

Your Gift to the King – Rom 12:1-3

Introduction – Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and so we pray that you have all been greatly blessed as givers this season. This is something we should grow up into as we are fitted more and more into the image of Christ, who gave Himself, and imitate the outlandish giving of our heavenly Father of Whom, “*His mercies are new every morning.*” Because of this prodigal grace of our God, we are instructed in Romans 12, “*therefore...*” This is a critical word. It is only because of what God has done (see ch’s 1-11) that we can, should, and must obey what is set forth.

The Beauty of Many Words – “*Therefore*” is not the only word here to notice. Paul piles on with words and phrases, so many of them worthy of sermons all to themselves.

I Beseech You, Brethren – While this apostle could easily command us to obedience simply because “it is the right thing to do,” he pleads with us, his “*brethren*,” fellow Christians who have experienced the same grace and mercy he has. He appeals to the logical outcome of the argument, to thankful and transformed hearts, to our senses which join with him in being overwhelmed with this grace (11:33, 36).

By the Mercies of God – The grammar of this points more to “by means of the mercies,” than “because of the mercies,” which only emphasizes that every act we do for God is a result of His work in us first.

Present Your Bodies – Being a follower of Christ never ends with systematic notions floating around in your head. Christianity is at its root a practical religion that can be seen in the lives of those who follow Him Who gave Himself for them. And it is never something which can be “a part of my life” or “a private religion.” Hence, the next phrase.

A Living Sacrifice – Using the rich imagery of Leviticus and the whole sacrificial system of the old administration, we are to see ourselves as lambs offered in whole upon an altar to God – and yet “living.” More on that later.

Holy, Acceptable, Reasonable Service – A holy sacrifice is one which has been set apart by God for sacred service to Him. An acceptable sacrifice is one which God has inspected and approved. Now how in the world can we be that for Him? Finally, to do these things makes logical (reasonable) sense and is our worship before Him. Our whole lives are to be lives of service which is our worship (1 Cor 10:31).

Not Conformed – One paraphrase translation reads, “*don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold*” (Phillips). We must be nonconformists with the world. In order to be a holy sacrifice, we must avoid the contamination of the world as well as the lust of the eyes and the flesh. This is the progressive work of sanctification, dying to sin more and more and...

Be Transformed – ...living to righteousness more and more. This verb is where we get our word “metamorphous,” putting on a new shape, a new person (Christ). And note, this is done through the renewing of our minds (an ongoing process).

Sacrificial Living – Putting these words together, what does it mean to apply these commands?

To God – Men are used to sacrificing themselves in many ways and for many causes. The disciple of Jesus however surrenders himself only to God first and always first. Every other sacrifice must come out of this initial sacrifice to the Lord (2 Cor 8:5). But remember, what are we sacrificing ourselves to? To the God of all mercies. We are surrendering to a life of mercy while receiving abundant mercies. We are spilling over.

A Life of Active Sacrifice – “*The presenting of the body to God implies not only the avoiding of the sins that are committed with or against the body, but the using of the body as a servant of the soul in the service of God. It is to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor 6:20), to engage our bodies in the duties of immediate worship, and in a diligent attendance to our particular callings, and be willing to suffer for God with our bodies, when we are called to it. It is to yield the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13).*” (Matthew Henry).

We are All Conformers – We never are really autonomous individuals, try as we might. We are either being transformed into something, or we are conforming to something. We are always becoming like what we worship, whether an idol or Christ.

Not Self-Conscious, Only Grateful (v3) – It is far too easy for the fundamentalist, the pious-Pharisee-type, to grab ahold of verses 1-2 and make something of themselves in it (Luke 18:9-14). But we don’t offer up ourselves noticing that we are doing so in that way. A humble man is never a man who is noticing how humble he is being, and quite impressed with himself. A humble man is overwhelmed by the mercies of God.

A Living Sacrifice – How can a dead man offer a living sacrifice? How can an unclean man offer a holy and acceptable sacrifice? Romans 12:1-3 has not left the Gospel message of God’s unmerited grace. We are not offering something to God that He hasn’t given to us. Our dead man has died to death in Christ and our resurrection-life in Jesus is the life we now live in our bodies (Gal 2:20). But if it is Jesus-life, then it is a life that gives, always dying, so that we might always be resurrected in Him and to His glory. We are givers because we have been given much. We are lovers because we have been loved much. We do this by the mercies of God because we swim in an ocean of the mercies of God.