

Serving the Savior

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Bible Text: Romans 12:1-8

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These words were written by John Newton a long time ago. What's the other song that he wrote? Amazing Grace. The former slave trader who was converted and became a great, great, great preacher and pastor and a great hymn writer.

Let's go to Romans 12 and look at verses 1 through 8 on this Sunday evening. We kind of finished our gleanings through James and Romans 12, especially verses 1 and 2, is one of those foundational texts, I guess you would say, in the Christian experience. We seem to go there often and learn that soon after our conversion. I was thinking just this week about the fact that I've been preaching here for 34 years and so many of the familiar texts I've dealt with at least once and if I always try to find brand-new stuff, all we're left with is Leviticus or Numbers. Some good and godly men that preached before me, I ran across some of their writings and they encourage you to go back and read works on the things you've put study into and I find it rich for me. I hope you find it rich for you because we can't just leave out stuff because we've touched on it 20 years ago or so.

But anyway, this is a text that is one of the easiest texts in the world to grasp. At the same time, it can be one of the hardest to grasp. Let's look at it together. Romans 12, verses 1-8.

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be [being] transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove [or discover] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in

his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Now, I. I want to do something of an exposition of this text is the dedication of self. The dedication of self. Notice how he just brings this out and if you want to put an outline on a piece of paper, the first sub point or A would be: the point of dedication. That's exactly what he's referring to here. There is a point of dedication from which you work out from in the Christian life. He says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God." That phrase that he urges us to present our bodies is what the Greek scholars call an aorist tense verb. An aorist tense verb means there is finished action in past time but continuing results or consequences. So he says, "You're doing something, a point was established and now there flows from that the continuation." I like to say a new purpose and pattern to life is established and now you flow in that new purpose and pattern. There is a point.

Now, the Scripture talks about becoming a Christian as a birth. The Bible talks about us being born again and birth happens at a point in time. There is a point in time when you become a believer in Jesus Christ. Now, I'm not suggesting that you have to always know exactly that point in time. For a number of people, it was a season of time where they came to realize that the reality of their sinfulness and their guilt was so apparent to them and the weight of that had come upon them but that also they found great joy and release in putting their trust and their faith in Jesus Christ and there was kindled within them a new love for the Scriptures and a new love for the church and for Christians, a new love for being around believers in Christ, a new commitment to biblical morals. They just noticed a change. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." But the Bible does say that there is a point in time where you are born into the kingdom of God. The Bible also pictures conversion as a marriage. There is a point in time when you say, "I do." And you become married.

So this is a presenting of your bodies at a point in time, it happens in your life and then you continue on. Now, notice how Paul makes this admonition. He doesn't bring the hard hammer of the law upon these people. He doesn't come down with a rod of iron. He said, "I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." That's an interesting phrase. In other words, when you begin to grasp all that Paul had been teaching the Roman church in chapters 1 through 11 of Romans, have you got several decades and I can go through that right quick? There is a lot there in Romans chapters 1 through 11 but notice what I'm saying: when you begin to grasp the wonders and the glories of how you're saved by grace, the great wisdom and power and beauty of God and all that he did in saving you and we see that in Romans chapters 1 through 11, layer upon layer, truth upon truth, precept upon precept, that's really just beyond knowledge. God tells us a lot and we never quit learning but it's just so glorious and wonderful. All the truths of sovereign grace. He says, "When you begin to grasp that," and that's why sound preaching and teaching is so essential. You can't understand the Bible until foundational precepts are there. So his point is: as you begin to grasp the glories and wonders of this mercy God has had for you, on that basis, I admonish you to start living this way. So here's my point to you: if you've

been born again by the Spirit of God, if you have been Gospel humbled, you know what I mean by Gospel humbled, don't you? That means you have received the Spirit of God. He has brought you to the realization of who you are and what you are before this infinitely true and holy God. You have had a crushing in your spirit and a brokenness in your heart about your wicked offensiveness before this holy God and you are humbled beyond compare that he would send his own Son to become your sin and have the imputation of your guilt and unrighteousness into him and him suffering in your place on the cross and then in grace upon grace, he takes his great righteousness and infuses and imputes that into you and you stand before the true and holy God in the righteousness of God's Son Jesus Christ. If that's beginning to grasp you, if that controls you, then Romans 12:1 and 2 begin to make some sense.

This isn't just a rulebook. It's not just a 1, 2, 3, 4 that you put on in the power of your flesh. You have to be one who has experienced the new birth and have begun to understand. You see, you can experience a new birth but not enjoy it much. Are you hearing me? You can experience a new birth and not enjoy it much because you haven't been taught well. But have you been preached to and taught well? Here's the interesting thing about it: those who haven't been taught well sometimes or don't understand the new birth, thinks that those of us who try to teach thoroughly the doctrines of Scripture are hard and joy crushers and putting people down and giving people low self-esteem because we preach the total depravity of man and the sinfulness of man before a holy God. By the way, I'm not trying to wound your self-esteem. I'm trying to annihilate your self-esteem. I want you to have Christ-esteem. Amen? God help that you look at yourself and get happy about that. Yourself is so rotten it took the death of the Son of God to make you righteous in the sight of God himself. You don't need self-esteem, you need Christ-esteem.

Anyway, isn't it true as we bring the thundering weight of the truth of God on us, that includes the glorious strength of Jesus to make us God's sons and it brings us deeper joy than if we hadn't learned those great doctrines and truths. It deepens our joy. So here's what Paul is saying: if you begin to grasp all that you are, that you can stand justified by grace through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works lest any man should boast. When you begin to grasp that, it holds you. It controls you. The old legalist denominations would look at us and say, "How are you going to get those people to live right? How are they going to be faithful? How are they going to serve God if you don't give them some rules and some laws and hold over them that they can lose their salvation?" Here's how we're going to do it: we're going to preach the truth and if God doesn't hold them, they're going to go away. That's it. If God doesn't hold them and that's what he's saying here. "I urge you by the mercies of God."

So he doesn't bring law down on them. He doesn't bring force down on them. He says, "Contemplate afresh the glorious truths of your conversion, your salvation," and doesn't that make you want to serve God? Listen to me friend: God is not at all happy or pleased if you obey him out of some fleshly, menial coercion. That's what the pagans do. That's what the wicked do. No, God comes and envelops you in sovereign, divine love and he apprehends you and captures you by that love and that grace and you cannot help but say,

"O Lord, I am weak. O Lord, I am failing. But O Lord, I fall but by your grace I'm going to keep getting up and keep going back and keep serving you until the day I die. Not to earn my salvation but because you have given me these great mercies and I stand in them." George Whitfield, like his associates John and Charles Wesley, was a member of the Church of England, the Anglican church, and it had fallen into unsound doctrine like it seems every denomination starts out strong and true and then falls away. And George Whitfield and John and Charles Wesley begin to discover the Gospel and the doctrines of grace and that salvation was not through the mechanics and the rituals and the formalities of church life, that true salvation was by faith in Jesus Christ. On one occasion George Whitfield talked about his journeying through the legalisms. He said, "I used to fast 36 hours twice a week. I prayed formal prayers several times a day and I almost starved myself to death during Lent and after all of that, only felt myself more miserable." So he knew what it was like to live under the force and the weight of legalism and law and not to joy in the treasures of mercy and grace.

I don't want to read a whole lot to you but Martin Luther, the great reformer, wrote this in talking about this verse 12:1 and at this rate, I'm not going to get through this but Luther writes, "He does not say I command you, he says I urge you by the mercies of God. That's because he's preaching to those who are already Christians and already godly through the faith of the new man, who are not to be forced with commands but to be admonished to do willingly what is good in regard to the sinful old man." He's talking about the new man you are when you are saved and the old man that you were before you were converted. "For he who does it not willingly, solely as a result of an admonition, he is no Christian. And he who compels it from the unwilling with laws, he already is no Christian preacher but a ruler with a worldly club. A law driver insists with threats and penalties. A preacher of grace lures and incites us with divine goodness and compassion shown to us."

That's what we're talking about. That's what Paul is saying here. "I urge you by the mercies of God, think on the great, great deep wonders of the wretched, wrath-deserving sinner that you are and God in grace chose to cast favor toward you." He wasn't obligated to do that. There is nothing in any way, shape or fashion, that compelled him to do that because you somehow are more special than your neighbor. No, it's unmerited favor and he didn't just kind of favor you. He took his precious one and only begotten Son and crushed him in the filth and rottenness and wrath of becoming sin for us, imputing into him our sin so that he might impute into us his righteousness. And we gain a standing through the mercies of God through his Son Jesus Christ infinitely greater than the righteousness of Adam and Eve before they sinned in the Garden. They had a righteousness but we get the righteousness of the Son of God. If that doesn't humble you and give you more joy, I call it crushing joy, it ought to crush us but lift us in joy at the same time. If that doesn't humble you and give you some joy, you ain't got one slight drop of the Spirit of God in your soul. Paul is writing to people he's convinced our genuinely converted and are beginning to grasp all these marvelous truths and he says, "On that basis, I urge you to live out the reality of the great transformation that has happened within you."

Now he continues, he builds on this and he says, "I urge you, brethren, by these mercies of God that you are beginning to understand, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice." That means that you ought to just decide, "I have drawn a line, though I will never be perfect, the new purpose and pattern of my life is that this body, this physical temple I am housed in temporarily..." By the way, you don't get a new glorified temple one day, hopefully soon. But right now you are housed in this old temple with these eyes and these ears and these hands and I've got a bad one. We have just this limited body that is prone to wander and prone to sin but he says, "Now since you've been radically transformed by the mercies of God, you need to consider, you draw a line in the sand that there is a new purpose for this body now. It's going in a new direction."

Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ." Line in the sand. Point in time.

"Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me and the life that I live now in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, I live for him who loved me and gave himself for me." Notice the point in time in the new change. A holy sacrifice. We are holy because he has made us holy. We stand holy in the merits of Jesus Christ. Not in your merits. You'll leave this service and go and sin but Jesus has never sinned. Aren't you glad you stand in his holiness? And in that holiness, you are now able to say, "Here I am, God. I am signing up to be your servant and to be in your service and I am confident I am qualified in your Son." Did you get that? Christ makes you a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God. Is that not good news? You know, we have all of these amazing Stoics and excessive ones around the world who lock themselves in caves and cast away all the things of the world and throw themselves into abject poverty and live by the strictest devotions and rules that they might feel like they are an acceptable servant to God. Not one of them are acceptable. You might as well get up in the morning and go to Walmart and yell, "Yea for the Crimson Tide," and go fishing that afternoon and just live like a regular person who knows and loves Jesus and Jesus has made you righteous. You are more holy than that monk hiding away in a cave somewhere, trying to put it on in the power of his fallen flesh. He didn't tell any of these Romans to quit their jobs and go pilgrimage somewhere to some holy place. He basically said, "Keep living what you're living, doing what you're doing. If there is obvious wickedness, repent of that and get it out of your life, of course. But live in the real world, in the real way but live for Christ, dedicate your body to Christ knowing that in Christ this is a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God." Folks, I'm going to tell you, I can't get over that. I've been preaching 34 years and I can't get over it. How are you getting over it? How can you wake up on Monday morning and not be stirred in the core of your soul that, "I today am a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God as I serve him today with all my sin and all my weakness and all my failure." As a matter of fact, he allows some of that sin to creep back in so that you might be reminded of just what you are so you will be humbled again and thankful again for just what he is.

Let's go on. There is a point of dedication under the this dedication of self. Consider that that's done, that's settled and I'm moving forward in a new purpose and pattern of my life to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Now, the product of that dedication. This would be B in the outline, the product of dedication. Verse 2, he says, "And do not be conformed to this world," that's the natural production. Listen, the great, great error that we fall into, I'm

guilty, especially as younger believers, is we come to know Christ, we want to serve him and immediately we focus on the world and what we don't want to be like. Great big mistake. You never do that. Don't ever focus on the world or on wickedness and say, "I don't want to be like that." Well, I can't say never. That's just not your primary focus because you will almost always pendulum swing from that wickedness to an equally bad form of wickedness on the other end. You might become an idolatrous legalist against the wickedness you are looking at. Listen: you never live for Jesus Christ by reacting against error, you live by acting on truth. Are you with me? Don't focus on the error and react against it, focus on truth and live it out and you will be against the error but you are doing it from a different perspective and from a different starting point.

So you find your self, here's the verse, verse 2, "not being conformed to this world." You find your self by focusing on Jesus Christ and focusing on the word of God, not worrying about the world. By the way, listen: have you found out that as you have grown in Christ, some of the things you stood against as a young Christian you really shouldn't have stood against? You might have had a little grace about some of those errors but you were so full of yourself that you knew what was righteous better than God did. I told you this before, I found out sometimes I was more conservative than God. You know what that's called? Sin. If you are more conservative than God, you are in sin. I had to learn as a young preacher that I had to let some things go because the word of God just wasn't clear enough about them and it was okay. Now, I'm not going into a list of stuff because I'll leave yours out but there is a whole lot of stuff that comes under that heading of stuff that you learned to let go. What's my point? You find yourself not being conformed to this world because you are focusing on Christ and just being pleasing to him. It's the product of your new focus and your new life.

A good verse, Galatians 1:3 and 4 says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins," now listen to this, "so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." In other words, we find ourselves, now listen, we have a new capacity, a new in enablement by the new birth and the new spirit that has come with than us to begin to live for God. By the way, find joy in it. And we find ourselves noticing that the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and his grace. That's what Paul meant writing to the Galatians when he said, "He gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age." We are no longer subjects held captive and enslaved by this temporal soon-to-be-destroyed world. We have a higher plane and a higher purpose to live on now. We're no longer conformed to this world.

We live not for this age. You see, we expect to go to heaven. This temporal world and the common graces of this temporal world are okay but they don't thrill us too much. We're learning to say, "That was fun but that's not my home yet. I have greater treasures and pleasures than that that await me somewhere else." So we are not of this age. We expect to go to heaven and then we expect to inhabit a new heaven and a new earth and therefore while we are here, our lifestyle increasingly becomes different. We are not conformed to this world. Now, that doesn't mean again that you don't eat a good steak dinner and you don't go to Walmart. Does that mean that you have to go and live on a farm and dress like

Little House on the Prairie and raise your own chickens? If you want to do that that's great, bring me some eggs. I love them when they are fresh like that. There is nothing wrong with that. That's okay but don't think that's what the verse means. We've got enough of that legalism floating through the reform camp right now. Somehow if you go back to the early part of the 19th century, you are more holy. Well, why not just go back to 2,000 years ago. Do you know what? Just pick one era and pick it out and say, "If we live like that then we are holy." That's the Mennonite and the Amish error. There are some good folks in those groups. I met some Mennonite folks who had good sound doctrine but they were entrapped in this focusing on some modern stuff that they couldn't do. I thought, "Where is that in the word of God?" That's not what "don't be conformed to this world" means. It means your joys, your treasures, your purpose is not the way the world would want it to be and the way the world defines that it should be. You have a higher calling and a higher joy and a higher purpose. You have been transformed within that's going to obviously make an outward change in your life.

Thirdly, C and we'll close with this one: the process of this dedication. There is a point, aorist tense, once for all, line in the sand, new life, new person, new purpose and pattern to my life. There is a product to that. I begin to see an outward difference in me. I'm not conformed to this world. By the way, that does cause some problems. The guys at work begin to think you're a little weird. Now, don't try to be weird. We don't need anymore Christians doing that. Don't try to be weird, just love Jesus and honor the word and you will be weird enough. Okay? Don't try to be ultra-holy and ultra-humble. I've met a few that come through that are just so proud of their humility. Just be real where you are and love Jesus and you'll find yourself different than those around you because your treasure is different, your goals are different and your ambitions are different.

Then there is a process to this dedication and that is C in the outline. He said, "be transformed." Then in verse 2, "do not be conformed to this world but be transformed." You know that's a present tense continual action verb which means "keep on being" or "be being" transformed. In other words, there is a transformation that happens within but now from that point unto glorification there is what we call progressive sanctification where you are to be being transformed. That word "transformed" is metamorpho, obviously, we get our English word "metamorphosis" from this word. You know what that means. It's a total radical change. And he says, "We're going to be transformed by the renewing of your mind." I'm convinced that can mean only one thing: saturating your mind with the truth of the word of God. And as you saturate your mind with the truth of the word of God there is always an exchange going on. You are unplugging and discharging old thinking and old conclusions and you are plugging in and thinking on new conclusions and new truths. Constantly a change.

Now listen to me: that's why from the moment we are saved until glorification, we will always be repenters. Some of you have been sitting under my preaching for 34 years and I hope and I pray that you still sit there on Sunday and find some thought patterns, some viewpoints, some attitude when the word of God is preached and you say, "Uh-oh, that's not right. God, I just know I've held to that for 40 years. Today in that church service because the word of God confronted it and rebuked it, I am going to let that one go and

replace it with a biblical viewpoint there." Isn't that a good way to live? I love living that way. It's either be living that way or go to hell. Which one do you want? Now, I'm not saying that you earn your way to heaven. I mean, saved people do this stuff. You are constantly repenting. You are renewing your mind to the truth of God and then one day you get this magnanimous leap forward. You know, the evolutionists say that there are these quantum leaps in the evolutionary chain. That's because they can't find fossils. They find all these fossils of fish and all these fossils of mammals and all these fossils of other things but the links in between, there are very, very, very few fossils that they can manipulate to look like there was this continual, gradual change so they say, "There must have been just some leaps." Evolution came along and it came to a certain stage of development and just boom, it jumped over here. Well, that's what's going to happen to you when you see Jesus. He is going to take your old mind in whatever state or status of renewing he's brought you to in this pilgrimage of sanctification and he's going to just bump you all the way up to the glorified level and you will have perfect renewed minds. Now listen to me: then from that moment onward, you will no longer be your biggest problem. You do understand that you are your biggest problem? It's not brother Jeff. You are your biggest problem. If you don't know that, you need to nail that down. You need to just say tonight, "I learned something tonight. I am my own biggest problem." What did the old preacher say, "It's not my brother, it's not my sister, it's me, O Lord, standing in need of prayer." You say, "Well, but my wife. Well, but my husband. Well, but my children." Well, there may be some things that need to be addressed there but it's very likely that a perfectly sovereign God put the right sandpaper in your life. "Yeah, but my situation." Still, you are your own biggest problem and that's why you've got to keep renewing your mind according to the word of God. That's why I've said to you 100 times and I'm going to say it 101 times, I drive two hours one way to put my family under sound preaching because if they don't get the truth, they can't renew. If they can't renew, they can't grow. If they are not growing, there is no evidence of salvation. Are you hearing me? You've got to be under the truth to gain security of salvation, not that it's earned but that's what gives you security, the preaching and teaching of the truth of the word of God. There is this continual of trying to be being transformed. 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed," that's a continual action, "into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." In other words, right now we have one status of glory and we are continuing to renew ourselves unto the word of God and then we go from one level to another level of glory to another level of glory to one day full glorification. So there is to be that constant inter-metamorphosis, this renewing of the mind.

Linski in his excellent commentary says, "The Christians inward transformation is affected when his moral mentality becomes renewed, the very mentality itself so that it no longer thinks, understands and judges as it once did because it is in the process of a renewal that advances steadily. The Christian minds the things of the Spirit, a thing he never did before and ceases minding the things of the flesh, a thing he always did before. As the Son of God, he is led by the Spirit of God in his very mind and the use of his body shows it." You see what he's saying: don't be conformed to this world. You are to present your bodies as a living holy sacrifice. Don't be conformed to this world. Now, what is the process of this happening? Renewing. Renewing. Renewing the mind with the truth of

the word of God, bringing truth in and repenting of old viewpoints, attitudes, conclusions or convictions that are not biblical. Canceling those out and putting new biblical ones in and then living them out and just constantly being in that flow. Constantly being in that flow.

The transformation is from continual association. Let me say that again: this transformation is from continual association. Association with the word of God primarily and foundationally but listen, God made no man an island and Paul is going to get to that in just a moment. We will cover that next time, Lord willing. He's going to go into all of the spiritual gifts and how we serve one another with those spiritual gifts. Isn't it interesting, he's saying as you're presenting your body a living and holy sacrifice, you are not being conformed to this world, the process of this is you are constantly renewing your mind. The natural outgrowth of that will be a growing desire and joy in serving your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Listen to me: that is the clear evidence of a new birth. These guys who are independent spirited and don't love the local church and hip hop around and run around and can't anchor their lives in a sound church and serve the Lord through thick and thin, up and down, good times and bad times, don't give good evidence. I'm not saying that they are not but don't give good evidence that they are one of these that God has changed who has presented themselves as a living and holy sacrifice, who is not being conformed to this world and who is continually renewing themselves because the outgrowth of that is always deeper love and service to the body of Christ.

Now, there is a huge problem in today's culture. It's hard to find a church sanctified enough and spiritual enough to where you can really call it the body of Christ. I'm serious. I'm not just throwing words out there, folks. That doesn't mean there's not some good Christians in most congregations because I know there is but very often they are the remnant and the minority and they are just hanging in there because they've got good hearts and good spirits. Sometimes very genuine Christians find themselves in a congregation that has no real spiritual vitality and it's kind of frustrating and they don't know how to serve God there because they are not one in spirit with so many of the people there.

Last thought. He continues on in our text, the end of verse 2, "so that you prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." That's the idea of proving by testing. Here's what he's saying: if you will live this truth I've been preaching to you tonight, guess what? The search is over. It's over, you have found the will of God. What is the will of God? That's the will of God. You will prove what the will of God is. That's what he means. Now think secondarily, decisions about self become clearer also. But you see here's the main thing, you young folks, you get all hung up on, "Who am I going to marry? Who am I going to marry?" Are you all looking at me? Are you happy? Can you smile? "Who am I going to marry. What is God's will?" That's God's will. Look, if you will do that, you will find her. If you will do that, you will find him. If you are not doing that, you probably won't. Is that not the easiest thing in the world? "Well, where am I supposed to work?" I don't know. Do this. That's the will of God. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you." That's what

this text is saying. It's just not hard, is it? It's just the easiest thing. It's the simplest thing. I mean, it's just not hard. All counseling is over. Don't come to my office. That's it. "But Jeff, what am I supposed to do?" You're supposed to do that.

I've started doing something with folks because I've had the experience myself. I'm done with this. I can't snap this finger but when folks are discouraged and they are downcast and they are depressed, I've walked in those arenas. I found something that never fails. It never fails. It never fails. It never fails. Fix it. Just fix it. If you are a child of God. That's why this is the easiest and the hardest thing in the word. If you are not truly born again, this doesn't work. You don't get it. You can't grasp it. You can put it on the flesh and it's just not going to work but if you are one who has been changed by the mercies of God, then this starts to make sense to you. Anyway, one quick application. When you are depressed, when you are discouraged, when you are downcast, the Bible says that instead of being like that, seek the Lord with thanksgiving. Worry about nothing. Put everything by prayer with supplication and thanksgiving, make your request known to God. So I'll have a person and I'll say, "Let's start with 25 things that you are thankful for." I'm not saying that you feel thankful for them, I mean that you ought to feel thankful for. I didn't say thanksgiving because you feel it, it's because it's the right thing to do. Don't teach your children to wait until they feel thankful, tell them to be thankful. Do you understand, that Jesus is Lord, not your emotions? "Well, I don't feel well." Well, yippe yi yo ki yay. Who cares what you feel. God doesn't care and I couldn't care less because if I cared how you felt, I could never help you. Of course, I care how you feel. You understand the context of why I'm saying this. If you let your feelings dictate to you, you're going to be a slave and in drudgery the rest of your life but you talk to your feelings, you don't listen to your feelings.

So you write down 25 things you are thankful for and then you write down 25 more things that you are thankful for and I just started with my wife and then my kids. Of course, I start with the Lord and I got down to about 175 and I was so happy I couldn't stand it. Look, if you will get with God and as an act of the will pray those things thanking God for them, I guarantee you, your spirits will lift. Nobody who is a child of God can do that and stay discouraged. You can't do it. Some of you look at me like a calf at a new gate right now. Do you know what that means? Have you ever seen a calf look at a new gate? That means you don't really know if that's really true. Well, try it. Try it. And that's another process, just one of a thousand of taking God's truth and renewing the mind with it. Then when God lifts your spirits, you have proven the will of God which was for me to do this very thing is good. It is acceptable. It is perfect. Nothing else is.

Let's stand together and we'll pray.