

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Wednesday Sermon

Date: August 18, 2021

Text: Romans 12:1-2

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Subject: Present your bodies a living sacrifice

In verses 27 through 36 of the preceding 11th chapter, we considered these things:

1. That all Israel shall be saved when the LORD, through His covenant with them takes away their sins.
2. That the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.
3. That as the gentiles have receive mercy in much the same way, so shall Israel receive mercy.
4. Paul closed that chapter with a marvelous doxology – words of praise!

a. *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 for ever. Amen. **Romans 11:33-36 (KJV)***

Now, we come to chapter 12, verses 1 and 2.

Romans 12:1 (KJV) *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.*

I beseech you -- The apostle Paul, having finished the *argument* of this letter how that the Gentiles have been graft into the root and fatness of Israel through the gospel and that when the fulness of

the gentiles has come, then God will cause all Israel to be saved. In this chapter, Paul proceeds now to bring forth a *practical* application, showing the bearing of what has been said on the duties of life, and the practical influence upon those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. None of the doctrines of the gospel are designed to be cold and barren speculations. They bear on the hearts and lives of every single one of us who have been redeemed. Paul the apostle therefore calls on those to whom he wrote (and therefore, to us who are in the Lord's churches) to dedicate themselves without reservation unto God.

therefore, -- Therefore looks back to the effect or result of the argument or doctrine of the 11th chapter. In other words, the whole argument of the first eleven chapters is fitted to show the obligation on us to devote ourselves to God. From expressions like these, it is clear that the apostle never supposed that the teaching of the doctrines of grace was to lead us to licentiousness. Many have affirmed that such was the tendency of the doctrines of justification by faith, of election and decrees, and of the perseverance of the saints. But it is plain that Paul had no such apprehensions. After having fully stated and established those doctrines, he concludes that we ought *therefore* to lead holy lives; and on the ground of them he exhorts men to do it.

brethren, by the mercies of God – The apostles addresses those at Rome as "brethren." This is altogether appropriate since this expresses the relation they stood in to the apostle, for whom he had an hearty love and concern. What he pressed them to was because of a sincere regard to their good, as well as to the glory of God. Those addressed were all God's dear children having one and the same Father, and so were under obligation to submit to his will, to honor and reverence him: Notice, if you will, and the Apostle did not say, "I command you," but "I beseech you". The urging was

not by harshness or sternness, but "by the mercies of God"; that is, the abundant mercy of God, displayed in their election, regeneration, and calling. Nothing can have a greater influence on a believer, to move him to holiness of life. The Holy Spirit brings the word to our remembrance and teaches us the truth of it. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and infirmity. The Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God with groanings which cannot be uttered by the human tongue. To what, then, did the apostle beseech them (and us)?

That ye present -- The word used here commonly means the action of bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. It implies, then, that the bringing of the offering was a free and voluntary offering. Brethren, we have been set free by the body of Christ once for all, therefore, the act of devoting ourselves to God is one of the most free actions that we ever perform.

your bodies -- This is not speaking of presenting our bodies in public worship. Certainly, that ought to be done faithfully. Nor is this speaking of our abstaining from grosser sins done in the body which defile and dishonor it. This is not even speaking of the offering of the body at the time of death in a way of martyrdom, though the saints of old overcame the tempter by the blood of the lamb and loved not their lives unto the death. The saints of the great period of tribulation will do that as well. But this is speaking of a present, high calling for us.

a living sacrifice, -- A living sacrifice in opposition to the bodies of slain beasts offered under the Old Covenant. A living sacrifice speaks of living and giving our whole selves to the LORD. The expression "living sacrifice" means, that we are to devote the vigorous, active powers of our bodies and souls to the service of God. The Jew offered his victim, slew it, and presented it dead. It could not be presented again. In opposition to this, we are to

present ourselves with all our living, vital energies. Our LORD demands by this commandment all our vigorous and active powers in the service of God the Saviour. This speaks of a presentation of ourselves in the performance of those things commanded us in willing obedience. This sacrificial giving of our bodies a living sacrifice comes from a principle of life because of the quickening influences of the Spirit of God. There is no wicked thought to obtain salvation by offerings our bodies holy, acceptable to God. Why is that? Because that was done by the offering up of the body of Christ once for all.

Holy, acceptable unto God, -- Remember, the offerings of Old Testament times where to be clean, without spot or deficiency. These were "set apart unto God and were set apart from the world." That is true of our bodies. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and our bodies collectively in the church are a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Which is your reasonable service. – This is agreeably to reason. That those of us who have their beings from God, and are upheld in them by him, and are followed with the bounties of Providence; and especially who are made new creatures, and are blessed by him with all spiritual blessings in Christ, that they should give up themselves to him, and cheerfully serve him in their generation. Such service is also agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, the standard of faith and practice; which scriptures enforce nothing but what is highly reasonable to be complied with. Think of it. It is a service which lies not in the slaying of beasts, but in the presenting of men endued with rational powers unto God; and is of a spiritual nature, performed by spiritual men, under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Romans 12:2 (KJV) *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.*

And be not conformed to this world: -- O, beloved, we commanded to “be not conformed to this world.” What does that mean? It means that we are not to make ourselves resemble or be like the unbelieving world in anything. Conforming means to put on the form, fashion, or appearance of the world. Do not fashion or accommodate yourselves to the corrupt principles, customs, or courses of worldly and wicked people. The word “world” comes from the Greek word for age – and means the people of this present generation; Those who are living about us today!

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (Romans 13:13 KJV)

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (Ephesians 4:17-19 KJV)

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings,

banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: (1 Peter 4:1-4 KJV)

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (1 Peter 1:14-15 KJV)

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But be ye transformed – The verb transform means to be changed into another form. Notice that the verb is in the passive mood. Therefore, the person is acted on by the Holy Spirit. Let's notice how this changing is affected according to scripture:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV)

This verse tells us that as we with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, (we) are changed [metamorphoo – same word as transformed in Romans 12:2.] Notice: we are transformed from glory to glory – from one image to another, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. As we behold and consider the blessed savior, we are changed little by little, but definitely, by the Holy Spirit.

By the renewing of your mind, -- Renewing of our mind. The renovation of our mind – a complete change for the better. As we contemplate and internalize the word of God, beholding Christ, our mind is changed and renewed. We learn to think in a different way – not in the way of the world, but in the way of the Word! This will take some tearing down of *unknown* idols in our thinking. This word would properly refer to the *external appearance*, but the

expression which the apostle immediately uses, "renewing of the mind," shows that he did not intend to use it with reference to that only, but to the change of the whole person. The meaning is, do not cherish a spirit which is common to the world, following its vain fashions and pleasures, but grow in the grace and knowledge of the LORD, and his kingdom and cause. We need our thinking changed! Drastically!

*If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; **And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. **(Ephesians 4:21-32 KJV)***

1. The world says we came from a germ floating in pea soup millions of years ago – but God says man was created in his own image and likeness just six thousand years ago and placed him in the Garden of Eden.

2. The world says the government owes us a living – but God says we are to work with our hands that which is good that we may have and have to give others in need.

That ye may prove – Through the presenting of our body as a living sacrifice, we both prove and approve of that which is contained in the Gospel and every commandment of our Lord. The Greek word used here (*dokimazein*) is commonly applied to metals and to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc. Therefore 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. O, beloved, we all need a new way of thinking for as “a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The renewed mind is, in itself, a *disposition* to obey the Lord; the mind will be prepared to understand his teachings. The renewed mind will admit his laws, and see the suitability and beauty of his commandments. A renewed heart is the best preparation for studying the commandments of the Lord – yea, even every word of the Holy Bible. As a man who **is temperate** is the best fitted to understand **temperance**; the man who is **chaste** understands most clearly and forcibly the arguments for **chastity**, etc. A heart in love with the fashions and follies of the world is ill-fitted to appreciate the arguments for humility, prayer, godliness and chastity. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," [Joh 7:17](#). The *reason why* the the renewing of the mind, that we may do the will of God; the mind (the heart, where we think and reason and know) that is renewed is best fitted to appreciate and understand his will.

what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. -- the revealed will of God as in the hands of Christ our savior and Lord. God’s revealed will contains nothing but what is good; and 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. Let us who are the saints of God both prove his will and approve his will and commend it to our brethren. It is certain we delight in the law of God after the inward man: and also that which is contained in the Gospel of the kingdom. We know by that revealed will that all whom the Father had given to Christ were redeemed by him, that these should be sanctified, and persevere to the end, and be glorified. Let all of us who are daily renewed in the spirit of our minds continually prove that which is good and acceptable and perfect. May God give us more grace to "so walk even as He walked;" "to follow his steps."