**Are You a Living Sacrifice**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Romans 12:1-8**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 5, 2025**

**Romans 12:1-8**

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

Saints, and so, because of God’s great compassion on both Jews and Gentiles in offering salvation through Christ, Paul urges believers to please God in their daily lives.

The evil world is full of temptation and sin. Paul helps believers understand how they can live for God.

Paul had already told the Roman believers to offer themselves to God so that their whole bodies would be for his glory.

Our bodies are all we have to offer—we live in our bodies. The body enfolds our emotions, our mind, our thoughts, our desires, and our plans.

Thus, the body represents the total person; it is the instrument by which all our service is given to God. In order to live for God, we must give him all that we are, represented by our body.

If our body is at God’s disposal, he will have our free time, our pleasures, and all our behavior. When sacrificing an animal according to God’s law, a priest would kill the animal, cut it in pieces, and place it on the altar.

Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important.

**1 Samuel 15:22**

Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

**Psalm 40:6**

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Saints, God wants us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices—daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal, and trusting him to guide us (see Hebrews.

**Hebrews 13:15-16**

15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

**1 Peter 2:5**

you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Saints, our new life is a thank-offering to God. Offering our body as a living and holy sacrifice to be completely set apart for God and dedicated to his service.

**2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Saints, when believers offer their entire self to God, a change will happen in their relation to the world.

Christians are called to a different lifestyle than what the world offers with its behavior and customs, which are usually selfish and often corrupting.

**Galatians 1:4**

who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father…

**1 Peter 1:14**

as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance…

Christians are to live as citizens of a future world. There will be pressure to conform, to continue living according to the script written by the world, but believers are forbidden to give in to that pressure.

But refusing to conform to this world’s values must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs—it must go to the transforming of the way we think.

Believers are to experience a complete transformation from the inside out. And the change must begin in the mind, where all thoughts and actions begin.

Much of the work is done by God’s Spirit in us, and the tool most frequently used is God’s word.

As we memorize and meditate upon God’s word, our way of thinking changes. Our minds become first informed, and then conformed to the pattern of God, the pattern for which we were originally designed.

When believers have had their minds transformed and are becoming more like Christ, they will know what God wants and they will want to do it for it is good, pleasing to God, and perfect for them.

**3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

Saints, Paul is here speaking as God’s messenger, an apostle. The authority he was about to exercise was not his own by right, but was an evidence of God’s grace.

He warned the believers that inflated pride has no place in a believer’s life. This is especially significant in light of Paul’s teaching up to this point in his letter.

The Jews are not better than the Gentiles; the Gentiles are not better than the Jews.

Rather, all are dependent on God’s mercy for their salvation, thus there is no room for pride. Any such pride would undermine the oneness vital to the growth of the church.

Each believer’s personal appraisal ought to be honest. Neither an inflated ego nor a deflated person is free to obey.

God has given each believer a measure of faith with which to serve him. This expression refers to the spiritual capacity and/or power given to each person to carry out his or her function in the church.

The concept of measuring your value is described further where Paul uses the terminology “different gifts, according to the grace given us.”

It is God’s discernment, not ours, that gives out the measure for service. Whatever we have in the way of natural abilities or spiritual gifts—all should be used with humility for building up the body of Christ.

If we are proud, we cannot exercise our faith and gifts to benefit others.

And if we consider ourselves worthless, we also withhold what God intended to deliver to others through us.

**4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,**

Saints, replacing the national identity that had once set apart God’s people, Paul gives a new picture of the identity of God’s redeemed people.

They are like a body. Each of us has one body, but it has many parts—eyes, ears, fingers, toes, blood vessels, muscles. And each part has a special function.

Not every part of our body can see; not every part hears. But all must work together if the body is going to move and act correctly.

**1 Corinthians 12:12**

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

Just as our physical bodies are composed of many parts, so Christ’s body is made up of many believers who all perform different work.

And as our bodies cannot be taken apart, so we belong to each other. The members work together to make the body work. When it is not done, the body suffers.

**5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.**

Saints, we must be humble and recognize our partnership in the body of Christ. Only then can our gifts be used effectively, and only then can we appreciate others’ gifts.

God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must:

**1. Realize that all gifts and abilities come from God**

**2. Understand that not everyone has the same gifts nor all the gifts**

**3. Know who we are and what we do best**

**4. Dedicate our gifts to God’s service and not to our personal success**

**5. be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God’s service.**

**6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;**

Saints, the emphasis here is that God has given these abilities to his people.

These are God’s gifts to his church, and he gives faith and power as he wills. Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

The gifts Paul mentions in this list fall into two categories: speaking and serving. Gifts are given that God’s grace may be expressed.

Words speak to our hearts and minds of God’s grace; acts of service show that grace in action.

This list is not exhaustive; there are many gifts, most of them hidden from the public—those “behind the scenes” words and actions that serve and magnify God.

The ability to prophesy, according to the New Testament, is not always predicting the future.

Often it means effectively communicating God’s messages

**1 Corinthians 12:12**

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

These gifts are not for having, but for using. In other words, God’s gifts fulfill their value as they are utilized for the benefit of others.

**7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;**

Saints, if a person has the gift of serving, then he or she should use it where and when it is needed, and use it to its best and fullest capacity.

The same goes for the other gifts that Paul mentions: teaching, encouraging, sharing, leading, showing kindness. Whatever gift a believer has, he or she should faithfully use it in gratitude to God.

By focusing on the application of the gifts, Paul is removing the tendency toward unhealthy self-congratulation in the discovery of gifts.

If we are busy using our gifts, we will be less taken up with concerns over status and power. Genuine service controls pride.

This list of gifts is representative, not exhaustive. It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts.

**8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

Saints, an assertive prophet usually would not make a good counselor, and a generous giver might fail as a leader.

When people identify their own gifts and their unique combination of gifts (this list is far from complete), they should then discover how they can use their gifts to build up Christ’s body, the church.

At the same time, they should realize that one or two gifts can’t do all the work of the church.

Believers should be thankful for each other, thankful that others have gifts that are completely different. In the church, believers’ strengths and weaknesses can balance each other.

Some people’s abilities compensate for other people’s deficiencies. Together all believers can build Christ’s church. But all these gifts will be worthless if they are used begrudgingly out of duty, or if they are exercised without love.

**1 Corinthians 13:1-4**

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray! Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**