



# **ROMANS**

The Gospel of God

## **The Gospel of Commitment!**

**Romans 12:1-2**

Message #25 of 33 – S1157

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Sunday Morning Service

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# The Gospel of Commitment!

## *Romans 12:1-2*

### Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 12**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

### Teaching

- **The Gospel of Commitment!**
- Paul concluded a three-chapter detour to talk about God's heart for the Jews.
- He now turns back to all believers.
- Verses 1 and 2 are transformational for both new believers and for more mature believers.
- For people who have been saved for a short time, these verses call them to a commitment to serve Christ with their whole being.
- For mature believers it is a call to reconfirm their call and to a self-examination of how they are doing.
- **Romans 12:1**
- Paul bases what he is about to tell them on the mercies of God.
- The mercies he is referring to is the first eleven chapters of Romans.
- **R. Kent Hughes** has a quote on this that I like because he uses one of my favorite words.  
"Paul is talking about the mercy of God...God's mercy to the terribly fallen human race through the provision of His Son. Radically sinful man was radically lost. But God provided a radical righteousness through the radical person of His Son, which made a radical new life and view of history possible."
- Based on that, God calls for a commitment.
- In essence, God is saying, 'Since I did all that for you, this is what I expect from you.'
- The better we know God and understand the fullness of what He did for us by sending Jesus to save us, the more reasonable what He expects from us seems.

- If serving God seems a burden to someone it is because they do not understand what was given for them to be saved and what they have been blessed with.
- Paul calls us to make our lives a sacrifice to God.
- This is Old Testament symbolism.
- In the Mosaic Law, to atone for your sins and please God, one had to bring a sacrifice, a living animal.
- That animal had to be free from any imperfections, symbolizing purity and innocence.
- That innocent sacrifice was killed and, in some cases, completely burned up.
- The ones that weren't burned up were to be consumed by the person making the sacrifice and their family.
- By calling us to be a sacrifice to God he is calling for a total commitment of ourselves to God.
- Paul uses three words to describe the nature of that sacrifice, living, holy, and acceptable.
- In the Law, a sacrifice must be living at the time it was offered.
- Spiritually, to be a living sacrifice means we are alive to God.

### **Romans 6:10-11**

**For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

- That means we have repented of all known sin, and we are striving to walk in holiness and righteousness.
- You can't be playing around with sin and be a living sacrifice.
- To be a holy sacrifice is to accept and acknowledge that your life has been set apart from the things of this world and are set aside for use by Almighty God.
- Your life belongs to God to use any way He chooses.
- And finally, the sacrificial life is acceptable to God if it is lived out according to His will and plan.
- You cannot live the life you want and expect God to accept it as a pleasing sacrifice.

- Paul finishes this verse by saying that being an acceptable, holy, living sacrifice is ‘reasonable service’ to God.
- Reasonable can also be translated as spiritual.
- The Greek word we translate as reasonable is the same word we use for logic.
- Being a living sacrifice is a logical response to what Jesus did for us.
- Since the birth of the church people have tried to differentiate between the clergy and the laity.
- Clergy are those who are called to minister to the laity, to the people.
- The laity are those who receive the ministry of the clergy.
- They imagine the clergy are called to give 100%, where the everyday people are called to give 50 to 75% of themselves to God.
- The New Testament doesn’t make that differentiation.
- The call here in verse one is for all believers.
- Every person who has benefited from the ministry of Christ on the cross has a reasonable service or duty to God to be an acceptable, holy, living sacrifice.
- Paul then tells us what we need to do to become a living sacrifice.
- **Romans 12:2**
- Paul gives us two commands, one negative, and one positive.
- The negative, do not be conformed to the world has the sense of being pressed into a mold.
- Something like clay is pressed into a mold so that its shape mirrors the shape of the mold.
- This world is trying to press us into its shape. Paul is telling us not to allow that to happen.
- One of the things that makes President Donald Trump so controversial is that he refuses to be conformed into the shape of modern politics.
- He sees the country and world and his role as president through a lens that is unique to him.
- He seems to be unfazed by the forces pressing against him trying to get him to conform to political correctness and tradition.

- If you choose to live your life as a living sacrifice to God, which you should, you will need to reject and resist the world's efforts to press you into its shape.
- That is hard but the default nature of most humans is to conform, to fit in, to go along with the crowd.
- The negative command must be joined to the positive command.
- You can't just resist being conformed, your mind must be transformed.
- The word that we translate to transformed is the same word we get metamorphosis from.
- The caterpillar goes into the cocoon and comes out as a butterfly.
- It is the same word that used to describe Jesus when He was transfigured. **Mark 9:2**

**Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.**

- It is also used to describe what we, as Christ-followers, are experiencing as we are sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. **2**

### **Corinthians 3:18**

**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

- How do we do it, how do we 'be transformed'.
- We don't – it is a work of God.
- 'Be transformed' is in the passive imperative.
- It must be done by someone else, by the Holy Spirit.
- It is also in the present tense which tells us that it is a process.
- We call that process sanctification.
- We are promised that the process will ultimately be completed.

### **Romans 8:29**

**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

- Both the positive and the negative must be the constant reality of our lives.
- If someone concentrates just on the negative and resisting the call of the world, it will lead to a futile life seeking human perfection – there is no such thing.

- If you focus just on the positive with without the negative it will lead a spiritual life devoid of power because Jesus will not live in Satan's house.
- We must say no to the world and yes to the Holy Spirit.
- The benefit of living a life fully committed to God, saying no to the world and yes to the Holy Spirit is you will know the will of God and you will know that God's will is good and acceptable and perfect.
- You will know that your life is pleasing to God, and you will experience as much of God as is possible while on this earth.
- God created the universe and everything in it.
- He has a perfect plan for it all.
- Knowing what that plan is, leads to the abundant life Jesus promised.
- Not knowing it leading to the enemy taking all God's good from you.

### **John 10:10**

**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

- Letting the Holy Spirit renew our minds leads to right thinking.
- Right thinking leads to right living.
- Right living leads to God's glory being seen in the world around you.
- God's glory being seen will lead some to come to Jesus in repentance and be saved.
- Give your life to God today as a living sacrifice.
- He will take it and do something radical with it.
- Don't let this world press you into its mold.
- There is no future in the things of this world. **1 John 2:17**

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

- But in Christ is life forevermore.
- After everything God and Christ Jesus have done for you, the commitment God is calling us to seems very logical.
- Simply put, God wants all of you.
- It is a good trade.
- I give God my life – the life I have been trying to live on my own and in my own power to God, and He exchanges it for a life lived in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- That's a really good deal.
- Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us make that commitment.
- **Pray! Last Song!**