

Romans 12: 1-10 (ESV) – A Living Sacrifice

Main point: Be transformed by God and not the world.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: In the previous chapters, Paul has been making his case that God has saved all people through his mercy.

Focus of the study:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Questions:

1. *What is Paul's instruction in v. 2?*
 - a. "Do not be conformed to this world..."
 - i. *What is this world like? How does it want to form us?*
 1. Look out for No. 1; self-centered
 2. Dog eat dog: competition with everyone else, might makes right
2. *What does Paul say to do instead?*
 - a. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind: *how do we do that?*
 - b. Test ideas, words, news against God's own heart and mind, "what is the will of God"
 - i. *How do we know God's heart and mind? What does Paul say is the will of God?*
 1. what is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - ii. *What can we do to think more about the things God values?*
3. *Paul continues in v. 3: "I say that everyone should not think more highly of himself than he ought." How should we think of ourselves?*
 - a. With sober judgment
 - b. With faith
4. *If you look at yourself with sober judgment and faith, what will you likely see?*
 - a. Reality ... rather than only what you want to see 😊

5. *What is Paul's next argument? (read v. 4-5 again)*
 - a. For (i.e., because), as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 - b. *I wonder what you think that means? How does a body function?*
 - i. Different parts (name them!)
 - ii. Different jobs (name them!)
 - iii. All connected
6. *What if a body were all ears and legs? What could it do well? What could it not do at all?*
7. *So, are we all the same here in this room? How are we the same? How are we different?*
 - a. Each person is unique, created by God, and in the image of God
8. *Are we unique? And are we connected?*
 - a. YES to both.
9. v. 6: *"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." What kinds of gifts, talents, and jobs do you or other people have in the world? How did you use them?*
 - a. Generate ideas: teachers, doctors, nurses, moms, dads, homemakers, soldiers, administrators, engineers; a singer, outgoing, analytical, good at fixing things....
10. *How are we supposed to work and live, and why?*
 - a. Together; as a team, because we need each other.
11. *Let's go back to the first verse of this section: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice ... which is your spiritual worship." And also v. 6: Having gifts that differ, let us..."*
 - a. use them!
 - b. *I wonder what it means to be a living sacrifice? How are we supposed to use what God has given us for others?*
 - i. We use our gifts and talents for the good of everyone; conformed not by the world, but by God.
12. Ask for prayer requests for today.
13. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
14. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace