the body of Christ with his brethren at Rome. — Why?

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Though the church of God is a local assembly of believers, it is also universal; and we are responsible before God to serve his church, to serve his people, wherever they are.

(Romans 12:4-5) “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (5) So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

USING OUR GIFTS

As members of the body of Christ, being placed in the body exactly as we are by the grace of God, we each have gifts needful and useful for the body, gifts “*differing according to the grace that is given to us.*” — It is our privilege and responsibility to use those gifts for the benefit of the whole body of Christ in the service of God (vv. 6-13).

- Those who are gifted to **preach** the Gospel

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(prophecy), pastors, must give themselves wholly to the work.

- Those who **minister**, those who are gifted to serve (deacons), and any who have gifts and talents by which they can help others, are to serve the saints. — (Serve Tables — Shante and Betty). — Always be on the prowl, looking for a chance to help.
- You who **teach**, older women teaching the younger, older men teaching the younger, more mature saints teaching the family children, public teachers gifted to teach the Scriptures, should always be on the lookout to use their gifts.
- You who are gifted to **comfort**, console, and encourage (exhort) others, always be on the lookout for an opportunity to comfort troubled souls.
- You who have the gift of God and ability to **give generously**, always be modest, quiet, and unseen, without show, using your wealth for the benefit of God’s saints, his church, his servants,

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and the furtherance of the Gospel.

- Those who **rule** the house of God (faithful pastors), must do so with diligence as faithful doorkeepers in the house of the Lord. — Keeping error out, bringing truth in, and welcoming needy souls to the Gospel feast.
- And you who are gifted to **show mercy**, do it cheerfully. — He/she who does the most good is the least known for the good he/she does.

RIGHT SPIRIT

Now, look at verses 9-13, and learn how to do this. Here is the spirit in which we must serve our God and one another.

(Romans 12:9-13) “Let **love** be without dissimulation. **Abhor** that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (10) Be **kindly affectioned** one to another with brotherly love; in honour **preferring one another**; (11) **Not slothful in business**; (This Business of

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Worshipping and Serving God and His Church)

fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; (12)

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation;

continuing **instant in prayer;** (13) **Distributing**

to the necessity of saints; **given to hospitality.**”

APPLICATION

Has God saved you by his grace? — Come, confess Christ, and give your body a living sacrifice to God by him.

Has God saved you by his grace? — Come, give your body a living sacrifice to God, day by day, in the house of God, serving him in his house, serving his cause, serving his people. —Everything done to and for one of the Lord’s children is done to and for Christ himself, who loved you and gave himself for you. So, be not slothful in this business. This is “*your reasonable service.*”

“I love Thy kingdom, Lord,

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The place of Thine abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God;
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heav'nly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be giv'n
The brightest glories earth can yield,

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And brighter bliss of Heav’n.”

Amen.