

Romans

PART 19

LIVING SACRIFICE
ROMANS 12:1-3

Responding To The Mercies Of God

Chapters 1-11 of Romans have taught us about what God has done for us in the gospel, and now chapters 12-16 will lay out the right response to the great mercies of God. The proper reaction to our salvation can be summed up by this phrase: “living sacrifice.” As we devote our lives to God, we will prove out His will with hearts governed by the love of God. Our minds, bodies, and actions all belong to Him, and Paul will urge us to be thoroughly transformed from our old life. He calls on Christians living in a pagan world and in the midst of the hustle and bustle of ancient Rome to let all be done in obedience to the faith— every aspect of life.

Chapter Highlights

VS 1

I BESEECH YOU: a warm admonishment. Scripture is lovingly imploring us to do this, not by compulsion, but out of a deep appreciation for God’s compassion to save us from corruption. God is for us, and He appeals to us to live for Him in turn.

THEREFORE: is the reason for our devotion, as presented by the epistle up to this point. The unshakable mercies of God are the grounds for dedicating our lives to Him. His mercy doesn’t change, despite our variable circumstances in the suffering of this age. The chief purpose of life is to boast in God forever, enlivened by the holy spirit by which we cry out Abba, Father. In light of all God has done, how amazing it is that we get to be a part of creation’s eternal goal!

A LIVING SACRIFICE: We all, the redeemed people of God, present ourselves to God as one living sacrifice. We are not part of the humanity that lives for sin, self, and Satan, but a new humanity with one shared purpose. The word “sacrifice” invokes the idea of religious ceremony, as both Jewish and pagan worship involved physical temples, tangible sacrifices, and visible priests. But we are a spiritual temple. We are living sacrifices worshiping God in spirit. So, in giving our entire selves up and over to God permanently, we don’t have to perish the way physical sacrifices do.

VS 1 CONT.

Because Christ has died, we are now dead to sin and can present our bodies alive unto God. We use our members to serve righteousness and carry the gospel to the world. Jesus says, “take up your cross and follow me,” and so we hold nothing back from him. Romans 11:36 teaches us that all things are from Him, through Him, and for Him. So as those belonging to God, we must die to our own purposes. A Christian life without sacrifice is not true Christian living. And though our lives are sacrificial, living for God is truly fulfilling, unlike the vanity of living for self. We do give up some things, but we’re giving ourselves TO someone, and who we gain far outweighs what we give up.

HOLY: We are devoted and dedicated to God as a people set apart for Him. We are separated from the world and its ways. God finally has a people to show forth the true purpose of creation: glorifying God. Romans 1 told us that the old kind of humanity knows God but doesn’t glorify Him as God. They worship the creation above the Creator, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. The new kind of humanity knows the love of God and is led by the Holy Spirit.

REASONABLE SERVICE: This response of worship is logical and rational in light of the gospel. In fact, it is the only right response, and if we can’t see that, we don’t yet understand the mercies of God. Instead of literal offerings, we offer ourselves as a spiritual service, like incense burning up to heaven. Chapter 12 will give us much instruction on specific ways to do this, but first it wants to win our hearts to the desire to use our lives for His worship.

VS 2

The course and ways of the world will try to conform us and impede us from our purpose. This ungodly age is ruled by Satan, and it’s reclining in wickedness. With hearts fashioned to the ways of the world, we will worship the creation instead of the Creator. Stop letting yourself be shaped and molded by the world, allowing it to tell you what is right and good. Don’t let ungodly influences into your life. Rather, be transformed, or reshaped, by the power of the gospel. These two molds are not compatible.

2 DIFFERENT ENDS WITH 2 DIFFERENT MEANS

SERVING SIN AND SELF WITH
AN END OF DESTRUCTION

VS.

SERVING JESUS WITH AN
END OF ETERNAL LIFE

VS 2 CONT.

Worshipping God as the Holy One is counter-cultural, and by ourselves, we are powerless to change ourselves. Instead, we must present our hearts to God and He will do the work of transformation within us. We can't do it alone, but we do make the choice to shun ungodliness, change our thoughts, and set our minds on things of the Spirit. This is the renewal of our minds. He will provide the power of transformation, but we bring to Him the desire to live out His will. When our minds are fresh and renewed to God's heart, then we can discern what the will of God is and show it forth as living sacrifices. The will of God is always good, well-pleasing, and perfect. So if we want to do God's will, it must begin in our thought life. What do we entertain in our minds? If it's fleshly worldliness, we will be conformed. If it's the gospel, we will be transformed. The dying and rising of Jesus must be of the utmost importance to us.

VS 3

The standard by which we measure ourselves must be the gospel. Does the measure of faith, the truth of Jesus in the Word of God, rule our life and bear weight in our hearts? Does it stir our affections? We must see the value of our lives through the lens of what God has given to be believed. This is sober thinking.

Conclusion

God has redeemed the whole of our humanity, and our whole humanity is for His glory. May we truly know the mercies of God, and thereby recognize that the only rational response to such unfathomable love is to give everything we have in worship and service to Him. May we renew our minds to the truth of the gospel, and with transformed lives prove out the wonderful will of God. This will show forth in every aspect of life: in business, in government dealings, in the church, and in our personal lives, as chapter 12 will continue to discuss.

Romans

VIEW OUR ROMANS SERIES ON YOUTUBE

