

Parson to Person

ROMANS 12 PART 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. 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" (Romans 12:1–2 NKJV).

Paul could not have asked the Romans to offer their bodies to God as a sacrifice of worship and obedience if he had not documented the Gospel and power of God in the believer as a pre-text. No person can offer anything to God but filthy rags until they have first been cleansed and made new in Jesus. Moreover, the fallen human cannot produce any work acceptable to God by acts of the will, "good intention," or compulsion. Indeed, *"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"* (Isaiah 64:6). Furthermore, for far too long and in far too many ways, pastor/teachers have been seeking human performance from the body of Christ by fleshly motivation and by guilt-generating messaging. This is just wrong. A true believer will be motivated from within by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. We all suffer from enough guilt and shame for our sin and should be moved from guilt to conviction and from shame to worship (surrender) motivated by love as empowered by the Lord's work within. Human performance-driven Christianity will only leave the believer frustrated and defeated. Genuine worship as empowered by the Holy Spirit will cause the believer to rejoice in the How Great Thou Art God! I love the lyrics found in the song entitled "In Christ Alone." It proclaims, "no guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me." Indeed, it is the power of Christ in us, not our power in Him. It is not what we do for Jesus as motivated through human will and emotion, but it is what Jesus does in and through us that is acceptable to Him.

Two Sundays ago we reviewed the first two verses in Romans 12 coupled together with the earlier chapters of Romans. Today we will begin to consider this new section of "orthopraxy" (the study of our behavior, practice, or lifestyle) by examination of the following points we failed to get to earlier:

- 1) The *"holy"* nature of our development as *"good and acceptable and perfect"* to God through the sanctification of the Spirit by *"the mercies of God."*
- 2) The *"living sacrifice"* we are enabled to offer God through redemption we have in Jesus.
- 3) The *"reasonable service"* (worship) as empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- 4) The *"renewing of [our] minds"* as a process in maturity through revelation in the word of God.
- 5) How being *"conformed to this world"* harms the testimony and effectiveness of the believer.

I Love you all,

Pastor Paul