

A Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:1-2

Pastor Sean Jamieson/October 11th, 2015

INTRODUCTION:

Times are tough. The world around us seems to be collapsing. Our future is filled with uncertainty. How do we know the will of God? The Apostle Paul lays out a plan for us to follow here in the book of Romans. It is imperative for us to not only take notice, but also respond in obedience, if we are to keep ourselves free of the traps from the enemy and live as light and hope to a dark and dying world.

BODY:

We have all asked big questions before. Questions about life and our existence. Questions about the earth and our purpose on it. Maybe we've even doubted God or questioned His love for us. This is ok. I believe God wants to hear our honest hearts before Him for if we don't live in honesty, we will never really encounter true transformation. Look, I firmly believe that God is bigger than any question we could ever have for Him and, while sometimes I wish I knew the answers to everything, I'm confident in God's ability to lead you to an understanding, if He feels like He needs to.

You see that's the thing, so often we picture God as just a bigger and more powerful version of ourselves, or at least like some other human being. But God is SO MUCH more than that. The Bible speaks of God being "The First & The Last, The Beginning & The End (Revelation 22:13), The bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16), His Omniscience (All-Knowing), His Omnipotence (All-Powerful), His Omnipresence (All-Present), and Creator of the Heavens & the Earth (Genesis 1)." The list goes on and on, there is no end to God, and that is something very difficult for you and I to wrap our heads around. Many in our world are on a pursuit to figure out God but I'm not sure we were ever intended to fully understand Him. The Bible also says that "His thoughts are higher than our thoughts; His ways deeper than

our ways.” (Isaiah 55:8-9) “Who can understand God?” (Job 36:26)

But again, these are good questions for us to be asking because they signify a starting point at the very least. And starting something is much better than waiting and doing nothing. I'm convinced that life is all about the journey. Sure, eternity is about the destination; I want to be in Heaven with Jesus someday and not separated from Him in Hell, do you? But LIFE, life is all about embracing the breath God has given you and determining what kind of a person you will be. A person of faith, which leads to living as free men and women, or a person of fear, living as slaves to ourselves, and even worse, as slaves to the enemy of our lives, the Devil.

So we must choose ourselves this day who we will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! The brave and courageous Joshua writes these words in the OT, Joshua 24:15.

Why does all this matter? Because God wants you to live life on purpose and the enemy wants you to live life on accident. The more the devil can get you to believe that nothing is ordained by God, the more he can deceive us into believing that miracles are not real, the more he can pervert our experiences in the world around us, the more control he has over us and ultimately, the more worship he receives from us. Because you see, the devil is in competition with God for your worship. That's right. That's what the devil, or Lucifer, as was his original name, did for God in heaven a long time ago; he was God's worship leader. And when Lucifer fell from heaven because he desired the worship that God received, He became known as Satan or the devil and took 1/3 of God's angels with him. You see what we mean now when we say that the enemy is divisive and comes only to steal, kill & destroy?! It's who he is, it's in his very nature! The Bible also says that he is the father of lies, the devil is, so obviously he would want nothing more than to deceive you into believing the lies over your life as you literally trade what is beautiful and freeing and life-giving for what is ugly and binding and full of death and destruction.

I spoke with our young people this last week about this very subject and our hearts break over the next generation because we care about them so much. We care about our future so much. And just as I spoke to them about what I see the enemy doing in their generation, the same can be said of us really, as we are all collectively a part of this present generation. You see church, the devil wants you to be fearful, he wants you to be depressed, he wants you to be selfish, he wants you to be apathetic and not have an opinion, he wants there to be pain in your life so you'll blame it on God, he wants to STEAL your JOY, KILL your VISION and DESTROY your LIFE!!!

Don't let him...don't let him...I beg of you...don't let him. Rise up man of God! Rise up woman of God! Take your rightful place in God's Kingdom. You are a servant no longer, you are a slave no longer, you don't cower in fear towards the enemy any longer! You are a child of God, a Son or Daughter of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who has chosen you out of the darkness you were in and placed you, seated you, in heavenly places full of His marvelous light! (1 Peter 2:9) Bind the enemy in the name of Jesus Christ and he will have no authority in your life any longer! Because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world and if God is for us, who can be against us?! (1 John 4:4 & Romans 8:31, respectively)

You must choose for yourself this day who you will serve, because if you don't, there is no guarantee that when the enemy comes, because he will, there is no guarantee you will not be shaken and even swayed by his tempting. You see, if he is the father of all lies and deceiving is his middle name, why would he ever unveil his true character to you? We don't see the devil as a really ugly monster with horns and a pitchfork! No way, he would be giving away too much, showing all his cards. Instead, we see the devil as that really good looking girl or maybe that guy at work that treats us well and actually notices us, that fun party or rave, that enticing pill or

bottle, that unassuming phone, tablet or laptop. “What could possibly be wrong with that,” we ask ourselves.

Why are we even tempted in these ways? The Bible tells us why; because sin is fun for a season. (Hebrews 11:25) It can be really fun...key words...FOR A SEASON! And then comes the heartbreak, heartache, remorse, regret, discipline, and consequences. I've been there. We've all been there! But...that's what's so great about this message and worship and church and what should bring you so much hope today. God is in the business of redeeming and restoring. Everything I've drawn from today has been from His Grand Redemptive Narrative, The Bible, which is a love story about Him drawing you and me back to Himself, into His presence to be with Him for eternity. He will turn around anything and everything in your life that the enemy meant for evil, to good. And then He'll come in by His Holy Spirit and pick up all the broken pieces. But you see, He won't just put you back together in the same way you were, no...he goes further, He puts you back in exactly the way He sees you, the way He's always seen you; perfect, priceless, precious, brave, courageous, outstanding, fearless, hopeful, full of joy, on purpose. And you come out better, much better than the way you were before.

Because church, He's proud of you. GOD IS PROUD OF YOU. I believe some people need to hear those words today. But maybe you're someone that doesn't, or at least think you don't, my question for you would be; is there someone in your life, in your work, at your school, maybe they live in your home or even sleep next to you, is there someone that God brings to your mind that needs to hear those words from your mouth. In the fatherless generation, our God wants those words to be heard loud and clear as they ring with truth...GOD IS PROUD OF YOU. He adores you. He cares about and for you. He loves you. He is pursuing you with a passion and He sees you winning always because He sees you as He sees Christ, His Son.

CONCLUSION:

It all comes down to this, as it always does. It's one thing to hear the Word of God, it's quite another to believe it and then go out and live it. James 1:22-25 says: ²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Will you choose to be a person of faith today or will you slink back into being a person of fear? God wants you, you are his prized possession. But don't think for one second that the enemy isn't competing for your attention and ultimately your worship either. We are coming into a place in time where I firmly believe that the nominal or fake Christians of our day will be separated from the real followers of Jesus Christ. Which side of the fence are you on? Choose this day who you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

Let's Pray