CALVARY CHAPEL
MARTIN COUNTY

The Doctrine of Sanctification Part 1
How Do We Go About Becoming More Like Jesus Christ?
Romans 12:1

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In the New Testament we have come across those things which are in the imperative. In other words, implying a command, and then there are those things that the Lord says to us as well as His servants in the pages of the Word, where it is an urgent consideration but not a command.

Here in Romans 12, Paul begins to sum up what he has been discussing so far in this letter. We have been the recipients of pretty heavy theology in some cases, as well as the full story on several things that previously we thought were true but now we know are indeed true.

The message now is to the church, it is for those who know and love Jesus Christ and Paul, based on his experience as a follower of Jesus Christ and the realization of how hard it is to truly be a servant in this current day, provides us some how to do strong advice.

Contrary to the manner that some teach the word, God is not made at His children, those who are indeed following Him and desiring to serve Him. In fact, while here in this planet, the only people Jesus spoke evil of were the religious leaders who were misleading the people away from the truth. Based on what we read in Revelation, that attitude has not changed.

But here, through Paul, Jesus is talking to us and encouraging us, showing us how we should live. Those who allege to teach the word and have decided that God's love also extends to encouraging those of the flock who are in sin have never really taken the time to fully study the scriptures. At no time did Jesus ever encourage someone in their sin to stay in their sin, it was always to repent and return.

We see Him saying the same here, as a loving Father and Savior to His people, giving us the key to spiritual success in this world. And heavily implied in it is a heart made right with the Savior and with His God in order to do what is being encouraged.

Romans 12:1–2
"**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." (NASB 2020)

As we have seen in the past, anytime we see the word "therefore," we begin asking what is it there for? Here Paul is summing up all he has just told us. I like had Pastor Chuck Smith put it when he taught through this verse.

This "therefore" takes us back to the comments on the love, mercy, and grace of God which have provided our election, calling, justification, and glorification. (Smith 2015, 85)

Everything that Paul has taught us and told us about God's grace, and about this salvation that those of us who have believed now have. Rather than ordering us to give Him everything, our Lord uses Paul to have him appeal to us. The Greek word is Παρακαλῶ (parakalo).

The Greek also provides us how serious Paul is about this since he uses a present active indicative verb form. Unless you are language geek, that means nothing but here in the Bible, even the choice of verb form is important to us.

First of all, the meaning of this word is "to ask to come and be present where the speaker is, call to one's side, summon to one's aid, call upon for help, to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage, to make a strong request for something, request, implore, entreat." (Arndt, et al. 2000, 764-765)

All of that is tied up in what the Lord is saying to us here through Paul. And then there is the grammar. The verb tense is in the active showing that this is "an action in process or a state of being with no assessment of the action's completion." This urging of Paul and of our Lord to present ourselves to Him is constant and continuous. (Heiser and Setterholm 2013)

Every morning when we get up, He is there coming alongside us and urging us to actively present ourselves to Him today. All day long the Holy Spirit does not relent with this and as we go to sleep, He is still there saying the same things

The grammar used not only tells us that this is a consistently constant request of us as followers of Jesus, but it is also active and a very real request.

Life coaches are really popular these days and unfortunately way too many pastors have moved into that role of life coach and no longer feed the flock the whole council of God's word. The Oxford English dictionary tells us that a life coach is a "person employed to help people attain their goals in life." (Soanes and Stevenson 2004)

Being truthful and honest about God's word may not meet that requirement. So, rather than encourage you to repent of the sin that got you into the predicament, they would rather encourage you to examine how that would meet your goals in life and how you can align those with what God teaches in His word. But you can't.

Let me be honest, there are times where I have found God's word to be intrusive and upsetting because it is telling me that the way I was living was wrong and there is no other option other than to repent, return and let Him run the show. Jesus is Lord and we all do indeed have trouble with that from time to time.

Jesus is not our life coach. We are being told a key to becoming more like Jesus here in Romans 12. Thaddeus Williams takes this a step further. "Becoming like Jesus is not difficult; it is impossible. We fail to worship and reflect him ten thousand times a day. Thankfully, there is grace. But we have a delusional voice in our heads, a self-serving bias that tells us we're basically good people who don't need grace. If we're basically good people then we don't really need Jesus as a Savior to take us from depraved to saved; we only need him (if at all) as a Life Coach to inspire us from good to great. And the Life Coach Jesus is simply not the Jesus we meet in Scripture." (Williams 2019, 42)

Life Coach Jesus is not the one urging us here in Romans 12. As we have already learned, the real Jesus was incarnated as a man coming to this planet to do one thing, die for sinners becoming our Atoner. He came to take all of us who were active enemies of God and to make it possible not only for us to become friends, but to become family. He has justified us as such as done more than just help us to meet our goals as a Life Coach. We now meet His requirements, if we believe, for eternal life with Him.

Romans 3:21–26
"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, but **it is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.** This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished; for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (NASB 2020)

His death on the cross followed by His resurrection did so much for us and because of that, He can and will continually come alongside us and urge us to take action on what it is He made possible, to become like Him. Jesus, as Williams relates to us, "died as our Battlefield Hero so that we who were POWs can claim victory of our satanic oppressor. He died as our Chain-Breaker so we can live free of sin's bondage. He died to become our Defense Attorney so convicts like us can receive the "not guilty" verdict. He died to become our Eternal Priest so we can stand clean and confident in the holy presence of God. He died as the Forsaken Son to bring outcasts like us into God's family. The more we worship and become like Jesus the more we will elevate those around us, lifting enemies, the oppressed, poor, guilty, unholy, and unwanted into friendship, victory, freedom, justice, purity, and family. (Williams 2019, 42)

Jesus is reflecting to us through Paul the need we all have as followers of Jesus Christ. He lovingly intends for us to be in the process everyday of conforming to Him and that begins right here in verse 1. He knows the outcomes that we will see in our life, the blessings and the joy that will manifest as we do this. It really is to our benefit.

Romans 12:1
"**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." (NASB 2020)

As we have already determined, God, when we give our life to Jesus, does not put us into a half-nelson until we submit. He does not force us give in, but there is a danger the longer we continue to wrestle with Him and what He wants to do in our life. There was one guy who did indeed decide to wrestle with Him and limped the rest of his life because of it (Genesis 32). The reality is we have already been overwhelmed by the grace of God.

When we came to Jesus Christ it was because of His grace. What He did for us is explained in depth by Philips. "God has saved us from sin, from its penalty and its power. He has saved us from self in all its features and all its forms. He has overruled the destinies of nations. He has triumphed in His grace and multiplied His mercies. He has, as it were, besieged us with His mercies, brought them up against us in countless number, built the bulwarks of His grace against our souls, poured a ceaseless cannonade of kindness in upon the breaches in our hearts. He has overwhelmed us with unmerited favor and carried all before Him on the resistless arms of love. "I beseech you therefore," says Paul, "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." It is the proper thing to do. It is the only possible thing to do. It is the only fitting answer we can give to "love so amazing, so divine." (Phillips 2009, Ro 12:1)

Paul is appealing to us that in the light of the glorious grace and mercy which has been lavished upon us by our Lord, the only logical, rational and practical thing to do is indeed say yes to this. Why wouldn't we? Sin, flesh the world and the desires of the world.

Ohh, shiny things which distract us from reality in Christ. How does that distract us?

Romans 8:5–10
"**For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness." (NASB 2020)

Yes, sin can indeed put us back into the flesh. The temptation to pander to our flesh is indeed strong but as we surrender to Him, the power it once had before Jesus is shown to be only, now, the power that we have decided to give to it. He has provided victory already.

1 Corinthians 10:13–14
"**No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." (ESV)

It is the last of the section of scripture that shows us the real problem, the why to we give into to temptation and the flesh rather than live in the Spirit. Idolatry. This is not about idols, it is about self. All of

us have, at one time or another, placed ourselves ahead of God, that is idolatry. That was the promise of Lucifer there in the Garden of Eden to Eve that she could be like God. In other words, you don't need God, you are all the God you will ever need. So, rather than allow the victory to the temptation which has already been achieved for us through Christ take hold, we indulge and sin.
James explains the process for us.

James 1:14–15
"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (ESV)

As we further examine what it is that Paul is urging us to do, because it is an active never ending issue for us, we realize that as we begin each day, and as we examine the past days, we must make certain that we are in the Spirit and not in the flesh. We know that is necessary because we have already learned earlier that the flesh cannot and will not serve God…ever. If you don't know it, you will. This is one of those verses to memorize and make part of you.

1 John 1:5–10
"Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness.** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us." (NET 2nd ed.)

Embedded in this, at 1 John 1:7, we first have a lifestyle statement reflecting where it is Paul is driving us to. Here we have the lifestyle of the believer. The one who is remaining obedient and faithful to the Lord. As we remain in Him and follow Him, walking in the light, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us and making His word a part of us, in other words, growing in sanctification (Romans 6:22, 1 Thessalonians 4:7), we have organic natural fellowship with one another. It is just what we do as believers.

You do not have to force fellowship; it is a natural outflow of the surrendered life. It is where you will be.

If you claim to have this level of fellowship, yet your life looks like hell, then that may indeed be where you are headed. This is not simply being religious, showing up for church on a Sunday every now and then and ticking off that church box. I will never forget overhearing two parents talking about their kids as they walked to their car in front of me. The children loved Children's Church, the Bible study and the friends they were making. They wanted to be there every week.

But mom and dad were having a discussion about how that was not possible. I mean "we have the boat, and we are using it a couple of times each month. Then there are our friends and the parties we go to on Saturday's." No, this is more like a something we can do this once every 5 or 6 weeks or so.

Again, idolatry and barriers to doing what it is that Paul and Jesus are asking of us here, to present our bodies. Kruse adds to our understanding of what John is saying here.

By his use of the present tense for the verbs 'to walk' and 'to purify', the author represents both the walking and the cleansing as ongoing activities. One lesson that may be learned from this second consequence is that walking in the light does not mean that those who do so never sin, but that they do not seek to hide that fact from God. They 'walk in the light' with him, and the result of their doing so is that the blood of his Son Jesus purifies them from their sins. (Kruse 2000, 64-65)

Our failures, as believers, are under the shed cleansing blood of the Lamb. No worries here but have we recognized the failures or are we lying to ourselves.

1 John 1:8
"**If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us**." (NASB 2020)

Being set free from sin does not mean that we will never sin. Paul, as we covered earlier, is very clear about what happens when we are saved. We are set free from the bondage of sin.

Romans 6:18
"and after **being freed from sin**, you became slaves to righteousness." (NASB 2020)

We are no longer enslaved and involved in sin because we do not know how to extract ourselves from it. Jesus sets us free law of sin and death. Reisinger and Allen explain this.

Believers are delivered from the bondage of sin as an inherent principle of their nature. This deliverance begins in regeneration and continues as the believer is sanctified and ultimately glorified. (Reisinger and Allen 2001, 121)

We are all sinners saved by grace and we can indeed, all of us, sin. Until we receive our glorified bodies, this is an ongoing item we must deal with on a daily basis. Thus, Greek grammar thing again.

The following are not outs or exemptions to this verse.

- There is no doctrinal word twisting available to deny we sin. We do. Body versus spirit per Gnosticism does not cut it.
- I was born this way therefore it is not sin. Bologna.
- I am simply doing what our culture does. Excuuuuuusssssseeee me.

The Pharisees tried to reason with Jesus, multiple times and excuse their sin. He would not let them get away with it yet we think He will for us in the 21st century. Nope.

As we learned earlier in Romans 5:12 We are all sinners and there is no way to argue that fact away. If we say we are subject to the curve, or there is no sin, or I do not accept your definition of sin, or on and on. That's okay.

God's definition is the only one that matters, and His judgment will remain the same on all who have rejected the gift of salvation available through Jesus Christ…guilty.

"The same sins are still around. But the same way of salvation is still there. Jesus died for sins. Guilt can be taken away. The power of sin can be broken by the joy of the Holy Spirit. The disease is still around. The remedy is still around also." It is simple to avail yourself of it. (Eaton 2020, 1132)

1 John 1:9
"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (NASB 2020)

If you have not memorized this verse, or underlined it in you Bible, you will. This is the Christian's bar of soap. This is where we will wind up as we follow the guidance of Paul and present our bodies.

Jesus died on the cross for all our sins, past, present and future. When we believe in Him, and ask Him to save us, He does exactly that.

He did not expect us to then sit down and develop and long list of every sin we every have done and then confess that to Him. 1 John 1:9 is not about salvation. Confession of all of our sins is not a pre-condition to salvation. If you have ever heard anyone teach this verse as a necessary component to be saved, they are wrong. As we have already stated and Dr. Fruchtenbaum confirms, “according to Scripture salvation is based solely on faith in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. Salvation is by grace through faith, and that is the only condition for salvation.” (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 4)

Ephesians 2:8–10
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.” (NRSVue)

Biblically, the solution to our sin problem is easy, Dr. Fruchetnbaum points out that “in more than two hundred cases where there is a condition given for salvation, faith or belief is stated to be the only condition. This is important to remember. There are more than two hundred places in the New Testament where the condition for salvation is spelled out, and in all these, cases faith or belief is given as the one and only condition.” (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 4)

Salvation is not trust in Jesus and do this that or the other thing; it is to believe what the Messiah, Jesus Christ did and be satisfied He has indeed saved you and me just as He has promised. Jesus achieved everything for us on the cross when He died for our sin, and then rose from the dead.

Sin is a fact of life. Sorry, but that really is the unvarnished truth. It is a characteristic issue all of us as believers struggle with as we do life here on this planet. But because you and I, as followers of Jesus Christ, are more sensitized to this, we are aware of the lines of communication we have cut due to our sin and the need to reestablish those lines of communication, one more time. Now we are beginning to understand what Paul is telling us here in Romans 12:1.

When we acknowledge our sin to God and confess it to Him, He responds. John uses sin in the plural here.

The plural indicates “that the confession of particular acts of sin is meant in this context, rather than the acknowledgment of “sin” in general.” (Smalley 1984, 31)

As we confess to the Lord that we are the ones who sliced the lines of communication through our disobedience, we are also telling Him, as best as we can, what that disobedience has been.

Put another way, God by His very nature is a forgiving God. Because of the blood shed by Jesus Christ and our already believing and applying that blood to ourselves as we come to Christ, we are now His. As we come to Him in confession of our sin, because God is a forgiving God, He forgives us. The lines of communication are instantly restored, and fellowship is as well. Once again, the Holy Spirit can work through us since that which had grieved Him, our sin, has been brought to the cross as we confess our sin and then God once again, has applied the righteousness of Jesus to us.

And now we can once again, engage in presenting our bodies to Him.

But I thought when we came to Christ, we were forgiven of all of our sin past, present and future? Correct. Yes, we have been forgiven, but that does not mean, now as members of His family, as adopted sons and daughters, that we do not need His forgiveness as a disobedient member of His family. He has expectations of how we live and sanctification, becoming like Jesus, presenting our bodies, is one of those. Tom Constable relates what the impact is.

God's response, since we are family and we have indeed been judicially forgiven, is to discipline us. "For example, a judge could accept payment for his own son's fine in court and set him free from the legal demands of the law but still discipline him when he got home." (Constable 2003, 1 Jn 1:9) He wants us to live in obedience and be free of the pollution.

1 John 1:9
"**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness**." (NASB 2020)

As family members, we have this guarantee from our loving heavenly Father. The issue is not acceptance, that was taken care of when we were saved, it is fellowship. By keeping the accounts short and remaining in a place of continual forgiveness, confession, this enables us to continue to experience intimate relationship as God's kid in His family. And yes, confession also includes repentance, we are agreeing with God and His word, we are saying the same thing He does.

That means a desire and willingness to turn away from what we have just confessed.

Do not fall into the trap, as some have, that what we have committed here which is sin isn't really sin. All of us are great at worming ourselves out of things. We learned that as kids.

Why is it that some today will not take this step being urged for us to take by our Lord who is using Paul to communicate it to us. Today, thanks to the culture, poor teaching, false teachers, and on and on. Many have redefined what is and is not sin. Our culture wants to feel good about itself so it does this with impunity. Yes, Isaiah 5 kinda stuff where good is bad and bad is good. But here is the assessment of our Lord.

1 John 1:10
"**If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.**" (NASB 2020)

Brother and sister in Christ, we live for Jesus, not the culture. We live per His standards and definitions all found in the pure word of God.

When we do that, when we excuse our sin as not being sin, what are we really doing?

This is basic stuff; we are putting aside God's revelation and word as what is and is not sin. We are saying we know better than God. Consequently, we are calling God a liar since we are also questioning His judgment of people. Ultimately, we are simply rejecting God's word.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, how much lower could we go?

Romans 12:1–2
"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." (NASB 2020)

So, now that we have placed ourselves into the position where we are once again in fellowship with our Lord, what exactly is it that we are doing here? The Greek word translated present is the word παραστῆσαι (parastesai) and some may not like what is being said.

The word means "to cause to be present in any way, place beside, put at someone's disposal, present, represent…'present' becomes almost equivalent to make, render…in the language of sacrifice offer,

bring, present…as a legal technical term bring before (a judge), prove, demonstrate. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 778)

Hiebert discusses the verb tense impact on this definition. “The aorist tense of the infinitive παραστῆσαι (parastesai) makes clear that Paul was thinking of a definite action on the part of the believer, an act directed by his will. With this sacrificial implication the aorist active infinitive denotes a deliberate action involving the thought of finality. A sacrifice laid on the altar could not later be retrieved; so the presentation here urged was to be made for life, not to be retracted later.” We are talking about a decisive decision. (Hiebert 1994, 314)

We all believe there are things that we can do and God gives us a pass and then when we are disciplined by Him, we struggle to understand since our failure was in part due to our sin nature. True, but recall what we saw in 1 Corinthians 10:13, God always provides a way of escape.

We just aren’t looking for it all the time. We think the temptation is unique. It isn’t, again 1 Corinthians 10:13. So, we have given ourselves to the Lord and presented ourselves to Him and He took that as commitment, we may not have quit understood what this word meant. This is a lifetime thing because of what He has done on the cross for us and there is not expectation from our Lord that we would ever retract it. He has saved us and He will never changes His mind about that. We may live like we retracted it, but discipline is intended to bring us back into obedience as part of the family. And yes, 1 John 1:9 again.

What we are doing in practice is presenting and then because of who we are, physical beings who tend to forget stuff, we do it again, and again, and again. It was a one-time permanent thing, the Holy Spirit moved in, but we are the one who must remember what it is we have done.

Dr. Moo adds “there is no reason in the context to think that Paul would view this presentation as an offering that we make only once. Paul simply commands us to make this offering, saying nothing about how often it needs to be done.” (Moo 2018, 769)

What is it that we are placing at the Lord’s disposal. That we are presenting to Him and representing to Him that this is indeed our best sacrifice. Our bodies is what the translation reads. That word is σώματα (somata). It means body of a human being or animal, body, dead body, corpse, the living body.” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 983) We give Him our body.

When you or I are fully empowered with the Holy Spirit, then He is free to exercise the will of the Father through us by the exercise of spiritual gifts which are provided by Him for the benefit of the church. He is free to use our body for the glory of God.

Phillips adds that “when the Holy Spirit has control of the body, He can express through the believer’s members the fruits of Christ’s sacrifice. The offering of the believer’s body is therefore a living sacrifice in contrast with the sacrifices of the Old Testament.” (Phillips 2009, Ro 12:1)

We are talking about the one thing which we struggle with, the flesh, our physical body, and giving it over to the Lord so He sanctify it.

Heibert explains what happens when we do this and indeed, present our bodies. We find “a body fully yielded to God is essential if believers are to make a spiritual impact on the world. Through their bodies they gain consciousness of the world around them and can communicate with it. Since the body is the vehicle that implements the desires and choices of the soul, the voluntary yielding of the body to God’s control is essential for effective Christian living. Through sanctified bodies believers can render God-pleasing service.” (Hiebert 1994, 315)

And our body is a spiritual sacrifice since we no longer go and present animals on an actual altar. Peter recognized this.

1 Peter 2:4–5
“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, **to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**.” (ESV)

For those who were the recipients of Paul’s letter, a sacrifice is normally something that is dead, killed as a sacrifice. When he says living sacrifice, this is an oxymoron for them. You said what?

“Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice.” In the 21st century, that is a hard concept for many followers of Jesus Christ to swallow.

I remember learning what it meant, I was 18 and working during the summer before Bible School at a Christian Camp in the mountains of Southern California. If I recall, we were given a place to sleep, food to eat, a continuous stream of kids to minster to, and $90 a week to boot. And for that, I learned what it really meant to be presenting your body to Him. Not all of the camps were ones we were to be counselors at, some were there to use the facility and when that took place, we became scullery workers.

There is nothing like getting up at 5am to prep breakfast and then wash all of the dishes, pots and pans to have them clean in time to be used again at lunch and then again at dinner. It meant long days, but the fellowship was as extreme as could be. I was also privileged to sleep on the ground at 6,000 feet for 8 straight weeks in a teepee. Fun. By the time school rolled around, I was very ready.

Being a living sacrifice can indeed be uncomfortable at times. As a living sacrifice, this means that, as Moo points out, “one that does not die as it is offered but goes on living and therefore continues in its efficacy until the person who is offered dies. “Holy” is a regular description of sacrifices; it implies here that the offering of ourselves to God involves a being “set apart” from the profane and a dedication to the service of the Lord.” (Moo 2018, 770)

Our Lord has a job for all of us, make disciples (Mattherw 28:19). That requires someone who is living and committed to what it is Jesus has asked of us to do. It requires a living sacrifice. It means persecution, and possibly pain, suffering and death.

John 15:18–20
““If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” (ESV)

We have new life in Jesus Christ and as a result, we are living ”new life” to Him. And we are to be holy, separated from the world and to Christ. This brings us back to what we discussed earlier about the flesh.

And here is the exciting part of becoming more like Jesus, of being a living and holy sacrifice who is diligently maintaining that position and place because of Jesus. We are acceptable to Him. We are pleasing. The word used here is εὐάρεστον (euareston). The word means “pleasing, acceptable” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 403) and is intended to help us recall the Old Testament concept of sacrifices that are pleasing and fragrant to God (Numbers 15:7).

I do remember reading the last part of verse one when I was doing scullery work one week there at the camp. I was hot, sweaty and smelled like tomato sauce from the spaghetti. And then I read that being a living sacrifice, which is holy and acceptable to the Lord “is your spiritual service of worship.” I always thought that serving the Lord would be a whole lot more glamorous than washing a bunch of pots and pans and smelling like tomato sauce, but it isn’t.

Heibert makes it clear it is God’s evaluation of the sacrifice that counts, not ours. “The pronoun “your” makes clear that God’s evaluation relates not merely to their physical bodies but includes the whole person. He takes note of the inner volitional response made to the appeal for the surrender of their bodies to Him.” (Hiebert 1994, 317)

Once again, many of us have been led to believe that only certain things done for the Lord constitute service to the Lord. I think we are all going to be shocked by what the Lord rewards in heaven.

Faithfulness in what He has asked us to do, and we simply do it every day unto Him as we sacrifice yet another day to Him and serve Him.

What is it that the Lord has asked you to do? Are you doing it and doing so unto Him? Are you keeping short accounts with the Lord and reviewing the day with Him at the end of and beginning of each day? Have we finally understood that God wants us to be faithful to what He has called us to do? Whether that is in business, ministry, family, sports. Are we doing it unto the Lord as a living sacrifice to Him?

What we are learning about here is sanctification and we are not done yet.

Here is the thing, if you do not know Jesus, then this is all just information to you. But for those of us who know Jesus, we are now putting the things Paul taught here in Romans , into practice.

Let’s pray and recommit ourselves right now to our King and ask Him to teach us to daily remember this commitment to Him.

And if you don’t know Jesus, let’s fix that right now too.

Romans 3:21–24
“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13
“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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