

Transformed through Faith # 41

Romans 12: 1-2

Up until this point, Paul has laid a solid foundation for salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone as the sole means of salvation. He has presented his case, offering irrefutable evidence that would be impossible to ignore or debate in regard to salvation. Having spent his time dealing with the doctrines of salvation, Paul now changes his focus. He knew the eternal importance of salvation, and yet he also realized the salvation experience was just the beginning of what should be a fruitful and fulfilling journey with the Lord. His focus for the remaining chapters in Romans is our Christian conduct and walk with the Lord.

I am convinced of the importance of these passages in our modern day. Our churches are filled with immature believers, those who profess saving faith in Christ, but have not grown significantly in Him. I sense a culture within the modern church that seems content to simply be saved by grace with no real desire for growth or to be used of the Lord. Salvation is essential, but we must understand as Paul did that it is just the beginning of the process. Along with our salvation, the Lord desires us to live sanctified lives, walking with Him and serving in ministry.

As we begin this final section of Romans, I want to discuss the [aspirations](#) Paul speaks of as we consider the thought: [Transformed through Faith](#).

I. The Believer's Consecration (1) – [I 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.](#) These are familiar verses to us. You might remember the miniseries I preached from these two verses. Through them Paul speaks volumes regarding the consecrated, committed lives we are to live. We discover:

A. The Expectation – [I beseech you therefore, brethren...](#)We immediately sense the urgency and expectation in Paul's voice, speaking to the believer, the brethren. The word beseech means "*to urge, beg, or implore.*" Paul was sincere in this admonition and he wanted the reader to sense his sincerity. He wasn't offering words of advice for mere consideration; he offered words of wisdom which he fully expected the believer to heed. He knew the value of a right relationship with Christ and wanted them to understand the importance as well.

- We will further discuss the expectations Paul conveyed in a moment, but we too must understand the urgency of our service and commitment to the Lord. I fear few really grasp the significance of our relationship with Christ and the eternal consequences involved. Our relationship with Christ ought to be the focal point of our lives. Many limit their relationship with

Christ and service with Him to church services. We must realize: church isn't a place we visit, or something we do; it is who we are! We are the church of Christ, His body, and with that comes responsibilities and expectations.

B. The Preparation (1) – *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...* Paul knew this journey with the Lord would require much more than physical abilities and desires. Before he reveals what they must do in order to please the Lord, he reveals the way in which they will have the ability to accomplish such a great task. Their strength would come through the mercies of God. The Lord had made provision for their salvation and He would provide all they needed to serve Him as well. Within themselves, this would be an impossibility; but through the mercies and help of the Lord, they could walk in a way that pleased the Lord while serving Him.

- I will admit that living for the Lord and serving Him can be overwhelming. Even though we have been saved by His grace, we remain in a body of flesh. Our Christian journey is a constant battle to overcome the flesh while seeking to please the Lord. God has asked us to do the impossible, humanly speaking, but He has just what we need to overcome through Him. Praise from others or personal satisfaction may motivate for a while, but we will need the mercies of God to endure the struggles we face and remain committed to the Lord.

C. The Submission (1) – *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice...* After revealing the preparation necessary to meet the expectations associated with living for the Lord, Paul spoke of our submission to the Lord. As believers, we are expected to present our bodies living sacrifices unto the Lord. Quite literally, we are expected to place our bodies at the disposal of the Lord, offering them for His use as He sees fit. We surrender our will in complete submission to His divine will.

- Had that been all Paul said, our submission would have been much easier. He further states we are to present ourselves a living sacrifice. Now we understand the concept of sacrifice. This typically involves death, an offering of something upon the altar to God. The Lord doesn't desire a physical sacrifice, but a living sacrifice. In essence, He expects us to offer ourselves completely to Him, while dying out to the lusts and desires of the flesh. Consider the thoughts of Dr. Alan Carr in regard to this verse:

- 1. A living sacrifice means that we are to be on the altar wherever we are. Regardless of the geographical surroundings, we are to remember that this body and all it is belongs to God. There is never an instant in life when we are out of His view or free to live as we please.*
- 2. A living sacrifice means a constant, continuous sacrifice. This is not something we do from time to time. But we are to offer this body up to the Lord and never ask for it back again!*

3. *A living sacrifice means that the body sacrifices its own desires for those of God. To be a living sacrifice will require that the body does not live for the world, the flesh or the devil, but that everything the body does is held to the guidelines of the Word of God.*
4. *A living sacrifice means that the body is devoted to the task of serving God. This means that we are to lay down the ambitions and desires of the body and commit ourselves to doing nothing but that which God bids us to do! We are to be His vessels through which He can live and work in this world.*ⁱ

D. The Demonstration (1) – *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...* As we present ourselves a living sacrifice unto the Lord, we are to do so in a manner pleasing unto Him. We are to live holy lives, revealing the change wrought in our lives through grace, which is acceptable before the Lord. Living a holy life reveals we are to “*live a separated life unto the Lord, consecrated before Him.*” Being acceptable before God speaks of “*living in a way that pleases and satisfies the Lord.*” In essence, our lives are to be lived in light of God’s desire and will instead of our own. We ought to be more concerned with pleasing the Lord than pleasing ourselves or those around us. We did not provide for our redemption and the world has offered nothing of value regarding our eternal existence and sanctification before God. We must make the Lord our priority in life, period.

- All of this goes hand in hand, working together within our lives. Through the strength received by the mercies of God, we offer ourselves living sacrifices unto Him. As we do so, we demonstrate a life that is totally surrendered to His divine will and purpose. Such behavior and way of life is pleasing unto the Lord. I fail my precious Lord daily, but I have a genuine desire to please Him with the life I live!

E. The Obligation (1) – *I 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.* Paul knew some would read these words and reject them outright, viewing them as impossible or ridiculous. Paul declares this is not only expected, it is quite possible. This is well within reason. It is our reasonable service unto the Lord. The word **reasonable** comes from the Greek word from which we get our word “logic.” The word **service** speaks of “*sacred service unto the Lord.*” It has the idea of “*the work of the priests within the temple, offering service and worship unto the Lord.*” So, Paul declares our sacred service and worship unto the Lord is logical within the life of every believer. In fact, this ought to be a natural response from every one who has experienced such amazing grace! He is worthy of our worship and service.

- Do you desire to honor the Lord and please Him? If so, there is no greater way than offering yourself in submission to Him, seeking to please Him in all you do.

II. The Believer's Transformation (2) – *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* A life consecrated before the Lord will result in a complete transformation. Notice:

A. The Challenge (2a) – *And be not conformed to this world.* The word *conformed* is derived from a Greek root word that refers to the outward appearance of a man that changes from day to day, and year to year. It literally means “*to fashion, shape, or mold.*” We are not to be shaped or molded by the world, taking on its appearance over time. We are to resist the lusts and temptations it brings, which alter our appearance and testimony. The believer should not allow the world to force us into the mold it has established.

B. The Change (2b) – *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Rather than being conformed, we are to be transformed. I have shared many times, this is the word from which we get our word metamorphosis. It is often used to refer to the complete and unchangeable transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. After the metamorphosis, there is no noticeable semblance in the two. The butterfly has become an entirely new creation. The believer experiences such a transformation in Christ.

- I would never imply this is possible within ourselves. Clearly it takes the miraculous power of God to transform one who was dead in sin unto one who is eternally alive in Christ. However, we cannot overlook the fact that Paul speaks of the renewing of our minds. We must set our affections on the will and Word of God if we are to overcome conformity to the world. We must fill our thoughts with obedience to Christ revealed in the Scriptures. We must seek to think as Christ did upon earth. *Phil.2:5 – Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Phil.4:8 – Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 1 Peter 4:1 – Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*

C. The Confidence (2c) – *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* Here Paul shares the confident assurance brought about through transformation in Christ. The word *prove* speaks of “*finding and following.*” How many times have we thought: if I could only know God's will for my life? Surely we all have at some point in life. Paul reveals it is possible to know and follow the will of God. The key is complete transformation in Christ. If you want to know His will for your life, commit your life to Him. A life lived in close communion with the Lord will not lack wisdom or direction. We can know what He has planned for us if we will walk with Him!

Conclusion: Paul began his thoughts on Christian life and obedience with a simple, profound message. He knew the struggles we face, and he had discovered how to overcome them. He knew what it was to experience abundant life in Christ. Do you desire a life of transformation in Him? If so, have you believed in Christ by faith for salvation? Are you willing to completely surrender your life to His will? Are you actively seeking to possess and maintain a transformed mind? If you answered yes to each of these questions, you are well on your way to living a life of victory that is pleasing to the Lord. If you answered no to any of them, Jesus is the answer. Seek Him for the need in your life!

ⁱ The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Romans.