

I Am Resolved to Greater Service Rom. 12:1-8

Thesis: To encourage each of us to be better servants of Christ.

Introduction:

- A. Tom Holland calls Rom. 12 the “Golden Chapter of the Bible.”
 - 1. The reason is because it is filled with instructions for Christians on how to live their lives.
 - 2. Some things mentioned in this chapter are easier to do than others, but all of them are important.

- B. Today, we will notice what God wants us to live like, how we can live this way, and why we should live this way.

I. Paul tells us that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (12:1).

A. This “living sacrifice” is to be holy and acceptable to God.

- 1. This “living sacrifice” is to be holy.
 - a. **Heb. 12:14** - Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.
 - b. **I Pet. 1:15-16** - but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, {16} because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”
- 2. This “living sacrifice” is to be acceptable to God.
 - a. **Heb. 13:16** - But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
 - b. **I Pet. 2:4-5** - Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 - c. This “living sacrifice” is only acceptable to God when it is done according to His will.
- 3. Notice the example of one who sacrificed great things for God.
 - a. Moses is one of the greatest examples in the Bible of one who gave up everything to be faithful to God.
 - 1) **Heb. 11:24-27** - By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, {25} choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, {26} esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. {27} By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

- 2) If it were not for the sacrifice of Moses, the children of Israel would not have departed from the land of Egypt when they did.
- b. We also remember the example of the apostles.
 - 1) Each of the apostles and early disciples gave all that they had so that they could follow Christ.
 - 2) In many cases, it cost them their lives.
 - a) Stephen – Acts 7
 - b) James – Acts 12:2

B. This “living sacrifice” is our “reasonable service.”

1. God does not ask us to do things that are not right.
2. Living this life of sacrifice is our reasonable service because of what Christ has done for us.
 - a. It is Christ who went to the cross to die for us.
 - 1) Rom. 5:6-8 - For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. {7} For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. {8} But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - 2) Jn. 10:17-18 - Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. {18} No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.
 - b. Because He was willing to sacrifice His life for us, then certainly we should be willing to sacrifice our lives for Him.
 - 1) How would you feel if you gave up your life so that someone else could live, and then they committed suicide the next day?
 - 2) When we refuse to live a sacrificial life for Christ, we are doing the exact same thing to Him: committing spiritual suicide.
 - 3) We have counted His sacrifice as being useless.
3. Our life is to be “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” because this is our “reasonable service.”

II. Paul tells us exactly how we can accomplish this goal (12:2-3).

A. Instead of being conformed to this world, we are to be transformed (12:2).

1. The world in which we live is evil.
 - a. Js. 4:4 - Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
 - b. I Jn. 2:15-17 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the

world. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- c. Because this world is evil, we cannot be like them.
2. We are to “be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds.”
 - a. We can only be different from the world when our minds are different than those of the world.
 - b. We renew our minds by putting our focus on what God wants us to do.
 - 1) This renewal comes only with a study of God’s word.
 - 2) It is a renewing of our minds that is based on the word of God.
 - c. As we renew our minds, we change our lives.
 - 1) Eph. 4:17-5:1 – Paul takes us from the old man to the new.
 - 2) Col. 3:10 - In case we missed it, Paul again says that the new man “is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”
 - 3) When we are “transformed by the renewing of” our minds, we change our life.

B. In being this “living sacrifice,” we cannot think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (12:3).

1. People of the world think that they are better than others.
 - a. Pr. 3:7 - Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil.
 - b. Pr. 26:12 - Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
2. The Christian that has renewed their mind must show humility.
 - a. Rom. 12:16 - 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.
 - b. Js. 4:10 - Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.
 - c. I Pet. 5:5-6 - Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” {6} Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,
3. We are to show humility because this is exactly what Christ did.
 - a. Phil. 2:5-8 - Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, {7} but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. {8} And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
 - b. Jesus left the home of His father in heaven so that He could come to this earth and serve us.

- c. **Mk. 10:45** - For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

III. Paul tells us the reason why we should present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (**12:4-8**).

A. Even though we may be many, we are still one body (**12:4-5**).

1. There is only one body, the church.
 - a. **Eph. 1:22-23** - And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, {23} which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
 - b. **Eph. 4:4** - There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
2. Paul makes it clear that we should not be divided.
 - a. We may not have the same function, but we work together as one.
 - b. **I Cor. 1:10** - Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
 - c. **I Cor. 12:12-27**
3. Christ died for this one church.
 - a. This is the one church that “He purchased with His own blood” (**Acts 20:28**).
 - b. It is “the purchased possession” (**Eph. 1:14**).

B. We should use the gifts that we have been given for the benefit of the body of Christ (**12:6-8**).

1. We do not use our talents for show; we use them for the benefit of the body.
2. **Col. 3:17** - And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Conclusion:

Today, are you presenting your body as a living sacrifice to God?