

July 27, 2014
“Live Worship”
Romans 12:1-2

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

In the first 11 chapters of Romans Paul has presented theology, doctrine. He has announced that the way of Salvation (the forgiving of sin and the giving of Eternal Life) is a gift of God, AKA, grace, a gift that is received by faith alone. You can't earn forgiveness of sin, you can't earn being made right with God, you can't earn heaven or Eternal Life, you can only humbly receive it by faith as a gift. God desires a relationship with you that will be forever, if you will only accept His offer and accept His Son, Jesus the Christ, Messiah, Savior. Salvation is not earned or even deserved, we don't do anything, rather we trust in what God has done for us through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and His resurrection. That's it! That's salvation.

Paul having concluded his doctrinal teaching in the first part of this letter to the Romans, he now gets practical. Paul does this in many of his letters, because it is not enough to know what the Bible says, it must be your life, it must be applied. The Bible does its most good when you do what it says, not just know what it says. So Paul makes this transition to the practical to explain how these doctrines should look in our daily life.

He makes the transition by using a small, three letter Greek word, *oun* (pronounced oon). It is translated in NLT as “and so” in other translations, “Therefore” and that small word is the connecting link between the two parts of this letter.

And so, dear brothers and sisters after all God has done for us as Paul spoke about in the first 11 chapters, in view of the mercies God as shown toward us (being saved is not pride in what we have done, but entirely on God's mercy), now that you have heard the wonderful truth presented in chapters 1-11, I plead with you, I beg of you, I pray for you to give yourself to God. If you will make the decision to give yourself to God and by the power of the Holy Spirit live out in experience what is true of you theologically the results will be staggering.

In grateful recognition of what God in His infinite love and compassion has done for you in pardoning your sins and receiving you back into His favor through Christ I exhort you to consecrate, yield yourself totally to God. Once and for all give yourself for the service of God. It is both a decision made at a point in time and also an ongoing practice.

Be a living sacrifice. In the Old Testament there were sacrifices of animals, but the animal was worthless after it was sacrificed, except for the BBQ everyone got to eat afterward. It had a short lived usefulness. But now we are still a sacrifice but a living

sacrifice. We die to nothing but sin and live completely and perpetually to Christ who died for us and rose again. Substitute sacrifices will no longer do, God wants your life. Animal sacrifices, bulls, goats, sheep will no longer do. It must be you, your whole self, useful to God always, not short lived usefulness.

In the Old Testament there were different kinds of sacrifices. We can reduce them to two:

1. Offerings given before being reconciled to God and to obtain forgiveness (the sin offering), and
2. Sacrifices that were made after being reconciled to God to celebrate reconciliation to God (the peace offering).

In the first part of Romans Paul talks of our need to be reconciled to God and how to obtain that, this is by faith in the sacrifice of Christ as our sin offering.

In this chapter Paul says because of what God has done for you, because now you have peace with God, offer Him a living sacrifice – offer Him yourself.

When Paul says give your bodies to God he means offer all of you, your whole self, your will, your mind, your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, your plans all of you to God. This offering of the whole of our lives is an act of worship that is pleasing to God. Live Worship!

When we think of worship what usually comes to mind is what we do here on Sunday mornings; singing, praying, giving our tithe, hearing the word, being in the presence of God. But God doesn't want worship to be confined to the church building on Sunday. God wants worship to extend from this religious part of your life to the whole of your life. Listen to Eugene Peterson's translation of Romans 12:1 in "The Message":

Romans 12:1 THE MESSAGE

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Worship is not a religious performance we sit back and enjoy. Worship is a life style. Worship is giving your life to God. And that does not mean doing something extraordinary for God, it means living your everyday, ordinary life for God - everyday, everywhere, all the time.

Someone has said...

"The main problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar."
— *Anonymous*

Keep doing the things that will keep you on the altar, pray, read the Word, spend time in God's presence.

Just as soldiers sacrifice themselves for their country in time of war, so Christians offer themselves for the Kingdom of God. This implies a constant sacrifice of the physical for the sake of the spiritual as Paul spoke of in:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 THE MESSAGE

You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally.

I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

Don't give up being a living sacrifice, don't crawl off the altar. No sloppy living, stay alert.

The sacrifice we offer is not just living it is also to be holy. Holy means set apart for God. We must recognize that we belong to God and must be set apart for His use. We are to be devoted and consecrated and yielded to God that we might truly be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19 THE MESSAGE

Or didn't you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for?

1 Peter 1:14-16

So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

A holy sacrifice is the kind that is acceptable to God. And not only is it the kind that is acceptable to God, but it is truly the way to worship Him. Draw upon the power of God's Spirit in you, draw upon His holiness, Christ's holiness – it is already in you.

It just makes sense, if you belong to God you want to praise Him with your life. Obedience to God at all times is the only reasonable and logical response to the grace of God. Worship is any act done for God. Daily laying aside our own desires to follow God, putting all our energy and resources at His disposal, completely set apart for God and dedicate to His service this is worship. If He is God and not us, if He has shown mercy to you in Christ then doesn't it just make sense that we should live for Him? Isn't living for Him the lease we can do?

Verse 2 is a continuation of the thought in verse 1. To be consecrated or set apart, completely devoted to God implies:

1. Don't (conform or) copy the behavior and customs of this world, but
2. Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

This world or this age that we live in is opposed to God's Kingdom. You don't belong to the kingdom of this world, but to the Kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 4:4

Satan ... is the god of this world

Galatians 1:4

Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live.

(v2) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

What should you do instead of copying the behavior and customs of this world? Let God transform you. How? By changing the way that you think. What you think or what you believe determines your actions.

God will change you from the inside out by His Spirit as you spend time with Him and apply what He reveals to you in His Word. And as you offer yourself to God, saying no to the world's customs that you use to follow and living for God instead you will learn to know God's will for you which is good, which is pleasing, and which is perfect.

Romans 12:2 THE MESSAGE

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the

culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Phillips translates it:

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God remold your mind from within.”

God transforms us in an instant, but transformation is also an ongoing process. “Instead of yielding to the influences that tend to shape us into the likeness of things around us, we must day by day undergo a change in the opposite direction.”

What Paul is describing here and in the chapters that follow is supernatural living, spiritual living and this kind of living is worship.

“Christians who are living sacrifices in the service of God are godly, not worldly; transformed, not conformed; humble, not proud; helpful and generous, not stingy; unified with others, not divided from them; loving, not hypocritical and hateful; other centered, not self-absorbed; enthusiastic, not blah; forgiving, not vengeful.”

- John MacArthur, *Romans – Grace, Truth, and Redemption*

God want you. All of your heart. All of your mind. All of your time, your energy, your resources. All your hopes and dreams. He wants you to offer it all to Him, put it all at His disposal. How should that change the way you live your everyday, ordinary life? This is worship, its living (a life of) worship.

Don’t conform; be transformed by consecrating yourself to God.

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you.”