

Every Square Inch

Romans 12:1–2

ALL THING NEW SERIES

- Last week, from Matthew 28, we looked at the first half of our mission as a church: **making disciples of Jesus**. We saw that Jesus's last command wasn't "make converts" — it was "make disciples," apprentices formed in His whole way of life, so that they, in turn, reproduce.
- That leaves an obvious question hanging: disciples formed into what shape? Sent to do what, exactly?
- The second half of our mission answers that question:

Making disciples of Jesus, who live all of life for the Glory of God.

- If this is your first Sunday with us, welcome — you've walked in on the back half of a sentence that explains why this church exists.
 - Here's the short version if you're catching us mid-sentence: we believe the whole of your life — not just the parts that feel spiritual — belongs to God and can, and should, be lived for His glory. That's not a program you sign up for. It's the air we're trying to breathe as Christ's church.

INTRODUCTION

- In 1880, a Dutch pastor, journalist, and eventual prime minister named Abraham Kuyper stood up to open a university and said one sentence that's had a huge impact on my own formation since I first heard it years ago.

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

- Kuyper wasn't inventing a new idea. He was restating something Paul had already said, near the hinge point of his longest letter.
- It's worth knowing that Kuyper wasn't a man who only theorized about "all of life." In the same few decades he pastored a church, founded a newspaper, started that university, and eventually served as prime minister of the Netherlands. He didn't treat his faith as one room in a large house he otherwise lived in on his own terms. He kept walking into every room of his life and insisting Christ owned each and every square inch of it.
- Paul spends eleven chapters of Romans building a framework for the most foundational doctrine found in the Bible — sin, grace, justification, the mercy of God toward Jew and Gentile alike. Then, in chapter 12, he pivots with one word: **"Therefore."**
- Doctrine that never lands in the formation of every day life hasn't been preached properly.

- Paul doesn't wait until the end of the letter to say this. It's the hinge — everything before chapter 12 is what God has done; everything after it is what that reality does to a life surrendered to Christ. If you ever wonder whether Christianity is mostly about believing the right things or living the right way, Paul's answer is: it was never a choice between the two. One produces the other.
- Last week we spent our whole time in Matthew 28 on the first half of our mission — **making disciples of Jesus**. If we stopped there, though, we'd have a church full of well-informed people with no idea what to do next. God's word and mission won't let us stop there.

Romans 12:1–2 NASB

"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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

- There are three movements in these two verses that I want to look at this morning: **an offering, a renewal, and a discernment.**

1. THE OFFERING: WORSHIP DEFINED

"Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice...which is your spiritual service of worship."

- The Greek carries the idea of "reasonable" or "rational" worship, sometimes translated like we see in the NASB "spiritual service."
- Think about this idea for a moment, because it is a powerful picture God is giving us here.
- Every sacrifice an Israelite had ever offered was dead by the time it hit the altar. A lamb, a bull, a dove — brought once, killed once, consumed once. Paul takes that whole system and does something with it: he asks for a sacrifice that stays alive — one that doesn't get up off the altar Monday morning and goes back to work, but lives their life as a continual sacrifice of praise to Christ.
- That means worship was never meant to be contained to the sixty minutes we spend in this room on a Sunday. Your body — the very ordinary, physical, day to day life — is actually the altar. Your commute is on the altar. Your inbox is on the altar. The way you speak to your spouse and your kids, and even the guy who cut you off in traffic is on the altar.
- **A seventeenth-century monk named Brother Lawrence spent most of his life on kitchen duty, washing pots in a monastery.**
 - He wrote that he came to sense God's presence at the sink as surely as he did at the altar rail, because he'd stopped drawing a line between the two. That's not just a nice idea from a monastery kitchen. That's Romans 12:1.

- This is a bigger claim than "try to be a good person during the week." It's a claim about what worship actually *is* — not a feeling you generate on Sunday, but a body, and a life, you keep offering all week.
- **What does that look like in an ordinary week?**
 - It looks like doing your job with excellence when no one but God will ever notice the difference.
 - It looks like the way you speak about your spouse, your kids, or your friends and coworkers when they're not in the room.
 - It looks like rest that's actually received as a gift from God, not just crashed into out of exhaustion.
 - It looks like how you treat the actual body Paul is talking about — sleep, food, exercise, medical care — not as vanity or as an afterthought, but as part of the very instrument you're offering.

2. THE RENEWAL: A MIND UNDER CONSTRUCTION

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

- Two Greek words are doing a lot of work here, and Paul means for them to be heard as opposites.
- **"Conformed"** is a word that pictures a mold pressing a shape onto something from the outside. **"Transformed"** is the word English gets "metamorphosis" from — organic change that happens from the inside out. One is a shape imposed on you. The other is a shape growing out of you.
- **Here's the point:** you cannot live "all of life for the glory of God" with a mind still being pressed into shape by whatever the world around you is selling this week — a newsfeed, an algorithm, a culture with it's own opinions about what's good, true, and beautiful.
- Something has to be renewing the mind on purpose, or something else will be conforming it by default. **There is no neutral setting.**
- Daniel and his three friends learned this in Babylon, of all places — dropped into the most sophisticated, most pressurized culture on earth, given a new education, a new language, even new names meant to erase the old ones. Daniel 1 tells us he "resolved" not to be conformed, starting with something as small as what he'd eat. It wasn't a dramatic stand. It was one deliberate, unglamorous decision, repeated daily, that kept his mind from being quietly reshaped by Babylon. Renewal usually starts exactly that small.
- **What's your version of Daniel's resolve this week?**
 - It might be as simple as what you let into your mind first thing in the morning and last thing at night — a phone, or the Word.
 - It might be choosing one friendship that will actually tell you the truth over five that will only ever agree with you.

- It might be reading something older than you are, on purpose, because every generation has blind spots it can't see from the inside, and the past can hand you a mirror the present can't.
- **This renewal isn't a solo project either.** It happens as you sit under the Word taught on Sundays, as you wrestle through a passage with your **Small Group**, as someone further along in a **Men's or Women's group** challenges an assumption you didn't know you had.
- For those who want a deeper, structured pass at it, that's exactly what the second course in **Saint George Institute's** four-course year is for — **Worldview** — eight weeks built specifically to renew how we think about truth, human dignity, ethics, government, work, science, and the arts, so that what shapes our minds is Scripture and the historic Christian faith, not whatever happens to be loudest that week.
- **C.S. Lewis put it simply:** every faculty you have, your power of thinking as well as your power of walking, comes from God moment by moment.
 - If that's true, the mind isn't a private, neutral tool you happen to also use for God on Sundays. It's one more thing being either conformed or transformed, every single day, whether you notice or not.
 - One of Satan's greatest tools in his arsenal is the lie of neutrality.
 - We are either being conformed unintentionally or we are intentionally being transformed day by day, from glory to glory, as we continually offer our bodies as a sacrifice of praise unto Christ Jesus.

3. THE DISCERNMENT: A WILL YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO

"...so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

- **Notice the order.** Paul doesn't say, "figure out God's will first, then obey it." He says: offer your body, let your mind be renewed, and discernment follows.
- This isn't a one-time decision made at an altar call. It's an ongoing skill — discerning what faithfulness looks like at your kitchen table, in your business, on your city council, in the way you spend your weekend.
- Every sphere of your life is included in "that which is good and acceptable and perfect," because Christ claimed every square inch.
- Notice, too, that Paul calls this discernment "proving" the will of God — the same word used for testing metal to confirm it's genuine. Discernment isn't guesswork. It's a skill you build by practice, the way a craftsman's eye for a good weld or a good joint gets sharper the longer he works. Nobody is born with it. Everybody can grow in it.
 - **{Remodeling Illustration}**
- Solomon prayed for exactly this at the start of his reign — not more information, but...

"an understanding heart to discern between good and evil" (1 Kings 3:9).

- He had access to more resources than almost anyone in the ancient world. What he asked for wasn't more of them. It was the wisdom to actually use what he already had.
- When we say "**all of life for the glory of God**," what we are saying is that we don't believe faith can be compartmentalized into a "spiritual" category and a "regular life" category.
 - Every relationship is a ministry opportunity.
 - Every decision is an act of worship.
 - That conviction has carried this congregation from a room above a meat market in 1909 to this room today, and it is what will carry us into the future for generations to come.
- That includes the parts of life we sometimes treat as beneath our calling. Jeremiah told a generation of exiles, homesick in a foreign city they never wanted to live in, to plant gardens, build houses, and "seek the welfare of the city" — because in its welfare they would find their own (Jeremiah 29:5–7).
- Discernment isn't just for the big, spiritual-sounding decisions. It's for your ballot, your board meeting, your neighborhood, and the ordinary square inches of the town God has planted you in, whether or not you would have chosen it.
- **One more thing to point out** — Paul says "prove," not "figure out alone." Discernment like this was never meant to happen all by yourself. God built it to happen in community, which is exactly why the same rooms that make disciples of us also help us discern what faithfulness looks like in each square inch of our lives:
 - **Small Groups** — praying through actual decisions with people who know your actual life, not a glamorized online version of it.
 - **Men's and Women's groups** — wisdom from people further down the road in marriage, work, and parenting than you are.
 - **Youth Group** — helping the next generation discern a calling before the world hands them one.
- Let me get specific, because "discern God's will" can sound abstract until we picture it in our everyday lives:
 - If you run a small business downtown, that business is on the altar — how you price a job, how you treat a difficult customer, how you pay your crew.
 - If you work the trades, or spend your days in the woods or on the water, the quality of work no one but you will ever inspect is on the altar.
 - If you're behind a teacher's desk or a nurse's station, the patience you have left for the last student or the last patient of the day is on the altar.
 - If you're home with young kids, the eleventh time you answer the same question with kindness instead of frustration is on the altar.
 - If you just retired and have more time than you've had in decades, how you spend it is on the altar — this church and this town has no shortage of people who need what your time could now offer.
 - If you're a student trying to figure out what comes after high school, the major, the trade, or the town you choose next is on the altar — and it's worth

discerning with people who love you, not deciding alone based on an instagram post you saw at 1am scrolling on your phone.

CONCLUSION

- Let's go back to Kuyper one more time: **not a square inch**. Not your job. Not your marriage. Not your bank account, your Saturday mornings, your vote, or your free time. Christ has already claimed all of it. The only question left is whether we'll offer back to Him what He has already purchased through His blood or withhold it.
- The image Paul chose was a living sacrifice. Unlike every sacrifice before it, this one gets to walk off the altar and back into an ordinary week if it so chooses. All of life for the Glory of God is a life lived on the altar as a sacrifice of praise. That's what it means to belong entirely to Someone who has already given everything for you.
- Put last week and this week together and you have our whole answer to "why does North Summit Church exist": **making disciples of Jesus, who live all of life for the glory of God**. Not disciples who only know things. Disciples formed in community, sent back out into their actual homes, actual jobs, and actual neighborhoods, offering it all, on purpose, over and over.
- **That is where the offering actually happens, week after week, one square inch at a time.**
- **So here's what I want you to do with this:** before you leave today, pick one square inch — one room of your life you've been quietly keeping off the altar — and hand it over this week.
 - Then go find people to do that with. Your small group, a trusted friend, your men's group. Whatever that looks like for you — you need a good place to have your mind renewed on purpose, alongside people doing the same thing.

Making disciples of Jesus, who live all of life for the Glory of God.

- That's not a mission statement to just put on a wall. That's what it looks like to belong, completely, to the Maker who is still — right now — making all things new.

[PRAYER]

