

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Romans Part 23 – Our Faithful God

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INTRODUCTION

D.L. Moody said, “The world has yet to see what God can do through a person who is totally dedicated to Him.” What would it be like if every facet of your life was given over to God? Romans 12 begins with how we live out the truth of the gospel, because belief that doesn’t impact behavior is a dead belief (James 2:26). We know that to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to put Him as our highest affection is God’s fundamental will for us. Practically speaking it means that we would:

1. Offer our body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God (Rom 12:1).

Paul reflects on all he has said previously, describing the why we want to obey Jesus – foremost being His grace poured out on us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our motives on why we obey Him matters to God, and so they must matter to us. In the Old Testament a burnt offering of one’s best animal was costly. A ‘living sacrifice’ as Paul urges us to be is no less costly – it consumes our whole life. Malachi 1:6-14 describes when the Israelites began to offer less than the best. So too we are robbing God if we are not giving God our all. Our New Covenant sacrifice is not an animal but ourselves and a commitment to living a life of joyful, total devotion to Jesus, which is our true and proper worship to Him.

2. Not conform to the pattern of this world (Rom 12:2).

To conform is to do what everyone else does, to follow culture, or the ‘spirit of the age’. Paul urges us to not think or follow the ‘patterns’ of the age. This is the underlying worldview that opposes or pushes God away to advance ‘self’ resulting in a self-serving push for personal happiness and self-indulgence even at the detriment and cost of others. Paul encourages us to be alert and discerning to not be drawn into this ruinous pattern, especially as promoted by today’s media. Remember we are to be salt and light, world influencers. This means our lives in certain areas must be counter cultural. Our efforts will not be perfect but keep our eyes and the direction of our lives on Jesus.

3. Be transformed from the inside out by the renewing of our mind (Rom 12:2).

When you put your faith in Christ you are a new creation in Him, righteous and complete in the spiritual realm. We are, here on earth, a work in progress. Christ will progressively transform you when you surrender your life to Him and take on the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), seeing all of life through Christ’s eyes. This world is not our home; we are only passing through. Read, meditate, memorize and pray the Bible. Regularly attending and engaging in worship services and meeting together to encourage one another (Heb 10:24-25) are some ways to renew and transform our minds and avoid sliding into the ditch of conforming to the pattern of the world.

Idolatry is our enemy. We will either worship God or a created idol. Place your trust in God alone. Surrender daily to Him. Be a living sacrifice. Try this ‘Idolatry Detection Test’.

1. The thing I’d be most worried about losing is _____?
2. The thing I’d be most worried about never attaining is _____?
3. Throughout your life what have you been most willing to sacrifice for?
4. What has made you the most bitter in life?
5. Whose approval do you seek?

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What do you do most of the time to fill your leisure hours?
2. When you hear the words to be a 'living sacrifice, holy and pleasing' what comes to mind? Why?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read Romans 12:1 in 3 or 4 translations. What does it mean to give your body as a living sacrifice? What should be the Christian's motivation for doing this?
4. Read Malachi 1:6-14. What sacrifices or actions gave God no pleasure? What is our equivalent today to these actions?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Read Romans 12:2 in several translations. Identify some patterns of today's culture. In what areas do you feel pressure to conform? As Christ-followers, what can we do to encourage and spur one another on toward godly patterns?
6. How does a renewed mind lead to knowing God's will? How do you test and approve God's will? How does this enable you to be salt and light in your community?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Refer to the summary for the Idolatry Detection Test. Reflect on the questions. Repent of any idolatry and ask God to help you surrender to Him and be a living sacrifice.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 12:1-2 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. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Malachi 1:6-14 ⁶ "A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the Lord Almighty.

"It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

⁷ "By offering defiled food on my altar.

"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'

"By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. ⁸ When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the Lord Almighty.

⁹ "Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the Lord Almighty.

¹⁰ "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹ My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty.

¹² "But you profane it by saying, 'The Lord's table is defiled,' and, 'Its food is contemptible.' ¹³ And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the Lord Almighty.

"When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the Lord. ¹⁴ "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the Lord Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

This week's writers: Gene Gibbs, Karen Gibbs, Elsa Henderson, Jared Harrison and Jorel Quemuel