

The Book of Romans - Part 38

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I'm glad you could join me today, and I trust that you'll have your Bible open to the book of Romans chapter 11. Now, last time we left off with verse 36, and, of course, that's the last verse in chapter 11 of the book of Romans and we don't want to overlook that verse as we get ready to go into chapter 12.

In verse 36, it says, *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen...* speaking of Jesus Christ. Now, Christ created all things. He sustains all things and reconciles all things, according to Colossians 1:16-20. God's Son made the worlds in the past, according to Hebrews 1:2, and He is upholding all things by the Word of His power, Hebrews 1:3. In the present He's doing this, and we see in the future, He will be heir of all things, according to Hebrews 1:4. Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Revelation 22:13 talks about that. In Revelation 1:8, it says *the Lord which is, and which was, and which is to come, the almighty.* And I say amen. As Romans 11:36 ends, it says, *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

Now we look at chapter 12 of the book of Romans. We see in the first chapters of the book of Romans how that these first chapters emphasize what God has done in grace. And no commands are found in the early chapters, and in these last chapters that we're going to look at, actually starting with chapter 12, we see the practicality and that many commands are found. And what God has done in grace is always the basis for Christian conduct and behavior, not to earn our way to Heaven, but because of God's grace, we are to serve Him.

Now, notice with me verses 1-2 and Romans chapter 12. Paul says, *I beseech you therefore,*

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. This is an appeal for consecration. Paul uses the word "beseech." Paul was begging the Christians at Rome urging them to do something.

Ephesians 4:1 says, *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.* This is Paul writing, of course, to the church at Ephesus. And then, we see there that the law says, "I command you," but grace says, "I beseech you." Notice the difference. Paul says, "I beseech you." That's grace. The law says, "I command you."

Legal obedience is based on fear, and the person who obeys because He is afraid of the penalty he will have to suffer if he does not obey, that is out of fear. The Gospel obedience is based on love, and in II Corinthians 5:14, it says, *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.* In other words, we're constrained not because we're commanded, but we're forced to do it because of love. It's through love that we're constrained to do it.

The word "therefore" points back to all that Paul has set forth in the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans. All that God has done for the guilty, the ungodly sinner. He says, "I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God." "By the mercies of God" means to have pity, to have mercy, to have compassion and realize that you didn't save yourself. It was by the mercies of God that you're saved and you're on your way to Heaven.

Paul says, "Present your bodies." The word "present" here is the same word found in Romans 6:13, and there it is translated "yield."

A comparison of these two verses indicates that your body is equivalent to yourself.

Romans 6:13 says, *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield [or give yourself] ... unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Now, we go on and we study verse 1 of chapter 12 there, and it talks about sacrifice. Every New Testament believer is a priest, and priests offer sacrifices. "I beg you," he says. "I beseech you to present your bodies as a sacrifice... a living sacrifice." The believer priest is to offer and give himself his body, wholly to God for God's use. He doesn't ask us to kill ourselves or to be offered on an altar of sacrifice by shedding our blood. He says, "I want you alive." He wants the living, and this is in contrast to the Old Testament animal sacrifices, which were slain and ended up dead. He wants us alive. He says, "I want you to present yourself wholly," and this means set apart for God's holy will and service. God's people are saints. They are set apart for the service of the King of Kings. No mortal man can say that a person is a saint or can make a person a saint. Only God through the blood of Jesus Christ can make a person a saint, and every person who trusts Jesus as Savior, according to the Word of God, is a saint.

Paul says that we're to present our bodies which is acceptable unto God. This is well-pleasing, and we see that God is not pleased when believers refuse to give Him their all. In the word "reasonable," we get our English word "logical" from this word. It's logical to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God.

And verse 2 of Romans 12 says, *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Notice there are two commands in this verse. The first is negative; it's what we should not do. And the second is positive, what we must do. "Conformed" here means to put on the form or fashion or appearance of another, to be like. Christians should not conform to the prevailing habits, style, and manners of the world. "The world" here means the people who do not know God. "This world" means this age. Christians should not conform to the prevailing habits, style, and manners of the world. We don't reach the lost by being like them. We are different. We are to come out from among them. It doesn't mean we are to separate ourselves in the sense of staying away from them. We have to give them the Word. We need to give them the Word out of love.

We know that Satan is the god of this world, of this age, of the unsaved. Second Corinthians 4:4 says, *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them....* It's Satan; it's the devil who blinds the minds of people so they will not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but God is more powerful. And once again, we've read how that people are without excuse, how that God is more powerful, and the Spirit of God will open the minds and hearts of those people who are willing to believe. But that verse says, *In whom the god of this world... speaking of II Corinthians 4:4... He has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

And as we study this verse 2, once again, it says believers are taught by grace to live godly in this present age. Don't be conformed to this world, but live because you are saved. Live the way that God wants you to live. He says, "be transformed." This means to be changed, to be transformed. This is like the word "metamorphosis." We're changed. How? By the renewing of your mind. The Word is of God. The Word of God is the means by which the mind is renewed. Romans 10:17 says, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the*

word of God.

Philippians 4:8 says, *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* Get your mind off the world and think of the things of God, is what he's saying here in Philippians 4:8 and in our present study of the book of Romans.

Romans 12:3 says this: *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Now, verse 2 teaches us that we must allow the Spirit of God to transform us into the image and likeness of Christ. You can't do that unless you're saved. You can't let the Spirit of God do that unless you've been born again. And if we are going to be like Christ, then we must be humble and this is what Paul's point is in verse 3. He says, *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you...* Don't think of yourself more highly. Be humble.

Second Corinthians 3:18 says, *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The Spirit of the Lord lives in those people who are saved, not in those people who are not saved. The people turn over a new leaf. It's simply that. They've said, "I'm going to try something different." Well, you don't try God. You ask Him to come into your heart. You ask Him to save you, and it's only through the Spirit of God by trusting Jesus Christ that anyone becomes like Jesus Christ.

Next time, as we look into these verses, we're going to begin with chapter 12, verses 3-5, and

we're going to see how that God wants to work in our lives as saved people.

Do you know Him today as your Savior? If you don't, you need to trust Him. If you've tried to live a godly life without trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior, you're going to fail miserably. It's only by and through the blood of Jesus Christ that anyone is saved and can live a holy life. I didn't say you're going to be perfect. I said that you can be conformed to the image of Christ daily. It's not something we do in order to be saved; it's something we do because we are saved. It's presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, totally giving ourselves to the Lord, saying, "Lord, here I am. Use me. Whatever job you have for me to do, I'm willing to do it."

If you're not saved, if you've not trusted Jesus as your Savior, don't try to do that. Don't try to live godly. You need to be godly in order to live godly. You need to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior by saying, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I trust You to save me. There is nothing I can do to save myself. I want You to save me." If you'll pray a prayer and ask God to save you through Jesus Christ, through His blood He'll save you, according to the Word of God.

It's been good being with you today, and let me remind you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. If you'll look at that Website, you'll see this message, and you'll see other messages of "It's a Good Life." Or you can write to me, and I'll be glad to share with your prayer requests and take them to the Lord. Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. Until the next time when you hear me say, "It's a good life, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer."