



Paul's letter to the church of Jesus Christ at Oklahoma City
The Admonitions-Romans 12:1

Romans 12:1

12 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.

If Paul wrote a letter to the church in OKC, I believe that he would include this text.

- Therefore

The first 11 chapters of Romans are Paul's doctrinal part of his letter to the Roman church. To teach doctrine means to teach someone what they should believe.

In chapter 12 Paul gave practical instructions. He told the disciples how to apply what they believe.

Notice the word therefore in verse 1. It means that Paul had built his case in Romans 1-11 and now he is going to tell the disciples what they should do with what he has taught them.

Paul gave the disciples practical instructions about how to experience their new life in Christ.

- I beseech you

The word beseech means to call near and listen closely. It is a word that would be used when someone was getting ready to make a very important announcement.

- brethren

He appeals to them as brethren. Paul used this word rather than the word disciples or believers. It is used over 100 times in the epistles. Paul used this word for this reason.

Jesus considered everyone who does the will of his father in heaven to be his family. (Matthew 12:48-50). It was the will of the father that we would believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was and is the first-born brother of many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

To Paul, this idea about family was not just a positional truth that would become real in heaven. It was real on earth. He lived it. He practiced it. Paul loved every believer like they were his family because they were his family.

To the early church, this idea about family was not just a positional truth that would become real in heaven.

Acts 2:42-47

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

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They lived it. They practiced it. They loved every believer like they were their family because they were their family.

It was this truth about family that motivated the first church in Acts to be devoted to fellowship with one another. (Acts 2:42)

It was this truth about family that motivated the first church in Acts to be devoted to breaking bread with one another.

It was this truth that motivated the first church in Acts to be devoted to prayer with one another.

It was this truth that motivated the first church in Acts to sell their possessions to meet one another's needs.

It was this truth that motivated the first church in Acts to meet daily in the temple to hear the apostle's doctrine.

It was this truth that motivated the first church in Acts to meet daily in homes throughout Jerusalem.

They were family. Families love one another.

Paul loved every believer like they were his family because they were his family.

- by the mercies of God

By the mercies of God described Paul's motivation and should be the motivation for these disciples to follow the instructions they are about to receive.

Instead of motivating them to obey with a promise of prosperity, Paul motivated them to follow his instructions by recalling the merciful blessings they had already received in Jesus. He had reviewed these blessings in Romans 1-11.

- present your bodies

Paul then told his brethren what they needed to do to fulfill their calling as disciples of Jesus. He said present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

Paul used the Jewish ceremonial law as a metaphor to teach his brethren how to live the Christian life.

In the OT law, the Jews were required to offer lambs as a sacrifice to atone for their sins. This sacrifice was made on the altar of God at the temple. The sacrifice being offered was devoted to God use and no other purpose. It was holy. To be holy means to be set apart exclusively for God's use.

Since Jesus had died and atoned for their sins, there was no longer a need for the disciples to sacrifice a lamb to atone for their sins. But to fulfill their calling as disciples of Jesus, Paul used this analogy to encourage the disciples to offer their bodies to God for God's use. In the same way that a lamb was set apart for God's use, set your bodies apart for God's use. Paul used the word body because by it they would understand that it meant their whole being.

To present was not a verb that meant one time for all time. This presentation was to be a normal practice for the disciples.

- a living sacrifice

In opposition to those dead sacrifices which they were in the habit of offering while in their Jewish state, Paul urges them to offer their bodies which are living sacrifices.

- holy, acceptable to God

The lamb offered not only was holy because it was set apart for God's use but it had to be holy in appearance. It had to be without any spot or blemish. Only animals that were without spot or blemish were acceptable to God.

While animals could be found without spot or blemish, where could you find people that were without spot or blemish and acceptable to God?

In Romans 1-11, Paul taught the disciples that when they received Jesus, they were justified by faith and not by works. Their sins were forgiven. Their spots and blemishes were removed. Because of Jesus, their bodies were holy and acceptable to God.

- your reasonable service

The word service is the word worship. Paul taught the disciples that the way to worship God was to present their bodies to Him.

Paul said the motivation for this living sacrifice is reasonable. The word reasonable means it makes sense.

And what made this sacrifice of their bodies reasonable was...

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Paul said that presenting their bodies a living sacrifice to God was a reasonable way to worship God because of the mercies of God.

Mercy means to extend compassion and forgiveness to someone who deserves judgment.

The mercy of God becomes meaningful to you if you believe you deserve God's judgment.

The bible contains a collection of stories about God's judgment for sin and sinners. (The Flood, the Passover, Snakes in the wilderness.)

The most terrifying story about God's judgment is the final judgment that will occur at the end of the world in Revelation 20:11-15.

What will it be like for all of us to see God?

Have you ever heard about something but when you personally saw it, it was much more impressive than what you had in your mind?

God is like that.

God is so impressive that if you see Him, you immediately see your need for His mercy. You are more than impressed. When you see God, you experience the fear of God. And by fear, I do not mean reverence or awe. I mean terror.

In the bible when people saw God they were terrified. They knew and felt a terrifying judgment was about to happen to them.

1. God said to Moses that no man can see my face and live. (Exodus 33:20)
2. Job was called the most righteous man on the earth. But when Job saw God, he abhorred himself and repented in dust in ashes. (Job 42:5-6).
3. Gideon saw an angel of God and thought he would be struck dead. (Judges 6:22-23).
4. The parents of Samson, Manoah and his wife saw an angel of God. Manoah said to his wife we will surely die because we have seen God. (Judges 13:22).

5. Isaiah saw God and he was so overcome by feelings of terror he said he was ruined. (Isaiah 6).
6. Daniel saw God. He lost all the strength in his body and he fell face down on the ground. (Daniel 10:7-9).
7. While fishing, Peter became aware that Jesus was God. He fell at the feet of Jesus and said depart from me for I am a sinful man. (Luke 5:8).
8. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured into His glorified state and heard the voice of God the Father, they were terrified and fell with their face to the ground. (Matthew 17:6)
9. When soldiers came to arrest Jesus, when Jesus identified himself they drew back in fear and fell. (John 18:6)
10. When Jesus appeared to his disciples after he rose from the dead, they were terrified and frightened. (Luke 24:37)
11. When the apostle Paul saw the glorified Jesus for the first time on the road to Damascus he was terrified and fell down. (Acts 9:3-6).
12. When the apostle John saw Jesus glorified, he was terrified and fell down at his feet as a dead man. (Rev. 1:13).

In the bible, in both the old and new testament, both before and after Jesus died, when people saw God they were terrified. They feared God and saw their need for His mercy.

Their knowledge of God created within them a fear of God. By seeing God, they knew they deserved judgment.

This is what will occur at the final judgment when we all see God.



