

Romans 12

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Date: 10 November 2013

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] I'm going to worship God now, singing from Psalm 1A. Sing Psalms. Psalm 1A, the tune is Creator. It's on page 1, Psalm 1A, page 1.

Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners' paths or sit with those who mock. Instead, he finds God's holy law, his joy and great delight. He makes the precept of the Lord his study day and night. He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream, and in due season yields its fruit, its leaves are always green.

Not so the wicked. They are like the chaff that's blown away. They will not stand when judgment comes or with a righteous day. It is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go, but those who live an evil life, the Lord will overthrow.

And remember, we're now standing to sing for all the singings. Blessed is the one who turns away. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk, who does not stand in sinners' paths or sit with those who mock.

[1 : 39] Instead, he finds God's holy law, his joy and great delight.

He makes the precepts of the Lord his study day and night.

He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream, and in due season yields its fruit, its leaves are always green.

Not so the wicked. They are like the chaff that's blown away.

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[3 : 07] It is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go, But those who live an evil life, the Lord will overthrow.

Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, O God, as we gather together this morning, we're very aware that we are in the presence of the Lord, the God who is our creator, the God who is our upholder, the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

And we pray, Lord, as we worship today, that there will be a sense of awe, a sense of the glory and majesty of God within our own heart, that we may have a little glimpse, a little understanding, a further awareness of who God is, and also our responsibilities before the living and true God.

We are brought before so many insights in the truth as to the greatness of your holy name. We cannot work these things out in and of ourselves, but we give thanks for the word, because this word is a living word.

It's alive. It speaks to us. It brings us to see and to understand and to lay hold upon things that we could never, ever work out by ourselves. And so we give thanks for the word, a word which makes us wise to salvation, a word which sets out before us a rule of life, a way of conduct.

[5 : 02] It sets out before us the will of God for our lives. And we pray, O Lord, that there will be a willingness within our own heart to conform to your will. We have to confess, Lord, that so often there is an unwillingness, that we have to confess, Lord, even at times that there might be a suspicion that if we cling completely and altogether to the will of God, that somehow we will lose out.

Help us, Lord, to be delivered from that thinking so that we will see that God's ways and plans and purposes are great. And so we ask, O Lord, today that we might follow the Lord with all our heart. We pray then to bless us, bless our worship, and may we hear what God the Lord will speak, that we will open, that our ears will be open to the truth. We give thanks, Lord, for the spread of the gospel throughout this world.

And we give thanks, Lord, for this day, the Lord's day that is set aside, a day where people are able to gather together to worship. And it's a great way to begin a week where we come to God's house and seek to honour the living and true God and to meet with the Lord.

And we pray today that it will be a day of meeting for us. We ask, Lord, to bless each person according to their own particular needs today. Pray for those who are going through difficult times and sad times.

[6 : 25] Pray, Lord, for those who are remembering loved ones who have passed away. And we know, Lord, how difficult and sore that is. And we pray for the healing and the helping and the restoration that you alone can bring into broken and bruised hearts.

We pray, Lord, for those who are going through difficult times with their health, those who have received bad news, those who are waiting treatment or undergoing treatment.

We pray, Lord, for those who are undergoing surgery or have undergone. We pray, Lord, for those who are laid aside. We pray for so many within our own congregation and amongst our office bearers.

We commit to your care and keeping. We ask, O Lord, to bless us. And we pray to bless us as a nation. And we pray in particular today as a day where we remember those who gave their lives for the freedom and for the democracy of this country.

And we know that as we reflect and look back, we realize enormous human cost where so many give the ultimate sacrifice that we may have the freedom and the democracy that we have today.

[7 : 46] And help us, Lord, always to appreciate what we have, that we know that there are other places in this world and where there is a rule and an authority that is dictatorial and is vicious and is angry and unfair and where the rule is such that people live in absolute fear and terror in their lives and particularly the freedom that is enjoyed in the gospel.

We pray that we might always have that freedom. We pray then to bless us and to keep us ever focused upon yourself. And we can never think upon those who have paid the ultimate price, the ultimate sacrifice without thinking of the ultimate sacrifice of all, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave us life in order that we may have life.

Help us to appreciate more and more the wonder of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ. We pray, Lord, to bless the nations of this world that are hurting. Remember those in the Philippines and Philippines where there's been just this fearful devastation with winds that seem to have been greater than ever recorded before, frightening it must have been.

And we pray for those who are trying to pick up the pieces, those whose hearts are broken and lives are broken and homes are broken. We pray, O Lord, to help. We ask for continued guidance and grace as we seek to worship.

Open our hearts, we pray. Have mercy on us and take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Just a wee word to the young folk before we sing again.

[9 : 40] Remember quite often when I was young, no, I'll start again. quite often when the children were young, I used to put a pound coin or a two pound coin in my hand and put it into a fist and I would say, right, if you open my hand, you get it.

It's yours. And they would try every means. There would be pulling and squeezing and tickling and then not doing anything for a while and then all of a sudden trying.

And obviously because they were wee and I was bigger, that was fine and they would never be able to get it. And then in the end I would just give it to them.

But I probably wouldn't do that if I was beside the world's strongest man or something and say, right, that's you because you know that just in a second your hand would be open. And the thing is in life that we're never able really to hold on to the things that often we want to.

There are lots of things that we really want to hold. Things that are dear to us and precious to us. And we always want to hold these things close to us. But you know the Bible tells us something absolutely wonderful.

[10 : 52] It tells us something about Jesus. And you know what it tells us? That if we give our heart to Jesus and give our life to Jesus that he takes us in his hand.

And you know what he says that nobody, nobody can open his hand to take you out. I think that's one of the most wonderful things that we could ever hear.

It means that it doesn't matter what you or I might do if we are locked in the hand of Jesus even if sometimes sadly we might forget a wee bit about him or we might wander away a wee bit from him. He's still got a hold of us even sometimes when we might do things that we shouldn't do still got us and you know at no point will he ever say see that person he or she has done so many things that are wrong that's it I'm just going to open my hand and let him go let her go.

He never ever ever ever does that. He promises that once he takes somebody into his hand that nobody no force no power on earth or even from hell is able to open his hand and take a person out.

[12:14] And I cannot think of anything that's more wonderful to know than to know you are safe in the hand of Jesus. So if anybody here today doesn't know Jesus as their own Lord who has never asked Jesus into their heart you ask Jesus to come into your heart today and when Jesus comes into your heart he will take you in his hand never ever ever to let you go.

That's wonderful. We're going to sing again from Psalm 25 from the Scottish Psalter this time Psalm number 25 and verses 4 to 10 the tune is Dennis Psalm 25 verses 4 to 10 and that's on page 231 Show me thy ways O Lord thy paths so teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth therein my teacher be for thou art God that dost to me salvation send and I upon thee all the day expecting do attend thy tender mercies Lord I pray thee to remember and loving kindnesses for they have been of old forever my sins and faults of youth do thou O Lord forget after thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great God good and upright is the way healed sinners show the meek in judgment he will guide and make his path to know the whole paths of the

Lord are truth and mercy sure to those that do his covenant keep and testimonies pure 4 to 10 Psalm 25 show me thy ways O Lord show me thy ways O Lord thy paths O teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth then my teacher be for the Lord brought the dust to me salvation send and I upon thee all the day expecting to attend thy tender mercies Lord I pray thee to remember one loving kind and bless is for thee the wind of all forever my sins and falls of you do thou O Lord forget after thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great

God God good and upright is love with sinners show the sinners shown the me in judgment he will guide and make his path to know know the whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure to those that do his covenant keep and testimony is pure let's turn now to the

[17:12] Paul's letter to the Romans all being well Luke will follow on in John's Gospel this evening and the Romans is true his John's Gospel this evening but this morning we're going to look at Romans and chapter 12 Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 12 at the beginning I appeal to you therefore brothers by the men and to you and to the who to to to to to to to to to to to what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For us in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function. So we, though many, are one body in

Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them, if prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal. Be fervent in spirit.

Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink, for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Amen, and may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. I'm going to turn now to Psalm 3 and sing Psalms. Psalm 3. It's on page 3. We're going to sing the whole Psalm. The tune is Rockingham. Psalm 3, page 3. O Lord, how many are my foes? How many up against me rise?

They all are saying now of me in vain he and his God relies. But you are my protector, Lord. You are a shield around me spread. My glory comes from you alone, the one who raises up my head.

When to the Lord I lift my voice in face of those who hate me still, the Lord will hear my cry to him and answer from his holy hill. I settle down and sleep in peace. I wake in God's upholding hand. I will not fear ten thousand foes who circling round against me stand. Arise, O Lord, save me, my

God. Deliver for your mercy's sake.

[22 : 07] Strike all my enemies on the jaw. The wicked teeth in pieces break. The Lord alone deliverance sends. No other source of help have we. Therefore upon your people all may your eternal blessing be.

Psalms 3, the whole Psalm. O Lord, how many are my foes? O Lord, how many are my foes? O Lord, how many are my foes?

How many are my foes? O Lord, how many are my foes? They all are saying now of me, When men hear on his God rely.

But you are my protector, Lord. You will a shield around me spread.

My glory comes from you alone, the one who raises up my head.

[23 : 45] When to the Lord I lift my voice in face of those who hate me still, the Lord will hear my cry to him and answer from his holy hill.

I settle down and sleep in peace. I wake in God's appalling hand.

I will not fear ten thousand foes, who circling round against me stand.

Arise, O Lord, save me, my God. Deliver for your mercy's sake.

Strike all my enemies, all the joy. The wicked's teeth in pieces break.

[25 : 40] The Lord alone deliverance ends. No other source of help am we.

Therefore, upon your people all, may your eternal blessing be.

Let's turn again to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. I'm reading at the beginning.

I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[27 : 09] Now, as Paul writes this, you notice that he writes to brothers, well, it's brothers and sisters, and that is, of course, deliberate because in the church, as he wrote, he was very aware of tensions that existed between the Jew and the non-Jew.

And he is making people aware that in Christ they are all one. And that's something we've always got to remember, that the body of Christ is an international community, and that all who are in Christ are ultimately our brothers and sisters.

We will all be in glory together, and we should always have that awareness as we live out our days in this world, that we belong to one another. I think it's one of the things that I think Satan always tries to do is to divide, to divide homes, to divide families, to divide churches, to divide communities. But God has made us for fellowship, for interaction, for community. Not for isolation, but for community. And it's one of the great lessons that's taught in the Bible, the importance of community, of fellowship, of togetherness.

So Paul is writing this, and he was always using that expression of brothers and sisters to make them aware, look, you're family, you're one. Okay, people have different backgrounds.

[28 : 35] We come at things with different ideas. We have our own unique personalities, different outlooks in life. But at the end of the day, we're still one in Christ Jesus.

We are brothers and sisters. And again, Paul begins this chapter by saying, I appeal to you, therefore. Now, whenever we find this word, therefore, it is speaking about, or whatever it is saying here, ties in with what has gone before.

And of course, Paul is talking about, in a sense, everything that's gone before. Because there have been great theological truths argued out and developed.

And Paul now comes to the practical aspects of things. In fact, this is the fourth time that Paul uses this word, therefore.

Back in chapter 3, there is the therefore of condemnation, where the whole world is lying under the condemnation of God. But, of course, he then goes on to highlight what Christ has done.

[29 : 41] In chapter 5, the beginning of chapter 5, there's the therefore of justification. Then in chapter 8, there is the therefore of assurance. And here we have the therefore, as it were, of commitment and dedication.

Therefore, because of all that has gone before. Now, Paul says here, therefore, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the message of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Now, a lot of people assume that when it says bodies, say that it really means just our passion, our identity, our personality, our soul, and all that it is.

And while it is true, I believe, that it captures the idea of presenting our entire being, I think Paul is deliberately using this word body.

Because he was writing at a time when Greek philosophy, Greek philosophy, which was very powerful then, looked on the body as a hindrance. The body was something that brought down the mind.

[30 : 48] And of course, remember, the Greeks were extraordinarily learned people. It was a time of great intellectual prowess and knowledge. But they often looked on the body as a hindrance.

A lot of the philosophers saw this as something that degraded. And something of that thought came in to the church, where people looked on the body as something, the actual physical body, as something that was sinful, something to be despised, something that was really a hindrance in any way to spiritual development and growth.

So I think that Paul is deliberately using this word body here, present your bodies, yes, your entire being, but yes, your bodies. Because we've got to remember that the body in and of itself is not something that is, well, it is sinful because of the effect of sin.

But the body in and of itself is something, when we go back to originally think of it, it is something that God made and said over it, as he made man and as he made woman, he said over both as he formed and created from the dust of the ground and from the rib where he created and formed, he said, it is very good.

So we've got to remember that as our bodies were formed and made, that God said over them, very good. So that's why we must never say, oh, well, the body is something that's altogether evil.

[32 : 24] But we know that when sin came into the world, that the effect of sin affected everything, and it affected our body, so that our body is now under the force and under the power of sin.

And that is why, as we know, the wages of sin is death. The Lord had said that the day you eat of the fruit, you will surely die. And death has come in, so that death is now something that works within us.

It's one of the sad things that the fall brought in. So we're very aware of that. But the body is something that, as we say, in and of itself is not sinful, although it has been affected by the fall. And God still has a place for the body, because when we die, it's not the end. If the body was something that was absolutely awful and altogether sinful and something that was to be discarded forever, that is exactly what would happen.

There would be no resurrection. But the Lord has seen fit that the salvation that he has won for us governs not just our soul, but governs the entirety of our being, governs our body as well.

[33 : 49] So that our bodies are not going to dissolve, as it were. You know what it says, that the elements will burn up with fervent heat at the end? Well, that's not how it's going to be for our bodies.

Our bodies, we are told, an amazing time is going to come when all the graves will open and when our bodies will be raised from the grave to be reunited with our soul.

It's quite an extraordinary thought, an extraordinary picture. But that's what we're told in the Word of God. That's what is going to happen. And so this governs the full redemption.

And that's why Paul is saying, look, when you become a Christian, the Lord wants your entire being. He wants your body.

In the past, your body was a slave and a servant to sin. Because your body was doing what your mind, what your inclinations, what everything in you wanted to do.

[34 : 56] That's the way it worked. So that you were a servant to sin. Your members were used as servants to sin. That's why Paul, elsewhere he says, now that you become Christians, he says, use these very members in the service of Christ.

So you see that the body, in a sense, is almost, although it's been affected by sin and has come under the power of sin, yet it is still something that we can use for good or for evil.

And that's why Paul is saying, look, I want you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. And that means, very simply, that in all the different things that we use our tongues to confess Christ, to praise Him, to talk to people about Jesus, to witness, we use our arms and our legs to serve Him, to get about, to do things for Him.

We use our ears to hear what He is saying. That's one of the things we're doing as we come to church. We are engaged in the worship. We are listening to what God the Lord will speak.

Our eyes to see, yes, not just to read His Word, but to see the glory of this world in order that we may praise Him, so that in all the different things we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. [36 : 18] And this word, to present, as a sacrifice, it's got the languages like that of the Old Testament, the whole ritual of the sacrificial system.

And you remember that everything in the Old Testament that was brought for sacrifice was put to death. Now, that doesn't mean, of course, that we put our bodies to death, although, to a certain extent, the body of sin has been put to death in our union and in coming to life in Christ.

But this is a perpetual, it is something that happens. When a person is converted, their body, our whole being, all of a sudden, becomes or belongs to Christ.

We're told elsewhere, your bodies, your body is no longer your own. We're told it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies belong to Jesus.

And that's what we're told, you're presented as a living sacrifice. It's something that happens, but it is something that's ongoing. I suppose it's like a wedding.

[37 : 28] When you get married, the day of your wedding, you, two people come together. And it's a once and for all, but it is a continued, ongoing, where the two are actually one.

You don't belong to yourself anymore. You belong to the other person and vice versa. There's this unique bond. And there's this exclusive bond with the bodies.

And so it is for the believer, that the believer now, you belong to Jesus. This is what we have here.

And so the Christian has given himself to Christ because Christ has given himself to us.

And so it's presenting our bodies. Now, this is the exhortation. This is what Scripture is saying to us. But I'm sure all of us here today know that there are times maybe we don't.

Yes, we have, and as we say, and at once and for all, and we continue to try to do and we continue to say to the Lord, Lord, help me this day, guide me this day.

[38 : 37] Please use me in your service and so on. But there are other times we still keep our bodies, as it were, for ourselves. Sometimes we give in to sin and sometimes we listen and we look and we do and we go and we involve ourselves in things that are wrong.

So it doesn't mean that when we present our bodies that never again are our bodies used in sin.

We're all too aware that that is not the case. But then Paul goes on to say, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Do not be conformed to this world. Now, to be conformed to the world is absolutely natural to us.

And if you're here today and you're not a believer, you are conformed to this world.

Maybe, maybe God's working in you and you're being drawn a wee bit away. But we are, by nature, as we are, without Jesus Christ, we are so conformed to the world, we're not aware of it.

It's just, it's as natural to us as breathing the air as we go about. It's only when we become a Christian that we become aware of such a thing as the world.

[40 : 07] Now, we're not talking about the world in the sense of the hills and the seas and all these things, the natural world that we see. This idea of the world is what we might term the age, the spirit of the age, the atmosphere of the world that we live in with the world's aims and the world's standards and the world's ambitions, the world's philosophies.

Because we've got to remember that these things by and large are not focused upon God and are not built upon God. They are built upon self.

They are built upon other things other than God. And that is why we've always got to be careful.

That doesn't mean that we opt out of the world and that we say, well, that's me, that's me, I'm no longer, I'm finished with the world.

I'm a Christian and I'm going to go somewhere else. We can't. We're in this world. We engage in this world. We work in this world. But it's bringing this very philosophy of Christ to where we are. That's how we live. That's how the gospel is lived where we are. But we're not to be sucked in by the spirit of the age and enveloped by the spirit of the age.

[41 : 26] It was one of the things the Lord was always warning Israel when they were ready to cross the Jordan into the promised land. The Lord was saying to them, you must not do as they do.

Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws. And you notice, one of the problems that hounded Israel all throughout their history was that very thing.

That they tried to marry following the Lord with the ways and the practices of the nations round about. And they were looking at certain things and they would say, oh, I like that.

That's appealing. I think I'll take this on board. I'll take that on board. And they would marry these things with the worship of God. So that the worship of God was a mixture of the true worship and of idol worship.

But it looked appealing and certainly it appealed to the lusts within our own heart. And so this is one of the great problems that Israel faced is that it was a broken society, a broken spiritual community. [42 : 40] And far too often, once you begin to go down that road, the worship of God was being pushed further and further and further away. and then they would move into idolatry. It always began with a merging, a mixing of other practices in with the worship of God.

But it always then ended up that the worship of God was pushed out and it would be the worship of idols and such like. And the Lord was saying, you know, these practices, this particular lifestyle, this particular way of thinking, it's appealing to the human heart without the Lord.

But it's going to destroy you. And of course, that was part of Israel's problem all down through the years. But then it says, as we say here, do not be conformed to this world.

Now, some people will say, well, that's a very negative. Could it not be put in a more positive way? Now, of course, we know that many of the Lord's exhortations are positive, but some of them are negative.

Even in Eden, there was a negative command. The Lord said, you can eat of everything in the garden except, but do not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[44 : 01] So, there was negativity there. When you look at the Ten Commandments that God has given us, is it eight of them what begins with a negative?

You shall not do this. You shall not do that. You shall not do the next thing. So, we're going to see that often as the Lord reveals His will to us, it comes by way of negativity in the sense that we are already moving in a particular direction and God is saying, no, you're not to do that.

That is wrong. And so, this is what we have here. And when a person becomes a Christian, that's one of the things that happens.

There is a turning. Remember, faith and repentance come together. Faith is looking to the Lord and repentance is looking to the Lord, but repentance involves turning away.

Remember the church in Thessalonica when they started to believe. It tells us that they turned from their idols to the Word of God.

[45 : 13] So, there's the negativity that we might term about repentance. It's a turning away. It's a deliberate movement away from something. And it is a turning to.

And so, I think this is what's caught up here. This idea that we have here. So, we have to ask ourselves as we look at our lives, what rules, what dominates my thinking?

Now, I know that there are days you can answer that in a different way because you might be here today as a Christian and you might be living really close to the Lord and you find that the Lord is taking up your thinking and you're so conscious that in your work that you're aware of the Lord's hand on you for good and even throughout the course of the day you're constantly speaking to Him, asking Him for help and for guidance, for forgiveness, different things, and you find that your thinking is colored by the Word.

Even in your dealings with people, the way you speak to people, the way you react to situations, and that, the Christian influence is governing your speech, it's governing your heart, it's governing your thinking, your mind, your mind, as we say, as it says here, is being renewed day by day.

There's this, this is affecting your day-to-day living. But maybe today it's not like that. Maybe as a Christian you're saying, oh, you know, I've drifted a bit and I'm afraid the world, the whole spirit of the age is becoming very attractive to me.

[46 : 53] The way I look out on things. Now, I'm not saying for one moment, don't get me wrong, this doesn't mean that the Christian is never to strive to do well or to be ambitious or to try and progress in their work or in their, not at all.

In fact, the Lord requires of us. It's one of the great things of our industry and of our work that there should be. We ought to do our very best.

That's not what we're talking about here. And there is no conflict between the spirit of the age and healthy ambition. That is not what we're talking about. But what is it that fills my thing?

Where are all my aims and my ambitions centered? What is it that I want to do? How do I react to people? How do I speak to people? How are my relationships at work and at all my different things?

And if we've drifted away from the Lord, we know. We know through these very things that it's not the way it should be.

[48 : 02] We come into church and we feel cold and we say to ourselves, oh, you know, I haven't even prayed this morning. You might come in and you find yourself that you're saying, oh. And you might be here and you're saying, I really have the, well, the Lord is saying, look, it's, as we say, it's this ongoing, as we said, present your bodies and the dead now says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

This is the ongoing sanctification. This is an ongoing process. And that means that every day can be a new day. That today, if things have gone a wee bit spiritually, ski-whiff, that you can try and say to the Lord, right, Lord, I'm sorry.

I've been caught up, been caught up with myself and I've taken you off the throne in my heart and other things have taken over and other people and other things and I've pushed you down, Lord. please come back. Sometimes it takes a wee while to get back. But coming to this realization that we're not where we are, that's the first step.

And then we need God's grace to enable us to go forward day by day, having this constantly being transformed. In fact, a paraphrased version of the Bible puts it this way, it's lovely, don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God remould your minds from within.

[49 : 43] It's not good. I'll read that again. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God remould your minds from within.

So we see we're not to be conformed to the spirit of this age, but we are to have our minds, the renewing of our minds.

And you see that if we are conformed to the world as Christians, it's going to have an incredibly deadening impact and effect upon us.

you know, you might be able, I might be able to talk to other people, we might be able to talk the talk, we might be able to talk the talk as Christians, but you know, if our minds are not being transformed and if we are not presenting our bodies as living sacrifice, our impact for good will be minimal.

As I say, we can talk and people may think, ah, it's doing very well, but unless there is this happening within our heart, unless there is this being renewed more and more to being like Christ, then the impact upon others is not going to be effective.

[51 : 04] And the greatest impact is obviously the more Christ-like a person becomes. And I'm sure you remember that the people who have created the greatest impression upon your life, that there was something about them that touched your life, were people who lived really close to the Lord.

They've left a lingering impression upon you for good. And we can all think of people like that. They left that lingering impression for good because they lived close to the Lord.

But you'll notice it's a sacrifice. That's what it says. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Now, a sacrifice always costs something.

If it doesn't cost, there's no sacrifice in it. We talk about giving sacrificially. That means we give that wee bit extra. To do something sacrificially means it's going to cost us a wee bit in effort or in time or in labor.

It's not going to be easy. And that's really what it's saying here. Present your bodies a living sacrifice. That doesn't mean that it's going to be the easiest thing in the world to do.

[52 : 23] It means that there's going to be struggles. It means that there's going to be battles. And you know, part of the problem is this. Because it goes on to say that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God.

What is the will of God? What is good and acceptable and perfect? Part of our unbelief, part of our lack of trust of God is this.

That we sometimes doubt that His will, His entire will for our life is really good. We think that somehow that we could do it a little better.

And we say to the Lord, Lord, I'll give you, I'll give you Sunday, and I'll give you certain parts of my life, and Lord, I'll have my quiet time, and there's times, Lord, I'll really watch what I'm saying with people, and there's sections of your life, and you'll say, right, Lord, I'll sort this and that, but you know, there's other wee bits, and I want to be in charge, and I want to control this.

This is my part. I've said this before. And why do we do that? Why do we want to keep a bit for ourselves? Because we don't trust the Lord properly.

[53 : 40] We somehow think that He's not going to work it out the way that we want, that we could work it out better. And far too often, this lack of trust manifests itself in us.

And if we're brutally honest, and if we search into our heart, we have to say, Lord, I'm afraid this is true. Yes, I've given myself to you. You are Lord of my life, but there are times and places and wee things here that I want to be in control of.

And the Lord is saying, no, discover, just discover how good and acceptable my will is for you. Give yourself completely body, mind, and soul to me.

That's really what the Lord is saying. And in this, with regard to renewing our mind, and with this, we finish. We have to be very careful what goes on within our mind.

As a person thinks in his heart, so is he. Your mind will influence very much the kind of person you become. What goes on in your mind? And our minds aren't sort of empty vacuums.

[54 : 52] We can't just say, right, oh, look at this, I've been thinking about all these, my mind is full of resentment and bitterness, full of all kinds of different forms of lusts, and this obsessive desire for power, and this and that and the next thing.

And then you become and you say, oh, I've got to get rid of that. Well, it's not enough just to say, right, Lord, help me not to think about these things. We have to replace what's there with something else because we can't just leave our mind blankety-blank.

We've got to, our minds have to be thinking on something. And that is why Paul, writing in Philippians, says, think upon these things. Let's remember what he says.

Fill your mind with the things that are true, the things that are honorable, the things that are pure, the things that are just, the things that are lovely, the things that are commendable.

Think upon these things. Then he goes on to say that the peace of God will govern, will guard your heart.

[56 : 09] And if we live in this way, it will have a profound effect upon the way we operate, the way we live, the way we deal with people, in all our relationships, and all the different challenges that we face.

We're human, we make mistakes, but we've got to go back and sort our mistakes by going to the Lord, asking for forgiveness. And we're to go to him saying, Lord, please help me.

This isn't the easiest thing I'm asked to do, but I believe it's the best thing. Help me every day to present, to go on presenting myself as a living sacrifice.

And Lord, renew my mind every day. Let us pray. Thank you.