

Romans 12:1-2

- 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.

“A Living Sacrifice” **Romans 12:1-2**

INTRO:

Notice how the Apostle Paul makes the transition from the doctrinal portion of his epistle to the applicational part. The Apostle Paul exhorted us to make a total commitment to the Lord which is ***“our reasonable service.”*** This is no small request, and yet, it is also not an unwarranted one. As we explore Paul’s exhortation, we will see it in terms of three divisions.

I. The Reason for our Sacrifice

II. The Nature of our Sacrifice

III. The Character of our Sacrifice

I. The Reason for Our Sacrifice

A. ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.”*** Thus, he laid the foundation for what he is going to require of us.

1. We must not forget that the Apostle Paul was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He had apostolic authority to command things of us in our walk with the Lord. In several places in the Word of God, he did command. Here interestingly enough, he exhorted or appealed to us. The Greek word rendered ***“I beseech you”*** means ***“to appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage.”*** While Paul could have commanded us to do this, he chose instead to urge and encourage us to respond to God in this way.

2. Why? He probably exhorted us because of what he asked us to do, ***“present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy and well pleasing to God.”*** A sacrifice cannot be commanded. It must come from the depths of one’s heart. A sacrifice must be a willing act of love and obedience to God. Paul did not command us, he exhorts us and urges us to respond in this way.

3. A sacrifice also is a total commitment. The people who heard this letter read knew this well. Whether they were Jewish or Gentile, in their religious practices they all brought their animal sacrifice to the temple. The lamb or goat which was their sacrifice never came back with them. The sacrifice was totally committed to the God you worshipped. It is the same here. The Apostle Paul exhorted us to make a total commitment to the Lord Jesus. He wanted us to give our bodies as a sacrifice to the Lord. Put it on the altar and give it to Him. Giving ourselves to the Lord is not to save us, but rather is an act of thanksgiving for what He has done for us.

B. Why should we do this? A total commitment of presenting our bodies as a sacrifice to the Lord is a huge step. Surely, the Apostle Paul gives us a reason to take such a step. He does. Listen again to how he begins his exhortation.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a sacrifice.”

1. The word translated ***“mercies”*** here is not the usual Greek word for mercy. This word speaks of more of God’s compassion for us when we were helpless. Paul meant those mercies God provided for us through faith in Christ.

2. God saw us when we were disgusting sinners, the very epitome of that which He hates, and He set His love upon us. He sent the Lord Jesus, His Son, His only Son, whom He loved, to die in our place. He made Him sin for us, and credited our Lord’s righteousness to our account because we believed. We should want to respond by giving to God something. The only gift that is a worthy response to God’s great gift to us is ourselves. The question is: because God loved us so much, how will we respond?

II. The Nature of our Sacrifice

A. Paul applied our salvation blessings by exhorting us to give our bodies as a thank offering to the Lord. The Apostle then described exactly what kind of sacrifice it must be.

B. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable to God.”

The first quality Paul described our bodily sacrifice as ***“living.”*** Every sacrifice that was brought to the temple to be given to God died. God does not want us to lie down on the altar and be killed. He desires us be a sacrifice given just as completely and irrevocably as the others, but alive and living out our giving to Him.

C. Not only must the sacrifice be living, it must be holy. The concept of holiness is that of dedication to another. We are to be entirely God’s and set apart for His use.

1. God wants us to seek to live apart from sin. While we cannot fully do this in this present age, we should be able to grow in personal holiness and sin less and less.

2. God wants us to be committed to Him and set apart to His use. We are to be at His beck and call. As the song says, *“Whatever He wants for me/ His will, His will I must know/ Where ever He wants to send me/ His will, His will/ I must go/ If He but speaks I’ll obey at His voice/ I’ve already decided His will is my choice/ Whatever He wants for me/ His will, His will I must do!”* This is no small thing that Paul is asking of us!

D. If we give ourselves as a sacrifice, living and holy, we will discover it will be **“well pleasing”** to God. God will accept our sacrifice and it will please Him.

1. We get a little of the flavor of this statement if we remember how God carefully laid out the details He required of the priests as they offered sacrifices to Him. If they followed the directions and did the sacrifice properly, it was acceptable and well pleasing to God.

2. The Apostle Paul assures us, if we will do this, God will accept our sacrifice and He will be well pleased with us!

III. The Character of our Sacrifice

A. We may be tempted to respond to Paul and say something like, *“Wow, Paul, this seems like an extreme response. God doesn’t want much does He?”* The truth is, God wants all that we are. This is not an extreme response at all, Paul wrote. ***“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.”***

B. Many newer translations like to translate this, your **“spiritual act of worship.”** It could be translated in this way. Certainly, any sacrifice that we bring is an act of worship.

1. **“Logikos”** can mean **“spiritual or reasonable, logical.”** The word for service is one reserved for service in the Temple. It can be our worship or our serving God.

2. Our sacrifice is the reasonable response to all that God has done for us. It is also our logical act of worship to God!

C. Paul confronted us with a choice. Are we willing to do this? This cannot be compelled by apostolic fiat. It must be the action of our grateful hearts. In view of all He did for us, have we given Him our bodies as sacrifices, living, holy and well pleasing to Him? If not, perhaps we should do that today.

Romans 6:18–19

“And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

Hymn #201 Grace Greater Than Our Sin