

The Life of Sacrifice- Open Eyes pt4

Ryan Abernathy / General / Open Eyes / Romans 12:1–2

Who is the Gospel for? This is a question every missionary must answer. And the second one follows it, if the Gospel is for everyone what am I willing to do so that everyone can hear it?

Foreign missionaries have to answer this question when they answer the call to the field. Those of us who embrace the missionary mindset have to answer it every day when we get out of bed.

And that can make it a harder question to answer because it is easy to get contented and unfocused and to be honest lazy when the monotony of the day to day hits. We become people who forget what we are called to and the desire to live for others becomes a burden too much to bear along with all the others.

But it is easier if you are dead.

And that's the next facet of the missionary mindset...living like dead people. People who have climbed up on the altar, been sacrificed, and risen to serve a different Master

So with that in mind, turn with me to [Romans 12:1-2](#).

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

The “therefore” in v. 1 refers back not simply to the previous argument about God’s mercy in bringing salvation to Jew and Gentile but to everything that Paul had been teaching from the beginning of the epistle. **It marks the transition from the theology of God’s redemptive act in Christ Jesus to the ethical expectations that flow logically from that theological base.** We come now to what is usually called the “practical” section of Romans

So the first question that should go thru any sane person's mind is why would I do this? What would compel me to lay down all the things I want to pursue and to chase after something else, that may not on the surface be as appealing or desirable.

Jesus.

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

C. K. Barrett comments that “ ‘the mercies of God’ forms a not inadequate summary of what is contained in chs. i–xi, and especially in chs. ix–xi” and that **the proper response “is not to speculate upon the eternal decrees, or one’s own place in the scheme of salvation, but to be obedient**

When we look on the story of the Gospel, who Jesus is and what He has done and is doing. When we realize what HE has done, what we are called to do pales in comparison. (Gospel presentation)

So if that is the reason then what do we give up? **Everything.**

And that is not an exaggeration. What we see here is a picture of someone crawling on an alter to die- and then to live again. Look I am not going to pretend this is easy, but it is truth. We are called to put to death all that we are and rise to walk again as someone different, made new by Jesus. The picture of a living sacrifice is as rough as it sounds. By the power of God, we are made alive again to go to work in His Kingdom.

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

“the earnest appeal, based on the gospel, to those who are already believers to live consistently with the gospel they have received.” **The metaphor in the verse has as its setting the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.** Believers are exhorted to “make a decisive dedication” (Berkeley) of themselves as worshipers stepping forward to place their offerings on the altar

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

That the sacrifice is “living” reflects the voluntary nature of the act. F. F. Bruce comments **that “the sacrifices of the new order do not consist in taking the lives of others, like the ancient animal sacrifices, but in giving one’s own**

And then look at what Paul calls us- holy and acceptable- our lives become an act of worship. And it is very different from living for your own pleasure.

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

The possibility of bringing pleasure to God provides a powerful motivation for complete surrender of self.

This is a phrase I cannot gloss over. **Who does your life say that you worship?** If our lives are supposed to point to Jesus, which way is the needle on your personal compass pointing? Because mine wavers. Some days I am all in and some days I am headed due south. But the calling on all of us is to be living lives that worship Jesus day in and out. **What we sing on Sunday has to be lived on Monday.**

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

Perhaps the best paraphrase is that of Knox, “This is the worship due from you as rational creatures.”⁹ In view of God’s acts of mercy it is entirely fitting that we commit ourselves without reservation to him. **To teach that accepting the free gift of God’s grace does not necessarily involve a moral obligation on our part is a heresy of gigantic proportions.** The popular cliché **“He is Lord of all or not Lord at all”** is absolutely right.

And that means we are living for other people, not us. And those people do not know Jesus. So everything we are doing, that is the end goal.

We become single minded. Everything has a purpose. And yes that means we are going to be a little odd to some folks. We are going to react to people in a different way. Our priorities are going to be different. Our homes are going to be different. We are going to be different as bosses and employees and friends and neighbors. **Because we are living for a different purpose, and we see a different future for all of humanity.**

Look I will be blunt here. When you live as a missionary you see people in the light of eternity. And your heart starts to ache when you see someone in your orbit headed for an eternity in hell separated from God. And that can drive us to some weird extremes, so Paul inserts a caution here. We want to see people come to Jesus, but we do it His way, not our way.

We have a lot of people in our day and time determined to win the world to Jesus in some weird ways. Some want to legislate it. Some want to debate and argue it. Some want to baptize every practice under the sun as holy. Some want to deny that people even need to follow Jesus.

We cannot win the world with the world's ways. Jesus told His disciples, in [John 12:32](#) that when He is high and lifted up He will draw all people to Himself. **We don't win the world by making Jesus small. We win people by making Jesus seen and known.**

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21) Paul reminded the Galatians that the present age is evil (Gal 1:4). It cannot, and must not, serve as a model for Christian living. Its values and goals are antithetical to growth in holiness. The church should stand out from the world as a demonstration of God's intention for the human race. To be culturally identified with the world is to place the church at risk. **Believers are to be salt and light (Matt 5:13–14), purifying and enlightening contemporary culture**

And part of that is how we are changed by Him. You are the BEST example of what Jesus does with a life that some people may know. Does that scare you? It should. But it should also excite you!

We are to be transformed and made to think- and therefore be- different, because we are the representatives of Jesus to the world we are around. He is making you new.

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

where Paul taught that believers, as they behold the glory of the Lord, are being “transformed” into his likeness. **The transformation of which Paul spoke in Rom 12:2 is not a change effected from without but a radical reorientation that begins deep within the human heart.**

And as we are made new, we discover what He has for us- discovering His will.

Romans 1. Among Believers (12:1–21)

The mind renewed enables us to discern the will of God. Released from the control of the world around us, we can come to know what God has in mind for us. We will find that his will is “good, pleasing and perfect.” It is good because it brings about moral and spiritual growth. **It is pleasing to God because it is an expression of his nature.** It is perfect in that no one could possibly improve on what God desires to happen

So many Christians go on and on about how they wish God would make His will known to them. Well let me tell you something, you aren’t getting a specific mission until you are doing the basics. Until God makes known to us a specific calling, we have a purpose. To make Him known where we are.

A missionary, to the house next door, the school, the garage, the office, the Walmart...to the end of the street before the ends of the earth.

