

Living Sacrifices

Romans 12:1-2

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the soldier at a VFW dinner, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10750.
 - 1. Sacrifice has always been a way of life for the people of God.
 - a. Under the Old Testament, worshipers brought animals who were sacrificed to God — They had to sacrifice financially to make those offerings — they had either to buy the animals or take them from their own flocks.
 - b. Today, the people of God are called upon to sacrifice much:
 - 1) We are to sacrifice our pleasures — “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).
 - 2) We are to sacrifice of our finances — “Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity” (2 Cor. 9:7).
 - 3) We are to sacrifice our family in that we are to love God more — “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:26).
 - 4) We are to sacrifice everything near and dear to us for the cause of Christ.
 - 2. The text we have chosen for this morning speaks of sacrifice. It speaks of offering ourselves as living sacrifices to God.
- B. Let us study this text and learn about offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices.

THE LIVING SACRIFICE OF OUR BODY, v. 1

- A. Paul exhorts these brethren by the mercies of God.
 - 1. As an aged brother, Paul encourages these Christians to give their bodies to the service of God.
 - a. This term was used of exhorting troops who were about to go into battle.
 - b. Just as those soldiers needed a prep talk when they were about to lay down their lives, Paul encourages these Christians to give up what is wrong in their life.
 - 2. He exhorts them to become living sacrifices by the mercies of God.
 - a. Mercy refers to the compassion, pity, arising from the miserable state of one in need.
 - b. The plural used here probably is intended to cause these Christians to recall specific cases where God has demonstrated his mercy in their lives.
 - c. In what ways has he demonstrated mercy in your life?
 - d. Paul is going to tell these Christians to present their bodies as a living sacrifice — we should present our bodies as a living sacrifice in light of what good things God has done in our lives.
- B. These Christians are to present their bodies as a living sacrifice.
 - 1. The term “body” here refers to the physical body.
 - a. Some in early Christianity claimed that what the body did had no consequence on the soul; all one should concern himself with. they said, was what the spirit did.
 - b. Paul says, “That isn’t so. What the body does is important.”
 - 2. Bodies are to present as a living sacrifice.
 - a. The term “present” carries connotations of presenting a sacrifice, such as an animal; just as animals were brought into God’s presence to be offered to God, the Christian is to offer his body.
 - b. But, our bodies are to be “living” sacrifices.
 - 1) The living sacrifices of our bodies stands in stark contrast to the dead sacrifices the Old Testament saints offered.
 - 2) “Living” also implies that we are to offer our bodies continually to God — they are always to be his.
- C. In what ways can we offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God?
 - 1. Sexuality clearly comes to mind.
 - a. We need to give our sexuality over to the Lord to allow him to determine the proper use of our bodies.
 - b. Scripture teaches clearly that God has established sexual norms he expects his children to follow.
 - 1) “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).
 - 2) “This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality” (1 Thess. 4:3).

2. But, this has reference to much more than sexuality- every way we use our bodies needs to be for God's glory, not our own.
 - a. Our feet dare not carry us where sin is rampant or where God will not be honored — John Newton's life rule was this: "I make it a rule of Christian duty never to go to a place where there is not room for my Master as well as myself."
 - b. Our tongue dare not curse God or man, dare not lie.
 - c. Our ears and our eyes dare not listen to music, watch TV programming incompatible with God's standards.
 - d. Only when every part of our body is under God's control can we say that we have offered ourselves as a living sacrifice to God.
- D. Our bodies are to be holy and acceptable to God — we are to separate our bodies from God and seek to make them acceptable to the Most High.
- E. This is our reasonable service.
 1. The term "reasonable" refers to that pertaining to reason or rationality. The idea is that we are to make a rational decision to turn our bodies over to God; we are to reason and give our bodies to him.
 2. This is our service to God.
- F. Have you given your body over to God? Does he control every part of your body?

THE LIVING SACRIFICE OF OUR MIND, v. 2

- A. We are not to be conformed to this world.
 1. "Conformed" means to form or mold an object alter something.
 - a. The term refers to the adoption or imitation of a pose.
 - b. The idea is that you take a piece of clay and a mold, and you make the clay look exactly like the mold.
 2. We are not to be molded or formed after the world.
 - a. Many Christians are molded alter this world — they talk like the world, they dress as the world, they work as the world, they play as the world. Sometimes it is difficult to tell a Christian from a non-Christian.
 - b. But, God calls upon us to be different.
 - 1) "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).
 - 2) "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (Jn. 17:16).
- B. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.
 1. To "transform" means to change the inward reality.
 - a. The passive here is a theological passive, and means something like, "Let yourselves be transformed by God."
 - b. Just how does God transform the Christian?
 - 1) He does so through Scripture.
 - a) "He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (Js. 1:25).
 - b) As we examine Scripture and obey Scripture, we become different, better, people.
 - 2) He does so through our brethren.
 - a) "Exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).
 - b) As our brethren encourage us to do right, we become different, better, people.
 2. The transformation is to take place in our mind — our thinking power.
 - a. The reason our minds need to be transformed is quite obvious — sin begins in our minds.
 - a) "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Mt. 15:19).
 - b) We need to be careful what our minds think, because sin originates there; we need to transform our mind.
 - b. Are you in the process of transforming your mind?

CONCLUSION

- A. If we transform our minds, we will be able to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
 1. "Prove" means to put to the test, examine.
 2. The idea is that if we clean our minds of all the garbage with which the world fills it we will be better able to appreciate/understand the will of God.
 3. How well are you able to understand God's will? How clear is your mind?
- B. Do you need to begin your transformation this morning?