

Salt Church

Romans 12:1-3

“Living Sacrifices”

March 29, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14)

Recap:

Romans 11:33-36

*33 Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge!
How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his
ways!*

*34 For who can know the Lord’s thoughts?
Who knows enough to give him advice?*

*35 And who has given him so much
that he needs to pay it back?*

*36 For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is
intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.*

Here is what we learned:

- **No truer words have ever been spoken!**
- God is sovereign
- He has a plan not just for the Jews but for the Gentiles as well.
- He will execute His plan with precision and perfect timing

- And His way is filled with grace and mercy!
- Every step of His plan is for His glory and our joy.

Now to today's text:

Romans 12:1-3

*12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies **as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

- *I will always be amazed with the amount of information that the Apostle Paul can cram into a sentence.*
- **Couple of things jump out immediately**
 - **1st “Therefore”** because of what we have learned in the 1st 11 chapters of Romans, (**mostly about how God gives His love, grace, and mercy**), **this should motivate a visible action within us and the framework of our life.**
 - **2nd A “living sacrifice”** what in the world Paul?
 - Isn't that an oxymoron?
 - We know what “living” is and we know what a “sacrifice” is also. (To put something to death as a sacrifice)
 - Separately they make sense
 - But together it doesn't make sense.
 - It's as if Paul has said, “draw me a square circle!”
 - **And yet, everything that we will learn today rest upon this tiny phrase.**

Let's continue:

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

- “True and proper worship”
 - In the Greek it is translated “the reasonable service of you”
 - **latreia: Service, Worship**
 - **Pronunciation:** lah-TRY-ah
 - KJV:** (divine service)
 - NASB:** divine worship, service, service of worship
 - **Root word of latreia means to serve**
 1. ministration of God, through worship

With all of that said I thought it would be helpful if I read to you several translations so that we could have the complete picture as we move forward.

New Living Translation, Romans 12:1

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind HE will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

English Standard Version Romans 12:1

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.

Berean Standard Bible_Romans 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brothers, on account of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

King James Bible

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.

Legacy Standard Version

Therefore, I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, *and* pleasing to God, *which is your* spiritual service of worship.

New American Standard Bible

Therefore I urge you, brothers *and sisters*, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Did you notice there is this connection between worship and service

- Why is it so important that we understand this truth?
 - I think a lot of it has to do with **the way we define worship**.
 - For most, we define it as related to song.

- ***We call men*** Pastors, Preachers, Teachers and such **but those who lead us in song we call worship leaders.**

What's your point Pastor?

- **My point is the text itself** (*Let's look at it again*)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

- ***That sentence has nothing to do with song.***
 - **It could include song**, but it is not referencing songs or music.
 - Paul through the power of the Holy spirit is saying, because of **God's grace and mercy in your life** there must be a change as to how you live and process life.
 - ***Nothing is said about how you sing.***

We call this spiritual formation and development

- The foundation of spiritual formation is “in view of God's grace and mercy” in your life.
 - It is a new way of processing life.
 - When you see and process life through what you know about God and His word it changes your thoughts and actions.
 - If God is pursued properly

- the process leads to more knowledge about Him
 - which leads to greater maturity,
 - which is evidenced in our body and actions.

Thus, we become the square circle:

- We are dead to sin
- But we are alive in Christ
 - **The result** is that we offer our bodies, our lives, our whole beings as living sacrifices.
 - This then becomes the new definition of **true and proper worship**. (it matters that we get this right)

What I am trying to convey is that how we live our lives is an act or worship.

- **Let that sink in for a moment.**
 - What does your life express about who or what you worship?
 - Does your life express genuine worship of God the Father?
 - You have heard me say many times, “**obedience is the greatest form of worship**”
 - But have you ever processed what is the motivation of our obedient worship?
 - It should His great love, grace, & mercy!

Before we move on, I feel led to say something about our style of music here.

- I love it
- I am grateful for our praise team
- I am grateful for Kenric's dedication to the truth and correct theology.
- I am grateful for the balance between the old and the new.
 - God is good, all the time!
 - Amen

Now, on to verse 2

²Do not conform to the pattern of this world,

- What is the pattern of this world? (We must define it so that we do not conform to it)
 - (Basically)
 - Living for self-glorification
 - Self-satisfaction
 - Self-centeredness
 - Following our wicked hearts
 - This is what the unbelieving world does, and it is what it celebrates.
 - This must not be what the child of God conforms to.

Now listen to the non-negotiable command from God on our lives

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- Transformed?
 - This is a very important word.

- Many make the mistake of believing that **change is the expectation.**

- ***Transformation is the expectation!***

- The difference between to the is change is often temporary, but transformation means to become something completely different.

- **Ponder this:**

- When someone becomes a child of God, they bring to the table all their sins
 - Laziness
 - Gossip
 - Cowardness
 - Sexual sins
 - Addictions
 - Lying tongues
 - Lust for power and money
 - You name it, all of it is brought before the throne.
 - **In exchange, Jesus takes** those things and replaces them with **His grace, mercy, and forgiveness.**

Something happens when sinner comes to Christ

- ***this is where the miracle takes place.***

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new.**

Here is what the Bible says

- *The transformation begins in the heart which in turn renews the mind.*

Ezekial 36:26

²⁶ ***I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.***

- New hearts lead to new attitudes
- New attitudes lead to new decisions (new minds)
- New decisions lead to new actions
- New actions lead to new futures.

Understanding the process helps us understand what Paul is saying:

- **Here is what I know about the process:**
 - This takes time
 - Transformation takes time
 - It is filled with victories and failures
 - It takes time and it is a process that involves more than your heart.

Romans 12

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- So, we see that the transformation from sinner to sanctified (more like Jesus) begins the day anyone submits to Christ.
 - He becomes a new creation
 - The old is dead
 - All things become new

- This is the beginning of the transformation, but the transformation doesn't stop.
 - ***For as long as the child of God is alive there is a “renewing of the mind” that continues until we die.***

Here is a couple of \$50 questions:

- How do you renew your mind?
- Why does he say “renewing?”
 - It sounds like it is a constant action “renewing”
 - How does this work?

1st There is the command to be transformed

- the strategy to complete the command is accomplished through the process of renewing your mind.
 - This can only be done through prayer, study of God's word, and the application of disciplines.
 - I would also add discipleship
 - Everyone should be disciplined
 - Everyone should eventually disciple someone.
 - This is a command from our Lord in Matthew 28
 - And everyone should belong to a church family (Hebrews 10:25)

(Before you ask)

The point is simple:

- **We never arrive**

- We never get to a point where we know Him fully but...
 - We can be renewed everyday
 - We can mature in the faith everyday
 - We can become more like Jesus everyday
 - This is the expectation on all believers

Romans 12:2

but be transformed by the *renewing of your mind.*

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is

- This is very interesting the way it is phrased.
 - I am reminded that God test us (**He never tempts us**)
 - **So, are we supposed to test God? (no)**
 - 1 Thessalonians says to ***“test everything and hold onto what is good”***
 - **What does that mean?**

Paul continues

“Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is”

- As I look at this sentence I see **the template to understanding and knowing my King.**
 - **How could we test and approve Gods will for our lives?**
 - **1st we ask,** (Prayer) (yes, He is our King and Lord, but He is also our Abba Father our “Daddy”)
 - **2nd get into His Word; *all truth is found in this single book.***
 - If it matches what is written, then we have tested and approved Gods will for our lives.

But Pastor...

- *What if there is no confirmation from God?*
 - *No obvious scripture?*
 - I would say, don't do anything.
 - **If you hear the Spirit**, say move forward, then move forward with prayerful consideration asking God for a super-sensitivity to His Spirit.
 - **Trust God as you move by faith** (Faith is often not knowing for sure but believing that God will...)
 - **Trust the scriptures!**
 - Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.*
 - **Pray, search the scriptures**, make a prayerful plan, and allow God to direct your steps.

*The fact that we are commanded to **test and approve** leads me to believe:*

- *It is not always going to be obvious.*
 - Meaning it's going to require **work and sacrifice**.
 - **(Time)**
 - **In prayer**
 - **In the Word**
 - **In fasting** (if needed)
 - This is not to say that all decisions are difficult to discern, but some are!
 - **There is a purpose to the work.**

- The purpose is to bring glory to God's great name and to make us more like Jesus.

Back to Romans 12

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Can there be anything more important and satisfying than discerning God's will for our lives?
 - **"His good, pleasing and perfect will."**

Romans 12:3

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

What does that mean?

- **Here is what it means:**
 - There is nothing to be proud about.
 - When He chose us, **all we brought to the table was our sin.**
 - God has not chosen you because you are better, smarter, more righteous than anyone else.
 - He chose us because He wanted to,
 - and He did it without any outside influence.
 - We must remember that we are the wild olive branches that were grafted into the tree called Jesus. (Romans 11)

- **But praise be to God that is not who we are now! (New creations)**

Paul continues

but rather think of yourself with sober judgment,

- **“Sober judgement”**
- This simply means that we need to be honest with ourselves.
 - I need to remind you that no one has lied to you more than you and no one has done more harm to you than you.
- **Self-reflection with honest judgment is what we need**
 - Humility will be the fruit of the life of a person who is honest with themselves.

Paul continues

in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

- **What does that mean?**
 - Does God give some people more faith?
 - Yes, yes, He does!
 - If you recall faith is a gift from God.
 - But there is a difficult reality about faith...

Saving faith comes by hearing, this is true but...

Mature faith comes through fire.

- I once heard an evangelist say, ***“God can’t use a man until He has hurt that man”***
 - I remember thinking “what?”
 - With sermons like that there is no wonder why he is an evangelist.

Think about all the heroes in the bible:

- Joseph was given a dream as a very young man that he would someday rule
 - That did happen but first he was sold into slavery by his own brothers
 - Later he was falsely accused of rape and thrown into prison for years!
 - But God...
 - Joseph planned his path, but God guided Joseph's steps (Proverbs 16:9)
 - Joseph eventually became who God wanted him to be, but he had to pass through the fire of slavery, separations from his family, and prison before he became the second most powerful man in the world.

The same can be said about:

- Job
- Abraham
- Moses
- Daniel
- Ruth
- Esther
- The Apostles (especially Paul)
- Even Jesus Himself

- The scripture tells us that Jesus learned obedience through suffering

So, when we speak of “***the faith that has been distributed to you by God***”,

- please keep in mind that in order for your faith to grow **there must be a reason for that grow**
 - and it almost always comes through difficulty.

Why would you end the sermon like this pastor?

- The easy answer is that **the Bible calls us to grow in our faith.**
- If we understand that real growth occurs in the fire of pain and suffering, **we won't be caught off guard when it comes.**

I would also add that understanding this truth brings us to this new conclusion:

- Our pain and suffering have purpose
 - **Before Jesus, you had no idea why you were suffering**
 - You may have thought God was mad at you
 - But now as a child of God you cry out in your weakness
 - Now, you know this beautiful truth found in Romans 8

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the

Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

***²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

So, we close today with joy in our hearts:

We celebrate these three ladies as they proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism

- We celebrate Gods call on our lives to be
 - **Transformed** by the renewing of our minds
 - **We accept that the difficult days** are on purpose
 - and used by God to make us more like Jesus
 - **And we submit our lives as LIVING SACRIFICES** for the glory of God our Father