

# An All-in Sacrifice

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we can turn back to our reading in Romans 12, we're going to look this evening at the beginning of this chapter, verse 1 and 2. Romans 12, you can read again verse 1 and 2.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, 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.

We're continuing our theme of sacrifice that we've had last night and this morning already, and coming to think more tonight about how that shows itself in our lives going forward from today.

As we acknowledge today, we have much to give thanks for and what the Lord has done for us, but it doesn't end now. We take the Lord with us into the week ahead and in all our days ahead, seeking to live for him.

[ 1 : 13 ] But how are we living for him? We saw this morning as we were looking in Leviticus chapter 16 in the Day of Atonement that the people were together in that sacrifice.

It was not an individual sacrifice. The congregation gave that sacrifice as one seeking the Lord's blessing, seeking the forgiveness of their sin.

And that's the idea I want to carry on this evening, that idea of congregation, that idea of being one together. Because when we think about church, that is what church is.

What is your idea of what church is? It's been defined maybe in different ways. Someone put it like this. Church can be broadly defined as a community of believers who gather together to worship God, study the Bible, and practice their faith.

The church is considered the body of Christ with Jesus as its head. You see there some of the themes that you read here in Romans 12. The idea of many members, one body with Christ as the head.

[ 2 : 27 ] But we think too of what it is for believers, what it is for the people of God. We gather together to worship God, to study his word, but to practice their faith.

In other words, to live out our faith. But how does that look? How do you view church? How do we do church?

Sometimes church can be viewed as an order, a hierarchy, where it's looked at kind of from a top-down idea. But another way of viewing it is that it's a body.

And that's what we have in Romans 12. A body made up of different parts. And the difference can be subtle, but it can make all the difference for us as a congregation of God's people.

Because if we look at it the first way, where there's hierarchy, we end up with a system of, well, there's something for others to do, but not for me.

[ 3 : 32 ] I just go along, and I don't actually maybe feel a part of it. But when we view it as a body, a body with many members, one body, and Christ as its head, then you can begin to realize that everybody has a part to play.

That everybody is involved, from the youngest to the oldest. You look at the sporting world, and there can be people who are to the fore in the sporting world.

For example, you take golf. You may have heard of Rory McIlroy, one of the best golfers in the world at this moment. You hear his name, you maybe automatically know who he is, what he's won. But who's this caddy? Do you know his name? Not many people would. This caddy's called Harry Diamond. But he's not to the fore, and yet he's just as important.

He's there to help and advise Rory McIlroy. He's making his way around the course to encourage him, to keep him focused. He's just as important. You think of Formula One.

[ 4 : 45 ] You think of Lando Norris, the current world champion. His name can be to the fore. But who are all his engineers? Who's his team in the background?

Maybe you know none of their names, but there are many. And they're there, and without that team, without his team of engineers, and everybody involved in the background, he wouldn't be a world champion.

And so you see, it's important that, although you can see that there are people sometimes to the fore, to be successful is about everyone being involved, everyone being together.

And that's the same when it comes to church as well. There can be those people who have specific roles. You'll know these roles when I mention them.

The minister, the elders, the deacons, the clerks, the treasurer, church officer, the presenters. You know, they all have a title and a role, but it doesn't mean they have a greater sense of importance.

[ 5 : 46 ] It doesn't mean that they are more important than anybody else. Because the church is the people coming together, one in Christ. Yes, we are individuals with different roles to play, but we recognize that everyone has a part to play.

And as we've been looking this weekend at the theme of sacrifice, we've seen it in Leviticus. And last night we were looking at the chapter 2, where we saw the grain offering, and it was that sense of a sacrifice of adoration, a worship given to God.

Then this morning we were looking at chapter 16 in Leviticus, where we saw the day of atonement, an atoning sacrifice made for us, especially as we see it in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, we're continuing that idea of sacrifice this evening, but seeing how it applies to ourselves. And here in verse 1 and 2 of Romans is where we find it.

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

[ 7 : 00 ] To present your bodies as a living sacrifice. When you look at Romans, you see that much of the teaching up until this point, up to chapter 11, a lot of it has been about teaching about the depth of what the Lord has done.

But what does that lead to? What is our remembrance of the Lord's death today? Where does it take us tonight?

Where does it take us tomorrow? How do we live out our lives in light of that? Romans has a great sense of giving us knowledge up to this point.

Paul's great teaching in Romans. He said, you can have all the knowledge, but now he's saying, therefore, in light of all this knowledge, how are we, what are you going to do? How are you going to live?

It is to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. To live for the Lord. Somebody wants to pray like this, knowledge is having the facts, but wisdom is applying those facts to your life.

[ 8 : 13 ] And so we are to apply all that we've looked at over these services this weekend, and again tonight, apply it to us, and ask, how are we going to live?

How are we going to go forward? And there's three things in these verses that I want us to see. Verse 1 and 2 of Romans. First of all, we have the worship of God. So we continue that theme that we had last night.

We see then there is the wisdom of God. This is what we need to live, lives that are sacrificed to God. And then we see finally the will of God that we are to seek as we live in this way.

So the first thing is the wisdom, the worship of God, sorry. And you see that in the first verse. The chapter begins with, therefore, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers.

And so, there's something important here that we are to see. So it's not just a case of, now, well, here's what you are to do. But it's in light of what has been said up to this point.

[ 9 : 21 ] Here is what is important in light of what you've learned. And up to this point, it's been about what God has done for us. What God has done for us.

For example, in Romans 5, verse 6, There's so much teaching in that.

While we were still weak, while we were still in our sin, at the right time, in God's time, Christ died for the ungodly. God was in control of it all.

Even as he gave his son to die for our sin, it was at the right time, God's time, his way. And that's what we've remembered today.

What we've been part of if you were sitting at the Lord's table or if you were observing the Lord's table, remembering the Lord's death until he come. But now we're asking, how are we going to live

going forward from here?

[10:28] How are we going to live going forward? And it's like Paul is here, a survey of what was done. When he says, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, in light of the mercies of God.

Looking at the mercies of God, as we survey the mercies of God, how are we going to go forward? What difference is that going to make in your life? What difference is it going to make in my life?

The hymn writer said, When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died, my riches gain, I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.

Maybe you came here this morning with that pride in your heart, boasting in self, confident in self. But when we survey the cross, the wondrous cross, when we survey all that the Lord has done for us, that pours contempt. That puts our pride down.

[11:32] That humbles us because we realize that we owe everything to him. So it's in light by the mercies of God.

And as you're reading through the book of Romans, you see the mercies of God that are so many. That God's mercies is from eternity and to eternity without beginning and without end.

You see it in his electing his people, his choosing of his people, in his saving of his people, in his transforming of his people, in his justifying of his people, in his keeping of his people.

You see it so many ways as you're reading through Romans. The mercies of God. Even as we think back to Leviticus, you see the mercies of God there, that he didn't give them what their sin deserved.

But there was mercy. There was hope given to them through sacrificing to God. And his mercy is more than we could ever imagine.

[12:39] And so therefore, as Paul is saying here, I appeal to you, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, your spiritual worship, to live for him.

And there's a subtle difference I want you to see here as well between Leviticus and how Paul writes here. When you're looking in Leviticus, we were seeing Moses giving commands, God's commands coming through Moses.

And it was very much a sense of the law. This is what you are to do. You must do this. There is a danger in that where it becomes a sense of legalism.

And we can easily fall into that trap. Well, if we do this, we'll be right. With no idea why we're doing it or how we're doing it.

We're just doing it for the sake of doing it. But as Paul says, he says, I appeal to you. I urge you.

[13:51] I encourage you. It's no less important. But there's a subtle difference. It's to be done in light of the mercies of God.

In light of the grace of God. In recognition of all that has been done. So it's not just a sense of obligation or duty that you present your body as a living sacrifice.

This is what I have to do. It's more, this is what I want to do. This is what I long to do. This is what I love to do. Because of the mercies of God.

Because of all that he has done for me. As we look at the cross. As we see what Christ has done. Does that not lead us to worship? To lead us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

To do all for him. Are we worshipping as we should? What is worship? Well, you see it at the end of chapter 11 in verse 33 to 36.

[15:01] And it's there speaking about to him be glory forever. But at the last verse there, verse 36. It's a sense of giving glory to God.

Giving praise. Giving worship to God. But then as you come into chapter 12, verse 1. This worship requires service.

The worship that he speaks of there, your spiritual worship, is acts of service. Presenting your bodies as living sacrifices is acts of service.

It's very much tied in that idea with the priests in Leviticus, how they were serving God at the altar. We are to be a people who are serving God in our lives.

And presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, it maybe makes you think there must be pain involved in this. Because we've looked at sacrifice last night and this morning.

[16:05] And it so often means death. Dying in sacrifice. Blood is shed. the flesh is burnt. But then you notice the difference here between what Paul is saying here and what we have in the Old Testament.

The difference is that in the Old Testament the people were called to give their sacrifice to give it over to death. But we are to offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice.

So it's ongoing. Now there is that sense of this sacrifice is costly. The sacrifice is painful. There's challenges in it.

It's personal. It's necessary. And all of these things it'll be hard. But we should love to do it in light of the mercies of God.

We are to give ourselves over to Him. Our worship is not just a few hours in here on a Sunday. Our worship goes on as a living sacrifice tomorrow Tuesday Wednesday Thursday every day of the week.

[ 17 : 23 ] We love Him so we are to serve Him. We love Him so we are to live our lives in that way of honouring Him in all that we do.

Our lives are to be a living sacrifice in the sense of our worship goes on day after day. And the second thing we see goes on in the light of the wisdom of God.

Because you look at it here in verse 2 where it says do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. So there's to be a change and to be a living sacrifice we need this change we need this wisdom of God.

Where does your wisdom come from tonight? What are you basing your life upon? What wisdom is it from the world and the thoughts that are around you within this world?

Well how is that working out for you? Are you happy? Are you happy being conformed to the ways of this world?

[ 18 : 41 ] When you're conformed to the ways of the world what does it mean? When you're young there's so much pressure to be conformed to the ways of the world.

To be those who go out for a drink. to be those who take this drug. To be those who turn away from God. You don't need him.

You don't need church. There's all of these ideas that will be thrown at you to be conformed to the ways of the world. But what Paul is saying here is wisdom is found not there.

Do not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. To allow God in. To see the wisdom of God in his word. To see that this is not something for old people or something for a past generation. That this word is for every one of us today and every day.

[ 19 : 48 ] Have you made mistakes? Of course you have. I have. You have. We all have. But have we learned from our mistakes?

Or are we continuing to be conformed in the ways of the world? As we go on in life we gain experience in life in many different ways.

And experience comes in what we have done. In what we've maybe achieved but also sometimes in what we've failed in as well. Wisdom comes from learning from what we have done badly often. From what we know is wrong. But if we keep on doing it that's not wisdom. That's what Paul is saying do not be conformed to this world.

Do not carry on in this way. Instead find your wisdom with God. As Proverbs 3 says verse 5 to 7 trust in the Lord with all your heart.

[ 20 : 49 ] Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

It is a challenge to us. Where are we finding our wisdom? We're to find our wisdom in God and in his word and to search after that.

Be wise not in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. We live in a world that is always trying to shape us.

To mold us. That's what the word there conformed means. It's talking about molding us. A mold is something that can mass produce the same thing again and again and again.

And that is what the world does. It molds us. It shapes us into our sin over and over and over again because it leads us away from God.

[ 21 : 56 ] It molds us into thinking in a particular way that goes against everything that God is saying. But we are to be different. We are to present our lives as living sacrifices, not being conformed to this world, but by being transformed, transformed by the renewal of your minds.

So don't allow the world to squeeze you into a particular way, a particular way of living that is apart from him, but instead come and see the importance of the word of God and be transformed by it.

in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul uses that image again of being transformed. How does renewal take place?

We are all with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. How do you get transformed?

you gaze longingly on the loveliness of Christ, on the beauty of Christ.

[ 23 : 13 ] You make him your study. You make him your delight. You make him that point of worship constantly going forward day by day loving him.

And the word here for transformed is about a complete change taking place. It's a word used for when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

That transformation takes place the same creature but in a very different way being seen. The caterpillar goes into the cocoon and it emerges then as a butterfly.

Completely transformed. And we have that image of God in us. because we are made in his image. But we so often shun that.

We don't live for him. But we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. By allowing Christ into our hearts. As Paul again says in Philippians have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself nothing.

[ 24 : 31 ] Taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

He gave himself and we are to be transformed by him and for him. By surrendering ourselves to God by filling our mind with the word of God by finding the wisdom of God.

That is how we are to live as a people who are living presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice through the wisdom of God.

So we have the worship of God we have the wisdom of God and it leads there to the third thing that we have the will of God that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.

When it comes to the will of God where do you start? What do you think of the will of God? Are you saying to yourself well I want to know the will of God in my life?

[ 25 : 56 ] Well this is point number three but it's probably the place where most would start but what you find is that when there is no worship when there is no seeking the wisdom of God then we cannot really know the will of God because the more we worship God aright the more we are unable to know the wisdom of God the more we will see the will of God in our lives.

Too often maybe our worship is like a car that's misfiring. If you've ever driven a car and you know there's something wrong with the engine it starts sputtering and just stalling now and again you know it's not right.

There's a misfire in it there's something wrong it needs to be fixed. That's very often maybe the way our worship is. It's sputtering it's misfiring it's not running as it should and instead of worship taking us where we're meant to be we're breaking down somewhere along the way but when our worship is right it leads us in the right way it's like the car that is running smoothly we're making good progress we're going along the way and when our worship is right it leads us into the will of God and seeking after the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect all of these things that we see working out when we are living a life right with God but what is your prayer when it comes to the will of God we were just talking briefly in the table in the manse earlier on how when it comes to the will of God sometimes our prayer could be along the lines of let my will be done instead of Lord let your will be done too often we may come to

God saying this is what I want you to do instead of Lord what will you have me to do and presenting our lives as a living sacrifice it's not coming to God saying this is what I'll do for you but it's to be a sense of what you want me to do for you show me your will show me your ways but when our worship is right we find that we fall into the will of God more readily and we see the will of God as a precious thing although it can be hard at times the will of God for us in the places that he takes us in the situations in personal circumstances in all of these ways the will of God can be hard but yet when you are in the will of God and you know that you are there with him with you it is precious because anywhere else would not be right so have you come in your life to that place where you are able to say take my life and let it be consecrated

Lord to thee take my life take my all take everything and let it be consecrated let it be given to you let it be yours Lord to do as you please that is what it means to give our bodies as a living sacrifice

[ 30 : 50 ] God God we surrender ourselves to the will of God or else we suffer or else we are going in our own wisdom and that is not how we are to live a life that's a living sacrifice to God we also have to see that the will of God is perfect somebody put it like this nothing we could add to God's plan would improve it when he reveals his will to us we need to realize that God sees the end of the matter before the matter begins he knows the path we will take he knows the obstacles and valleys we will pass through as we go he knows where the provisions are that he has already placed along the way his plan cannot be improved upon but it must be followed for there to be victory and blessing we can be in no better place than the perfect will of

God for our lives there is nothing better than to be in the will of God and to find ourselves in the will of God is to worship God aright and to seek his wisdom and then these other things will fall into place the will of God that is good and acceptable and perfect and we will be content when we are with him because out of God's will is an awful place to be away from God is an awful place to be that's what we were thinking of this morning with the scapegoat our sins are taken into the wilderness what we deserve that away from God but as we worship as we seek his wisdom as we look to his will we find a

God who is with us a God who never leaves us or forsakes us that was a hope they had in Leviticus that as they worshipped God as they offered up their sacrifice that God would be in the midst to bless what of ourselves this evening as we come away as a congregation of God's people are we seeing that we are members of one body with Christ as the head and are we seeking to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to him in light of his mercies in light of all that he has done for us how are we going from here this evening will we not go in that way the sacrifice that he has made for us should lead for us to give an all in sacrifice for him that we would go on in his strength that we would go forward seeking his blessing worshipping our right living by his wisdom not conformed to the ways of this world but transformed and seeking his will which is good and acceptable and perfect let us pray

Lord our gracious God we do thank you that you are a God who is with us at all times you are one who never leaves or forsakes his people though you can rebuke us Lord you do not cast us away and we thank you Lord that you give us your word you give us your truth you give it for our instruction for our knowledge of who you are but you give it for our living as well and how we are to live for you and by of the mercies that you have shown to us may you enrich us through all of these things may you build us up may you go with us in all the days ahead that we would know your peace upon us we ask it all with the forgiveness of our sin in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude by singing to

God's praise in Psalm 85 sing psalm's version on page 113 we're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 7 in times past Lord you showed favour to your own beloved land the prosperity of Jacob you restored by your strong hand you forgave your people's trespass you were pleased their sins to hide you withdrew all their displeasure from your wrath you turned aside we can reflect these words in light of what we were looking at this morning the way the Lord forgives and hides sin but then we come into verse 4 God our Saviour now restore us from us turn away your rage will your anger burn against us will it last from age to age will you not again revive mercy your salvation grant anew that these words would take us forward as well looking to

[ 36 : 41 ] God to restore us to bless us to revive us in all of our ways psalm 85 verse 1 to 7 we stand to sing to God's praise!

Amen!

that we may rejoice in you.

Show us, Lord, your cup and mercy, your salvation grant anew.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with a benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

[ 38 : 58 ] Amen.