

Present Your Bodies A Living Sacrifice

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. – Romans 12:1

The first stanza you were singing about the sweet shepherd reigning and the last verse that Toby read, **And he shall reign over the house of Jacob – Luke 1:33a**. We like to think of Jacob as Israel, but God has no true Israels in life here, as far as a nation is concerned. We all just are sinners, but that's the house Christ reigns over, over the house of Jacob. That one that was a deceiver...was a cheat...and all the other things that he might have been, but when the Lord converts one, them He saves not just from hell. That is from themselves, that is from society, that is from false religion. He saves them. Or I should say, He begins the process of saving us. None of us are saved yet. Hopefully we are being saved.

Well, Romans 12: 1-2. And a young man asked me, yesterday, and another one this morning about what I was on. I didn't tell them much. I said, "I feel like I am the least prepared that I have ever been." That was no exaggeration. That was no play on words. But he immediately said, "Well, if you would have said anything differently than that, I would know that I was not talking to the Barrett that I know." But in all honesty, I started off looking at verse 2 in Romans 12, and then I got to thinking, "Why am I skipping verse 1?" The two must go together. But verse 1, especially the latter part, or the title of today's message, has given me a lot of trouble. I cannot tell you exactly what it is. I can just point you to the one that is the great teacher of all. I want to speak to you from **Romans 12:1b, present your bodies a living sacrifice**. Now would you be kind to join with me as we pray and beseech our Lord for His work in dealing with us today and to the glory of His great name.

Our Father, the one thing that I suppose that we will all depart out of this life having never learned completely and fully experimentally is just what it is to speak with Thee, the Almighty Creator, the Living God, the Sovereign Ruler over this world, all worlds. Ruler over kings, elected officials, demons. Lord, we live in such a busy, busy world with such a busy life that oftentimes when we enter our closet, it is very difficult to get the events of the day just to fade into the far distance and be brought into the reality of me being in Thy presence. I know that we all live, move, and have our being in Thee. I know that we are always in Thy presence, but it is not a reality to us most of the time. Father, if it is pleasing to You, would You lift us as a body of people? Allow us to ascend upward. See Thee on Thy throne, there worship Thee. There pay our gratitude or thanks for all you have done and there looking into the very face of the God-man, the Son of Man, scars on that head and in those hands - a reminder of such a cost that none of us will ever fully know, never. Lord, if You will, enable us to rise just a little this morning above self and the world and there render to Thee thanksgiving and honor and glory and true spiritual worship. Father, I pray that you might help each individual - for it is of no benefit if everyone on the pew seems to rise, and yet one is left stuck here in this old world, and this hour is no different than an hour at work. My Father, give us of thy Spirit a good, clear sounding voice, a good mind, a spiritual mind, and of thy Spirit, Lord, to help the hearers, help the speaker. For Father, what if we gain this world and 10,000 like it and miss heaven? Bless these, Your children. Glorify thy great name and exalt the Blessed Redeemer. We pray in His name. Amen.

Romans 12:1: 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. Present your bodies. But as oft is custom, I beseech, I entreat, I beg, I pray. I pray, you hear me, brethren? And I pray

that by the mercies of God, you can rise to this of presenting your body a living sacrifice. There have been few, probably none, since Christ, with a heart like the great Apostle Paul. And you would have to look at him and you would say, “Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” But Paul talking, “I am the least of all the apostles. I’m not meet to be called an apostle for I persecuted the church. These other apostles did not persecute the church.” But God, in his great mercy, delivered him from such a great judgment, an everlasting torment, and a mind that is continually active throughout eternity - and every word that you have heard, every prayer that has been uttered for you, every time a parent pleaded, or the preacher warned, over, and over, and over; there is not a thing you can do about it. You cannot shut your mind off there like you do here. But continually, having what you heard and what you did go through your mind. And talking about Paul in such a heart, I’ll give you this verse that I cannot expound upon, because I do not understand. When he was writing to his brethren, the Jews, he said, **That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Romans 9:2-3 KJV.** In other words, he is saying, “I would go to hell willingly. I would be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.” I doubt that any of us have such a heart.

Now, writing to these at Rome, he says “I beseech you.” Number one, consider the word “brethren”. That means born of the same family, God’s family, birthed again. Paul, when he writes, every epistle except Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, each epistle was to the church - a church. He would always give credit if anybody had ever made a profession of faith, if they had asked the church to receive them as born again, converted sinners, Paul would credit them. You are my brother. You could add the word sister here as the Amplified does. “I beseech you, my brothers and my sisters, I count you that we both are of the same household of faith.” But even though he would give them due credit for what they had professed, he knew that in every church there was a possibility of some falling away - of some not enduring unto the end, and of some not finishing the race. Yet because of their profession of faith, he called them “my brothers”. You have been faithful for a little while - maybe years. You have been warned. You have made good on the promise of God according to your testimony and I give you credit for what you have said as being honest. “But brethren, I take nothing for granted, not even my own self” would he say. What – **having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Galatians 3:3b.** God saved, you labor, but you’ll never reach perfection here, and only in Him. As Paul counted those at Rome his brothers that were united by profession of faith to the true body of believers, so I trust every one of you here to be my brothers and my sisters - those of you that have made professions of faith. I count you faithful. You have been faithful for years. And yet, I still would ask of you and warn you – do not be deceived. Do not take anything for granted. Always keep in mind that this is a lifetime journey. It is a lifetime battling and warring. I trust that all of you here that say you are my brothers or sisters - I trust you still have your daily reading of this grand old book. I trust that you and your prayer closet are not strangers, and I trust that when you sit down here on these pews, you are not just a casual hearer, or one that must keep up a reputation, but that you place the utmost importance on hearing. If I can get this right, it was in one of Mr. Spurgeon’s books. He was talking about a preacher of preceding generations meeting a man that had heard him preach some 60 years prior. The man said, “I remember distinctly that sermon that I heard and how you warned everybody about not being careless in their hearing. You used the illustration that if you were going to the reading of a will of someone that was wealthy, it would not matter their voice, nor their tone, nor their manner in speaking. All you would be interested in was what was I left in the will.” I trust that you by now are well beyond a rough, stuttering old fellow up here, and that your importance is placed in hearing. Does God have a word for me today? I trust that that is you, and that you gather and you listen quietly within for any stirrings or any movement that might be of the Spirit of God to your soul. I also trust that you are very careful about that third

person in the Godhead. He has to be the one that tells you what the Bible says. He has to be the one that opens your heart and directs you.

Everybody in right fellowship with the Lord is very careful that their hearts come in no malice, no ill will, no jealousy, no backbiting, no envy, strife, or variance. See dear ones, if you have not yet figured this out, your attitude towards others, your very attitude, every dealing that you have with mankind, that could become such a commotion or noisy disturbance in your soul that the Spirit always speaking in that quiet, still, silent voice somewhat - if there is a lot of commotion or disturbance, noise in your soul, He is not here with you and He is not teaching. You must get that straightened out, but I trust that you do not come in like that, but you come in with a heart that you have pleaded with the Lord prior to getting here. Give me a quiet heart, quiet frame of mind, and let me hear from You. But if you have not had that in some time, then trace it back. Could it be one thing that I mentioned here or many that I could have that you have not heard from God in a good while? And with His departure goes your devotion. He will remain away until you deal with whatever it was that caused His departure. Just a word here to all of you that might be sitting with a very sensitive heart. Do not become alarmed when some days you go without the Bible having a good word for you, or some days your closet seems just like a duty and that you got nowhere in it. He does not always leave because of sin. Sometimes He will just leave you alone that you might grow up - that you might mature - that you might be like that little one that does not need mother inside all the time. You get to the point where she is in the house. That is good enough for you. Or she has gone down to another room but will not be gone long. And you grow and you grow, and you learn to live in those days when He is so quiet to you. Do not let it continue. Find out what caused it.

I am sure all of you as Christians can very well testify to this; you can utter words in a closet, but that is the extent of your praying. Your heart was not engaged and there was no communication between heaven and your soul. The same with reading, but I give you credit that you are my family. Your seat is rarely empty. But see, I do not know anyone's heart here. I do not even know mine. Like Jeremiah said, **The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9.** Therefore, I do not know your heart, but until you prove differently, I will have to take your word that you are in fellowship with the Lord. You find Him in reading, you find Him in the closet, and you find Him in His house. But I do not want you, if you have lost that, I do not want you to continue without lively dealings of the Spirit of God with you. Now I want you to turn to 2 Timothy 2:16. There are always those that excuse themselves saying "I have a right to be like this. You do not know what they did to me. You do not know what they said about me." Well, I am not asking you to go up and say I forgive you if someone has actually, truly, sinned against you. I am not saying run out and hug their neck and forgive them, but you forgive them a long time, possibly, before you will ever say to them, "I have forgiven you." God forgave you in Christ when the Lord Jesus died on the cross. And the times that you have made a straying step from the right path, God forgave you in Christ 2,000 years ago. But none of us will know anything about it until we acknowledge our attitude towards others, our dealings with other people - it has all been wrong. And then you will find out that you are forgiven. But please do not tell me that your attitude and your thinking about and towards others, against or for, does not affect you. Now in **2 Timothy 2:16-17a But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker.** Gangrene is what a canker is. Now, we do not hear much about that disease anymore with all the antibiotics that they have discovered and made. But gangrene was when a part of your body, a hand, a foot, a leg, was suffering from inflammation and it became so corrupt that they would have to amputate it lest that disease spread. See, from the skin, it had already gotten to the bone, and they had to amputate that limb, or your life would be over. That is what your attitude towards others can do for you. It can eat as was Hymenaeus and Philetus. What they were talking about, just eating like gangrene. I said, I did not know your heart, much less my own. But our Lord said **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,**

blasphemies Matthew 15:19 KJV. And He said that that is what defiles a man. Not what you take in your body, but that which comes out of your heart by attitude, by language, by your disposition. It has to be right with everybody - all before you get anything from the book, or the closet, or the message. I was reading this week the Sermon on the Mount for I do not know - I might say upwards of a hundred times over my life - but I sat there and it was fresher than ever before and it was as if I was in the congregation as the Lord spoke. They were real. They were beneficial. They were the Redeemer's mouth to me was as clear as it was 2,000 years ago to those that heard that. But it would not have been if my heart in any way against anyone would have been indifference, out of place, wrong thinking. I would have just been reading Matthew 5, 6, and 7 - nothing there.

Though Paul would count them as his brothers, he always would admonish them to strive, to enter in, to complete the race. Then he said, **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God Romans 12:1a.** It matters not how dedicated you are as a follower of the Lord today or your good deeds in the past. It matters not how gifted you might be or the number of talents perhaps the Lord has bestowed upon you. It matters not. Paul and Demas walked together for a long time. Judas walked with the disciples for three years. And yet there was such a difference there. Judas heard everything the disciples heard. But anytime you do any good deed in the service of the Lord, it originated in God and it was performed simply due to the mercy of God extended to you. I do not care how gifted you might be as a speaker, or how gifted you might be in dealing with your fellow human beings. You cannot do anything apart from the mercy of God. Ability to perform, the strength needed, and the door of opportunity open for you to do a good deed, say a right word is all dependent upon the mercy of God. Paul traveled through Asia and God did not let him open his mouth preaching the gospel to anybody in Asia. Now he is going to come back later and he is going to say that everybody that was in Asia heard the word of the Lord. You got those seven churches that Christ writes to in Revelation. But God had his mouth shut. And then when he makes that second missionary journey, God has opened his mouth all because of the mercy of God. You find some people that might be easy to speak with. You find others that you know - after you have uttered the first sentence - there is no need of you pressing on. They do not know what you are talking about. They do not have an interest in what you are talking about. So, if you ever reach folk, just being able to tell them about Christ, what He is for you, what He has done for you, it is all based on the mercy of God. That is not in you by nature. We do not have that ability. Being born again is of the mercy of God. Being devoted in heart, mind, and spirit, is nothing less than the eternal mercies of God.

Paul, the chiefest of the Lord's servants, saw more than any before or after and was taken to the third heaven. The third heaven is the throne of God. Remember in **Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.** Sometimes when the word heaven is used, it is talking about the space above you. How far that goes, we do not know. It is interesting to see the discoveries by these latest telescopes that are out there beyond Earth's atmosphere. I do not know how accurate their predictions might be. Some of them are saying that they are seeing light from a star, a sun 2,000 years ago. It might already be burned out before that light reaches the earth. I have no problem with that. I have no problem with the heavens above us extending on and on and on for God is infinite. And what God created - we do not know what all is beyond our little world because our God is eternal. Our God is infinite. And Paul had to have much mercy bestowed. Or John in Revelation **4:1c, Come up hither.** Paul had been to that uncreated place, the third heaven, and all he saw, all that he ever did and who he was in all of his journeys and all of his preachings, jailhouses, everywhere else, establishing churches, it was due to the mercy of God. Not a bit of difference - I know multitudes are going to take this wrong - multitudes or the number of hearers. There is not a bit of difference in Spurgeon or Whitfield or Wesley, or me, other than the times in which we live, other than the anointings of the Holy Ghost and the bestowal of gifts. I could have been one of them, they could be me. Whoever you are, whatever you

accomplish, it was the mercy of God. Mercy had to arrest Saul of Tarsus. Mercy had to show him the Lord Jesus. Mercy had to gift him and open the doors and enable him to speak all due to the mercy of God. Nothing more, nothing less.

But do not become lazy, folks, because of “Well, God must do it, I cannot”. No, you will be left out if you start neglecting your duties to God. Well back to Romans 12 and the part that I cannot explain. I will just have to tell you the best I can. May God help you and give you understanding even beyond what I know - much difficulties here. **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice Romans 12:1a.** There is a good possibility that the reference there is to Old Testament animals. Clean animals, those without blemish, were brought and sacrificed. And the shedding of their blood was pointing to the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood. You and I are not under the Old Testament. We are living in New Testament days. And no longer do we bring a sacrifice to some altar or to some priest, but the consecration and the devotion is in you. **Present your bodies.** Not, your physical body, it is neither for nor is it against God. It is just housing the real you inside this old frame of flesh and bones. **Present your bodies.** Your body does not think or feel. Now, you are going to say, “Well, if I stick a sharp knife in my hand, I am going to feel that.” Well, you would not if the nerves in your hand had been destroyed. It would not bother you a bit. Blood could flow and you would never know it unless you saw it. The reason you feel is because of nerves sending a message to your brain, “Hey you just stuck a knife in your hand” or “That pot you touched is hot, get it off”. Your body does not feel, it does not like or dislike. But the thoughts that arise in your mind is that fleshly part called your brain. Your feelings and your emotions come from your heart, and your will is operative because of your mind and your feelings. Now, Paul said about all this, **I die daily 1 Cor. 15:31b.** He did not mean his physical body. He was not referring to him in any way torturing that body, unlike Luther that crawled upstairs until his knees and hands were bloody, trying to find forgiveness. No, when Paul said, **present your bodies a living sacrifice,** he is not talking about your old physical nature. I am crucified with Christ. That is Paul that has been Saul all his life. **I am crucified with Christ- Gal 2:20a.** No spikes were in his arms or legs no thorns were on his head. But everything within him that was opposed to God, he said, “I am letting that die. And through the Spirit, I am going to mortify the deeds of the flesh. I am going to put them to death so that nothing has the mastery over me except the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, there are things I would like to do that I will not ever get to do, but it is not really important.” **I am crucified.** I wish I could say that as much as Paul said and knew what he was talking about. **I am crucified.** He said, “Nothing in this world is going to have mastery over me. Nothing – not wife, husband, family, job, or the greatest of my enemies. It is not going to be my master.”

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal 5:24 God never intended on sanctifying your old flesh. Jesus said to Nicodemus, **That which is born of the flesh is flesh – John 3:6a.** In other words, it is always being flesh. And your old flesh is not going to enter heaven, not in the beginning. You are going to be planted in the earth, and your old flesh will return back to the earth from which it came. And then this corruption, **must put on incorruption 1 Cor. 15:53b.** There will be a day when your bodies - when it is all over with, and the world has ended, our Lord has come - when your old bodies will be raised out of that grave, though they were but dust. And there with your eyes you shall see God. See, there's no opposition in you then. So, your corruption, my corruption, **must put on incorruption. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. 1 Cor. 15:44a** That is all Paul is saying. “Present your bodies. A living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” That is the you inside your frame. That is the real you. Every one of you know people that when you meet them, they are such phonies, hypocrites. I mean, it just comes out of them like the breath coming out from the lungs. Paul said, **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service – Rom. 12:1b.** The Amplified says, **which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship.** If you brought in your mind crowded out when you sat down, it is a good possibility that it will still be crowded

out when you leave. You have not yet come to what he is talking about here. Do you think that the Father that gave His Son and watching Him for 33 years suffer abuse, blasphemy, attacks of Satan... do you think that God the Father watched His Son go through all that, never pleasing Himself, but went about as a dying man, do you think God the Father is going to let that life and death of His Son be in vain? There is no possible way. His physical body was always in subjection to the will of His Father. He may have been tired, but **He must needs go to Samaria – from John 4:4**, or cross the sea to get to a demon-possessed man. No, Jesus went about doing good because he was in subjection to the will of his Father.

And God will provide for His Son a people like-minded... that you will get to the place you no longer live to the dictates of a fleshly nature. And there will be a people completely compatible in every aspect with the man Jesus - in every way compatible. God is going to see that your journey gets you to that place that you are who you say you are when you say you are a believer. There is not much said about the body but I cannot explain it. I do not have the words, but may God arrest every one of us and if our course is in any way different, or if we stepped off the path sometime back, may God help every one of you, every one of us, get back to the Lord Jesus. Dear ones, it is your living with Him here that is going to make you compatible for glory and for the glory to be revealed.

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