

Romans 12:1~2, part 1 (Emphasis on verse 1)

Illustration of 2 Children... One minds, one does not.

Was the one who didn't respond to my counsel any better off for knowing what I said?

Do you think it was because they didn't hear me or understand what I was saying? No...not at all. I believe that if you asked them, they could tell you exactly what I said. Let me ask you, Do you think "knowing what I said" helped them?

P: Nor will "knowing what the gospel says" without heeding it...

At the heart of the gospel message, is the call to surrender one's life to Christ!

Its not enough simply to KNOW what the gospel says...there must be the doing. Faith requires action. To hear the claims of the gospel, to know what Jesus Christ has done, and yet continue to live your life to your own will and ways will bring about a greater judgment. According to scripture, there will be different degrees of Judgment, based on the knowledge one has. (Mt 11:20~24) (Luke 12:47~48) To have knowledge of something, to know what is right, and yet continue to do otherwise makes the offense even more the worse...*does it not?*

Romans 12:1 marks a transitional point in this letter... It is here that Paul moves from the "**Theological**" aspects of the "*Gospel of Christ*," to the "**Practical**" aspects of the gospel. This epistle could be separated into two parts, Romans 1~11 Paul explains the Theological implications of the gospel, the message of Christ, while 12~16 Paul makes Practical application. Going from "*knowing*" what the teachings of the gospel, to the "*doing*" of the gospel. Up to this point, Paul has been explaining or revealing God's plan of redemption for all of mankind. Explaining what righteousness is, and what it is not. The purpose of the Law, and the role it plays in the message of Christ. How that man is totally depraved, spiritually dead. Paul has explained how God uses the Law to render men guilty before God, then points them to Christ as the only remedy. Paul has explained Israel's, role and purpose in bringing all of this to pass, making God's plan of salvation possible to all men. Having explained everything that God has DONE...he now moves to what men must DO given that knowledge...

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

The preaching of the gospel is not to simply share information...but in hopes that the hearers will come to the "*saving knowledge*" of Christ, that they would heed the message and repent by turning to Christ as Lord! God has done everything necessary for man's salvation; there is only one thing that stands in the way of the salvation of any man/woman on earth...**repentance**.

Repentance in that we would no longer live our lives in our own will and to our own ways and yield our lives to Christ, because the gospel declares that all who do not will perish! *He that saves his life shall lose it*...right? But there's another side to that, ...*he that loses his life for my sake shall find it*... It is impossible to live out TWO SEPARATE LIVES in one body...right? Thus the hope of the gospel is that we would be overwhelmed by God's love for us, resulting in surrendering our life to Jesus Christ as Lord.

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It's important to understand on what basis Paul calls us to this service...I call you to "*lay down your lives to God*" based on the "**the mercies of God**." I ask you to do this, on the basis of knowing what God has done for you. The point is, not out of obligation, not out of guild, or commandment... But rather out of

love and appreciation to God for what He has done! That is how God has chosen to save fallen man, not by our works in the Law, but by His Love. The love manifested on the cross was done in hopes of turning our hearts towards God.

Paul says...Knowing that Christ died for you...live for Him!

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The “call” is to “present our bodies” **as a living sacrifice** to God... Herein lies the very essence of the Christian faith, the heart of what it means to live the Christian life. Look very closely, the call of God **is not** that we “LIVE OUR LIVES FOR HIM...” But rather **WE SACRIFICE OUR LIVES** for Him. The call is to die to SELF...to place SELF on the altar, rendering our bodies unto God as a place for Him to dwell, as a vessel to carry out His Will and His purposes in our life!

...give your bodies to God...as a living sacrifice... The call of the gospel is not that we would “live better,” “live to a certain set of rules,” “be faithful to keep certain religious rites,” but rather that we would present “our bodies” **as “an offering”** to God, to be used for His purposes! Offering to God our “*very existence!*” To render unto God the very life we’ve been given on this earth, using it to serve His purposes. That we would give to God, our feet, our legs, our arms, our hands, our fingers, our eyes, our ears, our mouth, our tongue, our minds...that we would offer everything to Him, to be used for His purposes! We are to offer to God the strength in these hands, the strength that are in these feet, the sight that is in these eyes, the hearing that is in these ears, the speaking ability of the mouth and tongue, all the various faculties of our bodies, to be used for His purposes!

My life is to be a “living sacrifice” to Him... No longer using *this body* **for my own will and purposes**, but rather, lay them down on the altar, giving to God a empty vessel in which to dwell, and use to carry out His Will and purposes.

That is almost an *unimaginable request* in the church age we are in today... That’s a strange gospel to many today; they’re not hearing that. The “*Full Gospel*” is not being proclaimed. A false gospel that degrades the Grace of God, to something that teaches men can live how they want, and God will overlook it. A gospel that requires nothing of man. I’ll agree, as far as attaining salvation on my own, I realize I never could, it is impossible. Christ did everything necessary for my salvation. But there is one thing I must DO...and that is to receive it, by “*Surrendering my life*” to Him! This watered down gospel today does not call for a surrender of ones’ life to Christ as Lord...only Savior! And I’m been called of God and sent by God to tell you, that kind of gospel can’t save you! It’s a lie from the enemy. It is by making Him Lord, that He becomes our Savior! And the only way to truly make Him Lord, is for me to get off the throne of my life, thus presenting to him my life!

As I said, this is almost an *unimaginable request* in the church in the time we are in! But even so, that is what Paul is calling for us to do. And to make sure that no one suggest that he is asking “*too much*” of us, Paul adds...*which is your reasonable service*...The word reasonable can be translated two ways, according which translation you have. *The actual Greek rendering is* $\forall\lambda\omicron\gamma\text{-}\iota\kappa\text{-}\omicron\sigma\epsilon\forall$ from which we get our word “*logical*.” Paul is saying, when you consider what God has done for us, (by the mercies of God), in offering up His Son for us, knowing that Christ laid down His life for us...the only “*rational*” response, the only “*logical*” response is to lay down our life for Him.

Wouldn’t that simply be the “*Logical*” response? I mean, doesn’t that just make sense?

The point here is, that what Paul is “*Calling*” us to do, is not some “*Extreme Measure of Service*.” This is not something that should be considered “*too difficult*” or “*too demanding*.” But rather, it is the “*least*” we can do. The way it is written, doesn’t even consider whether or not one will be obedient to it, *it*

assumes that ALL who know this, will respond in this manner. That knowing what Christ did for us, the only logical, rational response would be to *lay down ones life in service to Him*.

...which is *your reasonable service*... In can also be translated "***your spiritual service***" or ***worship***. Paul declares, that to do this is simply the "*True Spiritual Worship of God*." To live our lives for our self, then come in to offer God our service on Sundays wouldn't be true worship would it? To offer God our lives is simply the way its supposed to be, it's only logical, that's what worshipping God is all about.

Here in this one statement, Paul sums up what the "*True Worship of God*" is.

The construction of Paul's statement here, is in that of the metaphoric language of the "*Offering of a sacrifice*," something very familiar to his brethren, the Jews. The *offering of sacrifices* was the heart of Jewish worship. Every facet of Jewish worship consisted of some kind of "*offering*," whether it was that of animals, grain, bread, oils, whatever, worship always involved some kind of offering that was presented on the altar to God by the one who had come to worship.

"*Holy and Acceptable unto God*" were familiar terms in the Jewish mind, for they speak of the condition and quality of the sacrifice being offered. Holy has the literal meaning of to set apart for a specific purpose. Under the Old Covenant, the worshiper was to "*set aside*" a sacrificial animal that was to be without spot or blemish, for the purpose of offering it to God. It was to be their best, the choice animal, the finest of the flock. That physical purity of the animal symbolized the spiritual and moral purity that God required of the offerer himself.

Listen... The *quality and condition* of the *offering* was a reflection of the heart of the one bringing the offering.

There are examples of this throughout the scripture...not only animals, but all things...

(N.T.) The Widow's Mite...

(N.T.) Mary's anointing of Jesus feet with the alabaster box of oil...

The *Acts of Worship* reflected the hearts of the individuals...

(Malachi 1:6~14) We see an example of this in Malachi's day... The worship in Malachi's day was one of utter corruption, utterly disgusting. They were offering the *blind*, the *lame* and the *sick* to the Lord. The tragedy was, they has sunken so low, that they saw them as acceptable. They couldn't understand why the Lord was so upset. "*How have we despised your name?*" "*How have we polluted the altar?*" It's a sad day when God has to declare Himself, that "*I am a great King*" as He does here. Israel's sacrifices (worship) were saying just the opposite. He closes out that chapter by declaring that the "*heathen*" FEAR HIM more than Israel did!

I will close by saying...those words are frightening to me, because they may well be used to describe our day! Brethren, God is not interested or impressed by "*religious activity*." God is seeking worshipers, true worshipers. People who have been touched by the Grace of God, being overwhelmed by such a love, respond by offering God their very life here on earth to be used of Him for His Will and Purposes.

Beloved, we call this the "*Worship Service*," and I guess in one sense it is. We come together to praise Him in song and testimony. But the real purpose of coming together is to listen to Gods word, in efforts to greater understand His Will and Purpose as revealed in scripture, then allowing them to become carried out in us. Reality is, this is not "*Worship Service*," that begins when we leave this building...

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