**The Living Sacrifice**

*Romans 12:1-2*

**Introduction**

1. Romans 12 begins the practical exhortation of Paul based on his exposition of God’s eternal plan of redemption in Christ.
2. So many disciples fail to see what the true spiritual response to such amazing grace is.
3. Paul’s exhortation in **Romans 12:1-2** represents what God’s true desire and intention is for those who have accessed His grace by faith.
4. The exhortation is descriptive of actual discipleship. Nothing less will suffice.
5. The Avenue of the Exhortation
6. Exhortation
   1. ***“I beseech you” (NKJV); “I appeal to you” (ESV); “I urge you” (NASB)***
   2. **Philemon 8-11** – especially as a stronger appeal to their own faith and experiences of God’s goodness, to elicit reciprocity in sincere interest, rather than simply making and enforcing a demand.
   3. **Paul’s instruction bears the weight, not just of divine authority, but of the motivation of grace and mercy.**
      1. It is no less a command, but the thrust of chapters 1-11 was to incite delighted discipleship from the heart.
7. The Mercies of God
   1. ***“by”*** – dia – the channel of an act.
      1. What he exhorts them to do issues forth from the great things God has done for them. (**cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15** – love of Christ compels; or mercies) It is the avenue through which this appeal comes.
      2. Furthermore, the content of the appeal itself is no less a continuation of the mercies of God – so it is not simply their actions taken based on what they see **God has done**, but based on what **He is still doing** for them as a continuation of such mercies, and what **He will do** for them.
      3. In other words, “do this because of what God has done for you, and seeing what He has done for you, do this because it will be but another expression of His mercies toward you.”
   2. Based on what they received – justification
      1. **Romans 3:19-26** – guilty before God through sin, but by God’s grace and mercy made just by Jesus’ death (blood).
      2. **Romans 4:5-8, 23-25** – blessedness of God not imputing sin, but forgiving based on Christ’s sacrifice.
   3. Based on what they are receiving – vitality through the Spirit
      1. **Romans 6:5, 7-8, 11** – freed from sin to live with Christ.
      2. **Romans 8:10-11** – the HS animates our body to righteous living (**v. 2** – through the law of the Spirit, the gospel)
   4. Based on what they will receive – glory
      1. **Romans 8:16-18, 20, 23-25** – we have hope, which implies future reward.
      2. This directly connects to Paul’s exhortation – in what will we persevere to realize our hope?
      3. Based on the mercies of God in the giving of hope, and the ongoing journey to realize it by God’s grace, we are to act according to Paul’s plea.
8. The Exhortation
9. Present Your Bodies a Sacrifice
   1. Sacrifice – **Romans 6:11** – a slain sacrifice, but one that continually lives to present self to God.
      1. My body is no longer being used in service of sin.
   2. **Romans 6:12-13** – our bodies are instruments to be offered in service to God.
      1. Old Law – Jews offered animals, etc. in service to God – that is what they presented Him. (With a fault of often not presenting themselves – **Psalm 50:12-15)**
   3. **Instruments** – *hoplon;* an implement or utensil or tool (STRONG)
      1. ***“YOU present YOUR bodies”*** – i.e. there is something greater than your body, namely YOU, but your body is an instrument you are to present to God in a certain way.
      2. Gnostic error – body is merely an envelope of the spirit, and is inconsequential to spiritual life, as it is inherently evil/sinful.
         1. It is a mistake to think that the body is separated from spiritual matters.
         2. **Cf. James 4:8** – cleanse hands (outward, bodily action), purify hearts (inward).
      3. Body is a significant part of ourselves – **1 Thessalonians 5:23**
         1. Body is for the Lord, now and future – **1 Corinthians 6:13-14**
      4. Our bodies are the tools we use to serve God – it is our offering to God – ourselves (the whole, body, soul, spirit), not something else.
10. Characteristics of the Sacrifice
    1. Living
       1. Not an offering that is accomplished in a moment of time, but an ongoing offering.
       2. **A sacrifice poured out on the altar of life by daily conduct in our body.**
          1. Contrast – “I’d be willing to die for the Lord.” But are you living for Him now? (That is the sacrifice!)
       3. **Micah 6:6-8** – He wants our life of faithfulness.
       4. **1 Peter 2:5, 9-12** – spiritual sacrifices including positive service to God, and abstaining from worldliness.
    2. Holy
       1. *Hagios* – “fundamentally signifies “separated” (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods), and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred.” (VINE)
       2. **1 Peter 1:14-16** – obedient, not former lusts, holy as God is holy.
       3. **“Holy” calls to mind the character and nature of God – the sacrifice presented must meet His specifications.**
          1. Separated from sin as He reveals it.
          2. Consecrated to His will as He reveals it.
    3. Acceptable to God
       1. If it is holy, it will be acceptable/well-pleasing to God.
       2. Not by own dictates – **Colossians 2:23** – ***“self-imposed religion”*** (**cf. 1 Timothy 4:3-4**)
       3. Not to speculate – **Ephesians 5:8, 10**
       4. What He reveals is acceptable – **Colossians 3:17** – what He authorizes.
    4. Your Reasonable Service – descriptive of the entirety, i.e. the sacrifice of our bodies that is living, holy, acceptable to God.
       1. ***“spiritual service” (ASV); “spiritual worship” (ESV); “spiritual service of worship” (NASB); “intelligent service” (YLT)***
       2. *Logikos* – rational (STRONG); pertaining to “the reasoning faculty, reasonable, rational,” (VINE)
          1. Not that it is merely intellectual, or rational.
          2. **1 Peter 2:2** – ***“desire the pure milk of the word (logikos)” – “spiritual milk” (ESV)***
          3. Speaking of that which is abstract (inward, not tangible) rather than material (carnal). (**cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14** – not by fleshly thinking, but through spiritual – what can’t be seen, but what God reveals)
          4. THAYER – “(2) pertaining to the reason or logic, (2a) spiritual, pertaining to the soul”
             1. ***NEB (New English Bible), ‘the worship offered by mind and heart.’***
             2. ***“the law of my mind…with the mind I myself serve the law of God” (Romans 7:23, 25)*** – God’s law appeals to the mind, the spirit.
       3. What is true, spiritual service to God? – the presentation of our lives on earth, our time in the body, to God in holy service to Him.
          1. Spiritual service is not unrevealed, speculative, or merely a matter of sincerity.
          2. **The spiritual service of the Christian is the full surrender of our bodies to the control of Christ in service of God as a response to the grace of God (cf. Galatians 2:20).**
11. The Execution of the Exhortation
12. Not Conformed to this World
    1. **World** – *aiōn* – properly, an age (STRONG); signifies a period of indefinite duration, or time viewed in relation to what takes place in the period. (VINE)
       1. What the characterization of the age based on what transpires in it.
       2. Namely, sin, disobedience, direction of Satan – **Ephesians 2:2** ***(“course,”*** aiōn)
       3. “We speak of ‘the times,’ attaching to the word an ethical signification; or, still more to the point, ‘the age,’ ‘the spirit of the age,’ ‘all the floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world.’” (R.C. Trench)
    2. **Conformed** – *syschēmatizō*; to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern (STRONG)
       1. “This verb has more especial reference to that which is transitory, changeable, unstable…Suschematizo could not be used of inward transformation.” (VINE)
       2. “Schematizo refers to the act of an individual assuming an outward expression that does not come from within him, nor is it representative of his inner heart life.” (WUEST)
    3. The way in which we offer to God the spiritual service of a living sacrifice will not be accomplished in outwardly acting like the world, while seeking to hold on to the spiritual blessings of Christ:
       1. **1 Corinthians 6:11** – that was your past, but now you are washed, sanctified, justified – act like it.
       2. **Ephesians 4:17** – no longer walk as Gentiles.
       3. **1 Peter 4:3** – enough of past lifetime.
       4. **Galatians 5:24-25** – if we live in the Spirit (inward), walk in the Spirit (outward).
13. Transformed by Renewing of Your Mind
    1. Transformed – *metamorphoo*; “to change into another form” (VINE)
       1. ***“transfigured”*** – **Matthew 17:2**
       2. “metamorphoomai, which speaks of the act of a person changing his outward expression from that which he has to a different one, an expression which comes from and is representative of his inner being.” (WUEST)
       3. With Jesus, His outward appearance changed to reflect who He truly is – Deity.
       4. ***“bodies a living sacrifice”*** – the way we conduct ourselves in the body in daily life must be radically changed/different.
          1. Must reflect who we truly are (inwardly) as children of God (**cf. 1 John 3:1-2).**
    2. Renewing of the mind – *anakainōsis*; renovation (STRONG)
       1. **The dramatically different way of living does not occur without inward renovation of our mind.**
       2. **Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13** – renewing of the HS through His revelation of the will of God.
       3. **2 Corinthians 4:16** – daily renewal.
       4. **Ephesians 4:20-24** – learned, heard, taught truth, renewed, transformed (***“put on the new man…created according to God”***).
    3. The spiritual service of presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is a transformation which occurs through the renovation of our mind to house and reflect the will of God. When we are filled with God’s will and are convicted, our lives will be lived in the dramatically different way which serves as the living sacrifice to God.
14. Proving the Will of God
    1. God’s will is not what is tested, and proved as good, acceptable, and perfect.
    2. **God’s will IS good, acceptable, and perfect, and the proving (testing) is of all matters we face in life, as to whether they are a part of God’s will.**
       1. Context – the inward renewal is by the word of God, so that you can live the transformed life in contrast to the world. As you live, you are able to prove what the will of God for you is because you have allowed it into your heart.
       2. ***“that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (ESV)***
       3. Parallel – **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – we test things (not the will of God) by comparing to God’s will to find whether they are “holy, acceptable to God, [a part of] your reasonable service.”
    3. This is how the living sacrifice is executed. We determine what God wills for us based on our mind being renewed by His word. In this way we offer a sacrifice that is acceptable to Him.

**Conclusion**

1. All that God has done for us in Christ should motivate us to surrender our entire self to God as a sacrifice of a life devoted to His will.
2. If this is our true motivation, then we will not fall in with the world, but we will seek to change our mind by God’s will so that we can live for Him in the way He desires.