

Therefore

5-9-21

Romans 12:1 (ESV)

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.

The word “Therefore” establishes a connection with the entire foregoing presentation especially Chapters 1-8. Personally, I believe this is the most significant “THEREFORE” in Scripture. Basically Chapters 1-8 have shown us who we are. Therefore, now God shows us what to do.

Warning: Trying “to do” before we understand who we are will be the most miserable and fruitless endeavor we will ever experience. Preaching on the “to do” of the Bible without understanding who we as stated in Chapters 1-8 will be oppressive and ultimately produce hopelessness.

However, based on what we know in Chapters 1-8, we are told to “present” our bodies to God as living sacrifices. This is a decision on the mind based on what we know.

Romans 6:13 (ESV)

Do not “present” your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but “present” yourselves to God.

The decision is one of total commitment defined as giving our bodies as a living sacrifice. Our whole body is presented. OT sacrifices were totally consumed nothing was left over.

Likewise, the NT Living Sacrifice must be totally committed to God. **The sacrifice acceptable to God must be the believers themselves!** We learned in Chapter 8 that we make the decision or set our mind on the things of God and the Holy Spirit will empower us.

We also see that presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is our spiritual act of worship. The two words “spiritual” and “worship” used here are difficult to translate. The Greek word used here for “spiritual” has no exact English equivalent. The word means to be genuine pertaining to mind and heart. **The idea is that the living sacrifice of our body which we render is genuine in heart and soul in the new way of the Spirit.**

Romans 7:6 (ESV)

We serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

The word used for “worship” means ministry or service dedicated to God. It covers the entire range of the Christian’s life and activity. This ministry to God was required in the OT:

Deuteronomy 10:12 (ESV)

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Understanding Chapters 1-8 must come before we are have the power to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, which is our spiritual worship, which reflects our natural heart felt service to God. This total commitment to God will require us to get into step with God's kingdom.

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

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.

The world is out of step with God. Therefore, as living sacrifices we should not be conformed to the world around us. **As living sacrifices, we are to be transformed by renewing our mind.** It is our responsibility to renew our mind. This means start seeing as God sees. Start thinking as God thinks. We do this by reading HIS Word, spending time with HIM, and HIS people. By reading God's Word, walking and worshiping with God's people, we experience God's mind and God's presence. As we renew our minds, we are able to do and test the things God is showing us. By testing what God is telling us we can discern the will of God; what is working and what is not working. By discerning what is good and acceptable and perfect we grow in maturity and power. This is growing from faith to more faith. Then, we start implementing more of the things of God with power in accordance with HIS Word and the counsel of the saints.

Thus, the whole Christian community learns to grow in God's will in the fullness of HIS power.

Romans Chapter 1-8, we learned "who" we are. Then in Romans Chapter 12 and afterward we learn "what" we do. We see this order throughout Scripture.

First The WHO!

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Second The What!

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

When we fully embrace who we are, we are able to do the works God has prepared for us!