

Romans

Romans Chapter Twelve

Romans 12:1-2

June 5, 2011

This is lesson number 91 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: Present Your Bodies to God

We have come to Chapter 12 in our exposition of Romans. This is lesson number 91 in my series of expositions. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached 297 messages on Romans Chapters One through Eleven. That works out to more than three times as many lessons that I have taught on the same texts.

Why does it take 297 sermons or even 91 lessons to teach eleven chapters of the Bible? Can't anyone just read the Book of Romans and get what it says?

Not really. Now I do not mean mysticism, which would mean that I as a minister could know things that you cannot know. But God gave gifts to the church. That is why God gave pastors and teachers to the church. They study and compare Scripture with Scripture and bring in applications of the text to the hearers. Then the hearers can see if what they preach is according to the Word. The pastors grow and the church is edified.

Now in teaching from Romans 1-11 I have given you some “strong meat” [KJV] of the Word of God.

The writer to the Hebrews, who I believe is Paul, says:

Hebrews 5:12-14 KJV

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

NKJV translates it “solid food”.

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How do we discern both good and evil? By the solid food of sound doctrine!

Our Postmodern culture says that discerning both good and evil is not a problem because **nothing is evil**. You are not to make value judgments concerning moral behavior.

The tenets of Postmodernism include:

No value judgments

Pluralism {all religion or no religion is equally valid}

No objective truth { except that there is no objective truth }

Feelings over facts

But a Christian cannot hold to a Postmodern worldview!

Everything about Postmodernism is against Christianity.

Romans Chapter 12 begins a new division of Romans where we learn how to discern both good and evil. In fact 12 - 16 do that very well.

Romans Chapters One through Eleven are heavy on doctrine, strong meat / solid food, or the teaching of God's Word.

We have the most thorough presentation of the Gospel in Chapters 1-11.

Most religious people today, including most Southern Baptists do not believe the teaching of Chapters 1-11. They do not believe that God is sovereign in His choice of whom He shows mercy. They have been taught that God cannot save anyone unless that person gives God permission.

The essence of the Gospel in four statements: [Henry Mahan]

Man the sinner.

Christ the Savior.

Judgment is certain.

Christ is not a beggar.

Any fair reading of Romans should convince anyone of their real guilt and condemnation because of the one sin of the one man, Adam the representative of the human race. That means every person is condemned already. **Man the sinner.**

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Then in many different ways in Romans Paul presents Jesus as the righteousness of God and the only propitiation [appeasement of God's wrath] for sin. There is only one way to be saved and that is by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. **Christ the Savior.**

Because God is holy sin must be punished. Acts 17:31 tells us, "God has appointed a Day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Judgment is certain.

Romans and Ephesians and other Scriptures establish that salvation is God's free choice and that God justifies the ungodly. It is Christ that saves and **Christ is not a beggar.**

Man the sinner.

Christ the Savior.

Judgment is certain.

Christ is not a beggar.

That is the essence of the Gospel.

So we have taught the **doctrines of grace** from Chapters One through Eleven. But doctrines have implications of personal application.

In 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God..."

After all of this "strong meat", so what?

Correct doctrine is very important. But even if you know correct doctrine but do not personally apply its implications, you will become a religious Pharisee, and at the judgment be found to be still dead in trespasses and sins. Correct understanding of doctrine necessarily leads to personal application.

Why didn't Paul just tell believers how to live a Christian life?
Because doctrine must come first.

First he gives the teaching and then the application.

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That seems to me what the “seeker sensitive” preachers are missing. People don’t like to be told that God is absolutely sovereign. Just tell me what to do but don’t tell me that I am a lost sinner. Tell me about the love of God but don’t tell me “God hates the workers of iniquity every day.”

It was first necessary to lay down the doctrines of grace in order to have a basis for certain behavior. That is what the “therefore” in 12:1 means.

There are those who only want to hear doctrine.

And there are those who only want to hear application.

All application without the correct doctrinal basis will make you into a legalist or a charismatic or both and your hope of salvation will be based on your false notion that you have earned a righteous standing before God because of something that you have done or because you have a certain spiritual gift.

Paul was accused of being an **antinomian**, someone who believes that you can be saved but that you do not have to be obedient to the Word of God.

That is what the so-called “Lordship” controversy is about. The idea that Jesus can be your Savior, but not your Lord is a lie.

He is the Lord Jesus Christ!

We have already seen how Paul answers the charge that he is an antinomian.

Romans 3:8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"? — As we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Romans 6:12-14

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

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Beginning with Chapter Twelve Paul is going to tell Christians what the implications of correct doctrines are. In all of Paul's letters he gives us first the doctrine and then he tells us the "so what"?

God has called you; you are born again; and you are justified: so what?

The "so-what" says that since you were baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ's death and you have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life that acceptable worship is that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

How do you "walk" or live the life of a Christian?

Every believer should want to know "**the will of God.**"

Many books have been written on knowing the will of God.

The best book on the will of God is the Bible itself.

There are over 20 NT references to the "will of God."

Take these two:

1 Thess 4:1-8

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.
NKJV

1 Thess 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
NKJV

Likewise we have before us a clear statement in verse 2 of Chapter 12 that you as a Christian, "may prove, or know what is that **good and acceptable will of God.**"

Before we open up what each verse or section tells us about the will of God we will first read Chapter 12.

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The outline of Chapter 12 is fairly simple. After telling us what our reasonable [not asking too much], service of worship is in verses 1 & 2, the rest of the chapter divides into the **will of God** for the Christian in regard to the church in verses 3-7. Then verses 8-21 give us the **will of God** for us as individual Christians and how we relate to one another.

Follow along in your Bible as I read Chapter 12.

Romans 12

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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Now everyone who hears what I have just read now knows the will of God for your life in the church and for your life as an individual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every Christian needs to know should desire to follow the **will of God. Amen?**

Well, I surely do want to know the will of God and as I read what it is I often find myself, “weighed in the balance and found wanting.”

Let’s examine verses 1 – 2:

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Let’s first talk about our **reasonable service of worship.**

The OT system of worship was based on sacrifices as a thank offering to God. But the OT sacrificial system has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ never to be needed again.

The people who teach that a new temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and that actual literal animal sacrifices will once again be offered have simply ignored what the NT teaches about what is an acceptable sacrifice of worship to God.

If the OT sacrifices are gone forever what can we do?

Instead of offering a sacrifice you can be one!

Devote yourself to holy living and to pleasing God. And this is not an unreasonable thing for a Christian to do, it is the right thing to do, and it is what every genuine Christian will desire to do.

Some people think that all Christianity involves is writing out a check and doing a few projects to help the poor and needy. Well we are instructed to do that. Give our money to support the church and be charitable and help others. But here is what real Christianity involves.

Presenting your body as a living sacrifice to God.

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Christianity is not a one-time experience when a person is born again.
Christianity is a life lived for Christ.

The greatest evangelistic tool is a life lived for Christ.

Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel, and use words if necessary."

How do we live a life for Christ? We must change our way of thinking. The idea is for us not to live as the world. Don't try to be like everybody else.

Learn to stop thinking like the world thinks and let's renew our mind.

There are some dangers here when we actually put this into practice.

We look around and see that the world wears a lot of makeup, lipstick, and such. So some people say that Christians do not wear makeup.

Unbelievers go to the movies.
So some say that Christians cannot go to movies.

That is nonsense and the root of legalism. That is the way the Pharisees came up with all of their "rules."

We must learn the difference between God's thoughts and man's rules.

God calls us to be positive and not negative. Transform your mind. Renew your mind. This is not a call to hide out in a monastery but a call to learn how to think.
We need to learn to think God's thoughts after Him.

When we learn to think God's thoughts after Him we will know what is the will of God for us and we will be able to discern both good and evil.

A renewed mind learns what God loves and what God hates.

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The Bible is full of instruction about how to think God's thoughts after Him. Here is just one example:

Proverbs 6:16-19

**16 These six things the LORD hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren.**

That is not all that God hates but He surely hates those things.

Here is another lesson on how to think God's thoughts after Him.

Jesus gave us a simple rule for knowing how to act in every relationship with another person.

Matthew 7:12

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...

You see the problem is not so much in **knowing** what is right but in **doing** what is right from a renewed mind. Doing what is right from a renewed mind is not burdensome. The apostle John said Jesus' commandments are not burdensome.

If doing what is right is a big problem for you, ask yourself why.

This is why we need to read the Scriptures every day. As we read the Bible we will find that what James wrote is true.

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The Bible is like a mirror that gives us a reflection of what we really look like.

James 1:21-27

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Notice that this is the first thing that Paul tells us after laying down the doctrine. He tells us how we may worship God in an acceptable manner? After learning what the God of mercy has done for us in Christ why would we want to listen to the devil to tell us how to live?

If you think Chapters 12-16 were written to make your life unpleasant you have missed the point entirely. Presenting our body as a living sacrifice to God is what will make our life bearable.

If I get sick, it is God's body that is sick.

Do you think He cares about His own body?

If we give ourselves entirely to God then we no longer get to decide what is in our best interests.

How can I be pleasing to God if I do not know what He expects of me?

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

God willing in the next lesson we will look at God's will for us in the church and the correct exercise of spiritual gifts.

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As we prepare to take the Lord's Supper may we reflect on the mercies of God and how God has made it possible for anyone to present their physical body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

As you examine your own life do you find that you can personally prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God?

Jesus gave His physical body and blood for the remission of sins.
Have you given your physical body to God as a living sacrifice?