

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
11 October 2020
Romans 12:1 (KJV)

1 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.*

A Consecrated Life

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The Apostle Paul has taken pains to delineate at length the privilege of the Christian life in God through Christ. He has painted for us richest of God's blessings that is bestowed on the most unworthy sinners by His unfailing mercies. As the psalmist extolled, "The Lord is my shephard, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me to sill waters." Having received so much, he is seeking from us a response. A reasonable response. Not a demanding response. But a willing response. A grateful heart, a pair of willing hands to serve, a set of feet willingly consecrated for His glory.

In Luke 17:11-19 is recorded Jesus' healing of ten lepers. All ten came to seek Jesus for mercy to heal their leprosy. Only one, a Samaritan returned to give God the glory. He was gloriously saved blessed of God. Leprosy is a terrible skin disease that is contagious and consumes the body slowly but surely. A leper almost certainly face a slow painful death. Life is miserable. Imagine the elation for the ten who were healed by Jesus of their leprosy.

¹¹ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.¹² And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: ¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. ¹⁴ And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. ¹⁹ And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

The Apostle Paul is seeking a reasonable response to give honour and glory where it is due. The Apostle Paul himself was a recipient of God's great grace and consecrated his life for God's glory. Can we do anything less? May God bless our devotion to Him.

(2) Defining Christian Consecration

1 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.

The consecrated life that is acceptable to God is characterised by holiness. The word "holy" means "set apart, sanctified, consecrated." The root word means "chaste, pure." Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of God through Jesus Christ. It means sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement. It is made possible by the God, the Father of mercies (2 Cor. 1:3) who showed compassion or pity for the suffering sinner. [The Complete Word Study Bible Dictionary, Spiros Zodhiates]

Solomon defined holiness as the defining character of believers that God pronounced as good in **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

The fear God and keeping of His commandments bring holiness. The consecrated life is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice; one fully surrendered to God in faith. The believer's body is the temple of God which is holy as taught by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:17 *"The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* Andrew Murray said well, "From eternity it was God's desire to create man as a dwelling place through which to show His glory."

The believer can depend upon God's mercies as they make their bodies a living offering to Him. Plumer observed well, "By the mercies of God, not merely by the infinite kindness known to dwell in the divine bosom, but by all the amazing mercies manifested in your election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, redemption, and glorification..."

Choose to surrender your life to God is the Apostle Paul's plea to you and experience the beauty of holiness in your life.

(3) A Living Sacrifice

1 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.

Give to God your wholehearted devotion is the call issued by the Apostel Paul. All that we are comes from Him. God made us with a mind, with a heart and with a will that we might think, love and obey Him freely.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-79) of England began writing verse at age seven. Her insatiable thirst for the Bible led her to memorize the entire New Testament, Psalms, Isaiah, and the Minor Prophets. She was a concert contralto soloist and a brilliant classical pianist. She gave her life to Christ at age fifteen.

At age twenty-one she stood in the art gallery at Dusseldorf, Germany, looking at the painting of the crucifixion with the engraving beneath it: "This I have done for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" In the previous century the wealthy young Count Zinzendorf of Moravian missionary fame read these same words and was led to consecrate his life to Christ. As she stood there, her very soul was stirred. Tears cascaded down her cheeks. From that moment she dedicated her talents to the service of the Lord.

Through her life she was frail and dedicate in health and died at the early age of forty-two. When she wrote "Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee," it was for her a prayer. And when she penned the words, "Take my silver and my gold," she did exactly that! She gave fifty pieces of jewellery (heirlooms) to the Church Missionary Society, including a jewel cabinet that she said was "fit for a countess." She retained only a brooch for daily wear that was a memorial of her parents, and a locket with a portrait of her niece who had gone to heaven. Of that experience she wrote, "I don't think I need tell you I never packed a box with such pleasure." Despite the dark nights of frequent sickness and suffering, the dedicated life of this poetess can best be summed up in her prayer lyrics.

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Take My life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow with ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move,
At the impulse of thy love;

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages for Thee
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose
Take my will, and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart; it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

May the words of this beautiful hymn echo the prayer and consecration of our life.
Amen.

[Extracted and edited from Songs in the Night by Henry Gariepy]