

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship**

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Code: 45-89

We come together tonight as always on the Lord's day with eager hearts to dig into the Scripture. And I want to invite you to open your Bible to the twelfth chapter of Romans. And we're going to look together at verses 1 and 2...Romans 12:1 and 2, the supreme act of spiritual worship.

The text says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your spiritual worship. And do not continue to be conformed to this world but be being transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may approve what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

A young lady approached me last week when I was at a conference speaking, and she was very tearful and very distraught. And she said to me essentially what I have heard in different words many times in my ministry. She said, "I just can't seem to live the Christian life the way I should." She said, "I am frustrated. I am without victory, without a sense of accomplishment. I struggle seemingly with the very simplest forms of obedience in my Christian walk. I'm constantly defeated. Can you help me?"

I said, "Well, what has been your approach to solving the problem yourself?"

She said, "I have tried everything." She said, "I...I've been going to a church where they speak in tongues, where they have healings, where they have all kinds of spiritual experiences." She said, "I've entered into all of them. I've spoken in tongues. I've had certain ecstatic experiences, gifts of prophecy, certain supposed miracles. I've been slain in the Spirit. And in spite of all of this, I am not pleased with my life." And she said in a rather telling remark, "I've tried to get all I could get out of God."

And I said, "That's your problem." The key to spiritual victory is not getting all you can get, but giving all you have. There's a big difference. And there are people literally flocking into churches and spiritual experiences to get more of God when the issue is not what they need to get but what they need to give. And that's the essence of this tremendous passage of Scripture.

Having concluded eleven chapters of profound and thrilling doctrine that defines what God has done for every believer, Paul does not say, "Now here's what you need to get." He says, "Now here's what you need to give." The key to powerful living is not getting something more, but giving all we have.

And I'm somewhat admittedly frustrated by that particular idea that is so prevalent in Christianity that what you need to be successful in living the Christian life is to get something...when the real issue is to give.

You remember, don't you, back in John chapter 4 that Jesus said, "The Father seeks true worshipers." He redeemed us in order that we might give Him glory, that we might give Him ourselves. Paul writing to the Philippians in chapter 3 verse 3 defines a Christian as one who worships God in the Spirit, who rejoices in Christ Jesus and has no confidence in the flesh, one who worships. Peter writing in 1 Peter chapter 2, a monumental statement that all of us need to be very aware of, said, "You are living stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

We are a spiritual priesthood. Every much...every bit as much a priesthood as was the Aaronic priesthood, the Levitical priesthood. We are every bit as much a priest as was Melchizedek. We are priests under the Most High God. We are a kingdom of priests whose goal is to offer up spiritual sacrifices, even as priests of old offered up physical sacrifices of animals before God.

Now as spiritual priests there are many kinds of sacrifices. Scripture talks about the fact that we can offer the calves of our lips, Hebrews 13, the calves of our lips which is praise and thanks unto God. It says that we can offer God our petition and our prayer, that we can give to God of our substance of what we possess. We offer Him worship when we serve others which is truly an act of worship. But above all of these things, prayer and praise and giving and serving, there is one act that is the supreme and all encompassing and all effecting act that a believer must do in his life as a true worshiper and that is to offer himself as a living sacrifice. That is the issue.

And, frankly, that is very distant from most of what is being proported today as the key to spiritual living. We hear that in order to really have victory in your Christian life on the one hand you have to get more of God. Or on the other hand, you have to have a better estimation of your worth and see yourself better than you see yourself. But what Scripture says is it isn't a matter of affirming your own value, it isn't a matter of seeking something more, it's a matter of presenting yourself as a living sacrifice. That, dear friends, is the sum of eleven chapters. This is not some arbitrary thought pulled out of the air. This is a consummate conclusion to eleven chapters of great doctrine. What is the conclusion when we've said all that could be said about what God has done for us? The conclusion is we give back to him all we are. That's the conclusion, the supreme act of spiritual worship.

And I really confess to you that my own belief from experience is that that isn't easy, but that it is absolutely necessary if we are ever to know the fullness of the blessing of God and be able to render to him the service that is due to Him and bring Him glory...the giving of oneself totally to the Lord.

Most Christians never really come to that place fully. They flirt with the world, they flirt with the flesh. They flirt with their own personal indulgences and desires. They become victims of the philosophy and psychology of the world around them. They buy into the world's bag. They entertain themselves with the world's mode of entertainment. They think along the lines the world thinks. And so they never really come to the place of total commitment that is discussed in these two verses and therefore they forfeit the fullness of the blessing that God would have for them.

Now the central concept in these verses, look for a moment would you to verse 1, is the phrase "a living sacrifice." That is a very important phrase. As I mentioned from 1 Peter 2:5, we are spiritual priests offering up spiritual sacrifices. The primary sacrifice we are called to offer, Paul says here, is ourselves. Now the language here is definitely Old Testament. It is the language of ritual offerings. It is the language of ceremony. It is the language of the Levitical system. It is the language of the priesthood. It is the language of sacrifice. And in the Old Testament, we know that an offerer would come to God bringing his lamb or his turtledove, whatever it was that he was going to sacrifice, he brought that sacrifice to the holy place. It was given over to the priest and the priest took it, slew it, put it on the altar and as it were, offered it to God.

That system has come to an end. God no longer desires that animals be offered to Him, any kind of animals. There is no more animal sacrifice pleasing to God. That era has ended. No more dead sacrifices. Now what God wants is what kind of sacrifices? Living ones. No more dead animals, but living men and women. And so the essential act of the Old Testament Jew's life, his religious life, was the presentation of a sacrifice as an indication of the genuineness of his faith. The central act of a new covenant believer is the presentation of his heart, his soul, his mind, all that he is as a living sacrifice.

Now I want to add a footnote to that, lest you misconstrue the intention of the Old Testament. When I say that the central act of the Old Testament Jew in the ceremony and the ritual which God had instituted was to offer an animal, that was not to say that that animal was to be offered instead of his own life. It was to be offered as a symbol of the offering of his old...of his own life. For example, in 1 Samuel, I'll just call a couple of verses briefly to your attention, in 1 Samuel 15, I believe it's 22, Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" And the answer implied is no, of course not. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."

In other words, the intention in the Old Testament, in the offering of a sacrifice, was not that a dead animal was offered instead of a living soul, but that a dead animal was offered as an outward symbol of the offering of the heart and the soul.

In Psalm 51, we find again the same idea in verse 17, "The sacrifices of God are dead animals? No. A broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not turn down, refuse or despise." In Psalm 141 verse 2, it says, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense and the lifting up of

mine hands as the evening sacrifice."

In other words, those three Scriptures tell us that an Old Testament Jew who offered a dead animal was not offering a dead animal instead of offering himself but only as an outward symbol of the inward reality of which he was also committed, to which he was also committed and that was offering his own heart. In the New Testament, the outward sacrifices have ceased. And God calls only for the living sacrifice. This is a call to dedication. This is a call to commitment. And this, beloved, is the logical, the only logical conclusion to redemption. There is no other logical conclusion. This is it. Romans 12:1 and 2 is the only proper response to God's redeeming work, the only proper response.

Now we are then to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. What does that mean? We don't want to just talk of it in rhetorical terms, just throwing it out as rhetoric, but we want to express specifically what it contains. So let me discuss with you out of this text the four elements in a living sacrifice...the four elements. This is very foundational to our spiritual experience. The four elements that are included in the presentation of a believer as a living sacrifice are these four: soul, body, mind and will...soul, body, mind and will. They are the four elements. And they appear in this passage.

First of all, offering myself to God as a living sacrifice implies that my soul has been given to God. It implies that. It all starts at that point. I cannot offer anything else to God unless my soul has been given to Him, right? Because it is to my soul that the text appeals. It is a call to a regenerated soul to make a proper offering. And if that soul is not a regenerated soul, not a redeemed soul, not a saved soul, not a transformed soul, there's no way that the message of God can be communicated to that soul. And there's no way that it can respond. So the very fact that he says "I beg you therefore, brothers, you who have experienced the mercies of God to present yourselves as a living sacrifice" implies that they are believers whose souls have already been given to God in salvation.

So this is not something that a person can do unless they're redeemed. Nothing else can be offered to God if the soul hasn't been offered. An unregenerate person cannot give God his body for service, cannot give God his mind, cannot give God his will, cannot respond to God at all, 1 Corinthians 2 says, that the natural man can't even understand the things of God. They're utter foolishness. There's no way that Scripture would ever appeal or the Holy Spirit would ever appeal to an unregenerate person to make a supreme act of dedication to God. So the implication here is that the soul must come first.

And this truth is repeated in Scripture. It's not even one that really needs to be discussed very much because it's so patently obvious. But just sort of as a basic reminder, it says in Matthew 16:26, "What does a man profit, or what does he gain, if he shall acquire the whole world and lose his own...what?...soul?" Now Scripture refers to the soul as that inner part of man which God seeks to redeem. Sometimes Scripture calls it the spirit of a man. The spirit or the soul is that inner part, that invisible part that is the very basic man himself, the essence of being. And that must be given to

God.

In 2 Corinthians, to give you an illustration of it, in chapter 8, it discusses the churches of Macedonia which by indication of the text were very poor and very afflicted churches. They were having a very difficult time. And it says that they gave in great abundance of joy and they gave richly with liberality. In other words, though they had very little they gave much. And he says, in fact, in verse 3 of 2 Corinthians 8 they gave beyond what they were able to give. In other words, they dug into the very life blood, they dug into their food money and their survival money to give. And why is it that they would do that? Why such dedication? Why such commitment? Why such living sacrifice? Verse 5, "This they did not as we hoped but first gave themselves to the Lord." And that's the key. That's always the key. Before any single act of sacrifice can be done, there must be the giving of self. It all has to start there.

In Romans a little earlier than the text we're looking at, this is reiterated, when it says in Romans 8:8, it says, "So then, they that are in the flesh," listen to it, "cannot...what? please God." And to be in the flesh means to be unredeemed. An unredeemed person cannot please God, cannot make an offering to God, cannot worship God, cannot present anything to God. You hear an unregenerate person say, "Well, I do what I do for God." That's not so. God doesn't accept that. There is no sacrifice made of body, mind or will unless there is first the giving of the soul in redemption. And that's essentially what Paul is saying when he says in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 3 these very important words, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, though I give my body to be burned, if I have not love it profits me...what?...nothing."

In other words, if I am not one who possesses the love of God, all my acts of self-sacrifice are worthless. It doesn't mean a thing to God. He may give to charity, he may give himself to philanthropy, he may sell everything he has and dispense it to poor people and think in his heart he's making an offering to God when the fact of the matter is that's not the case at all.

Now all of this is implied if you'll notice please in Romans 12 in Paul's opening statement. It is all implied when he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." It is because they are brethren, a term of identification of those who know the Lord, it is because they are brothers in Christ, it is because they have received the mercies of God that they can be begged to follow through the full phases of dedication. And I think you can sense that that's in the text. If the soul has not already been given to the Lord, then the rest of the exhortations are useless because it is the soul that responds to the beseeching. So all dedication to God begins with salvation. It begins with the soul and the spirit being given to God. And only when that innermost self has experienced the saving mercy of God does it have the power and motivation to desire a life of sacrifice to God...only then.

That's why, do you remember in the parables of Matthew 13, when the Lord was talking about the different kinds of soil, He said there was a soil that had rock bed underneath the ground? And when

the seed went into what's called the stoney ground, or the rocky soil, as the roots went down they hit stone. And so the nutrients and the water and the sunlight and all the things that cause growth caused it to go up because it couldn't go down and it flourished for a while, but the sun came out and burned it and it withered away. And the Lord said this is the one who hears the message, who listens to it but when tribulation comes or when persecution comes they have no real root and they die. The idea there is that these are people who make an outward rather joyful and immediate response to the truth about Christ but it's never genuine as proven by the fact when it calls for sacrifice, they die.

In other words, since the soul was never really given to God, they can't make any other sacrifice, you see. It's very much the same in the soil that was filled with weeds, as it says there that the weeds began to grow along with the seed and they, which are the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this age, choked out the seed. In other words, this is an unredeemed soul that can't make a sacrifice because it's never been redeemed. It's the same as the rich young ruler who when told by Jesus, "Sell everything you have and give it to the poor," went away. He was not willing to make such a sacrifice, he was not willing to obey the Lord, that was not within the purview of his tolerance because he was not a redeemed soul. He walked away. No such sacrifice would he make.

So, Paul then is speaking to believers, "I beseech you," he says. The word "beseech" basically means to beg, parakaleo, I come alongside to call you to this. It is a word of tenderness. The Holy Spirit is called the paraklete, isn't He? The one called alongside. It is a word sometimes translated "comfort." It's a word of gentleness. It's a word of tenderness. It's a word of affection. He comes alongside brethren who are already bent toward this kind of dedication because their souls have been given to God, you see. It isn't anything obtuse to them. It isn't anything far removed from their desire. It is the most natural response to their redemption. And so he speaks to them in terms of love and calls to them as fellow believers and brothers. It carries the authority of an Apostle, and yet the tenderness of a loving brother. It's very much like Philemon where Paul says, "Wherefore though I might be much bold in Christ to command you that which is fitting, yet for love sake I rather beseech you." I mean, I could as an Apostle command it, but as a brother I...I just exhort you to do this. Typical of Paul to encourage someone along these lines.

Now believers are further connected by this wonderful statement, "I beseech you therefore," that is based upon all these things that we've discussed, "by the mercies of God...by the mercies of God." What does he mean by that? Believers have experienced the mercies of God. And since we have experienced the mercies of God, therefore...therefore, we ought to do this.

Now what are the mercies of God? And I suppose this has been discussed through the years in studies of Romans. I don't think it's that difficult, really. I believe the mercies of God are everything that God has done for the believer listed in chapters 1 through 11, the whole thing, all the provision of God's mercy for man's sin, all of it. And what have we learned in these first eleven chapters? It is an impressive list.

What are the mercies of God? Think with me of them. Love, God's love is shed abroad in the heart, it says in Romans 5. Nothing can separate us from the love of God it says in Romans 8. Grace-- Romans 1, Romans 3, Romans 5, Romans 6, all the way through, grace, grace, grace, another of the mercies of God.

The Holy Spirit, chapter 5 tells us that the Holy Spirit has shed abroad in our hearts. Chapter 8 tells us we have received the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. It says it in chapter 8 verse 2, verse 4, verse 9, verse 11, verse 14, verse 16 and verse 26. The Holy Spirit is a mercy given to us by God, an undeserved blessing.

How about peace? Chapter 1 verse 7, chapter 2 verse 10, chapter 5 verse 1, chapter 8 verse 6 and elsewhere it says we've received peace. That's a mercy of God. And faith, over 20 times, and comfort, chapter 1 verse 12, and power, chapter 1 verse 16, and hope, chapter 5 verse 2 and chapter 8 verse 20 and 34...and 24, rather. And we've received patience, chapters 9 and 11. And kindness, chapter 2 verse 4. And we have received glory and honor and righteousness and forgiveness and reconciliation and justification...all of those are the mercies of God. And in chapter 5 verse 10, we have received security and eternal life in 5:21 and freedom in chapter 6 and chapter 7 and resurrection in chapter 8 and sonship in chapter 8 and intercession in chapter 8. These are the mercies of God.

And what he is saying is, "Look, you who have received all of these marvelous things, you to whom God has given them, and they are mercies." And what does mercy mean? That we don't...what? We don't deserve any of them. But we have been given love and grace and the Holy Spirit and peace and faith and comfort and power and hope and patience and kindness and glory and honor and righteousness and forgiveness and reconciliation and justification and security and eternal life and freedom and resurrection and sonship and intercession, and there are more.

What should be our response who have received so much? Does it seem a great thing to ask that we give back to God ourselves? Is that a great thing? Is that some thing for which we ought to be patted on the back for such magnanimous act? Hardly...all of that sums up the mercies of God...all of it. All because of the work of Jesus Christ in the sovereign mercy of God to us who believe.

And you know something, beloved? What Paul is saying here is this ought to be the strongest motivation. Oh, he could have said, "You better give everything to God or else He'll get you." He could have used judgment. I mean, it wouldn't be foreign to Paul to do that. He does remind us repeatedly in his epistles that what you sow you reap, Galatians 6:8, that if you sin, the Lord will chasten. But here the greatest motivation of all motivations is given. It is the motivation, listen to it, of gratitude...of gratitude. And he is saying it is almost simply consequential for a believer who has received the infinite unending and eternal mercies of God to, as an act of instant response, almost a

reflex, give himself a living sacrifice to the God who gave him so much. To hold back...to hold back at all is an incredible act of injustice and ingratitude, demonstrating a woeful lack of thanks to a gracious, merciful God.

The Psalmist had it, Psalm 116 verse 12, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" And what he was saying is, "I can't think of anything that would be equal to what He has done for me." Well, fortunately God doesn't expect us to return in equal. All He asks is we give ourselves as a living sacrifice.

We were up in Alaska. And a man came to me and said, "I want to talk to you." We had been teaching the Word and he said, "I want to talk to you." I spoke on the difference between a true Christian and a sham Christian, a false believer. And he came to me and he said, "Ohh..." he said, and tears were running down his cheeks. He said, "I...I believe I'm a sham Christian." He said, "I need to talk to you."

And so we set a time when we could meet. And he sat down and he said, "Something's happened since we last talked. Something's happened to me since I said to you I was a sham Christian. I feel differently now." And there had been a few messages in between those two conversations.

I said, "Let me ask you one question. What is the deepest desire of your heart? What weighs heaviest on your mind right now." And he was a very prominent man, successful man who had a large realm of responsibility. And I said, "What weighs on your mind more than anything else? What is your deepest hunger in your heart?" And he simply said this, "My greatest desire is to give all I am and have to Jesus Christ."

I said, "My friend, that is not the desire of a sham Christian. That is the desire of a redeemed soul." And the tears began to flow down his eyes and he said, "Then, now I'm a real Christian." And he was, bless God.

It all begins with a redeemed soul, that's the point. And the word "therefore" also supports that. Because you have experienced the mercies of God, because you have been benefited by all the things that God has done, you ought to give yourself a living sacrifice.

Now let me just digress to a footnote. Sometimes I hear people say, "Well, why do you have so much doctrinal teaching? Let's have more practical stuff." Once in a while I get a little note that says, "Your sermons need to be more practical." And that may be true...that may be true. But let me tell you something, I'm just kind of following my teacher Paul. I don't do it always very well but this is my goal anyway. And Paul had a pattern that I really like. His pattern was this, before you ask anybody to perform a certain duty, you deal with doctrine. Did you get that? Duty is always based on doctrine. There has to be a foundation of truth before there can be any call to a certain kind of behavior...very,



very important.

Now, when people say, "Well, we have too much doctrine. Could you give us some more practical stuff?" that's a very shallow perception. I really don't know what they're saying. That's a very shallow perception. Because there is no, now listen to this, there is no basis for behavior apart from truth. And Paul doesn't give us any kind of exhortation until he's given us eleven chapters of doctrine.

Now I admit to you that Paul gave those eleven chapters and they could probably be read in a couple of hours and it's taken me two years, but the principle is nonetheless the same. That's why Paul says to Timothy, "Nourish..be nourished up in the words of sound doctrine, teach your people sound doctrine." That's why he says the same thing to Titus. What is important in the ministry as he outlines the principles is that you hold fast the faithful word that you've been taught and are able by sound doctrine to exhort. You exhort based upon the foundation of truth.

To put it another way, ethics rise out of dogma. And the marvel of the mind of Paul is that his mind can sweep over the realities of divine truth but he never gets spaced out and he never gets lost, his feet always end up firmly on the ground, don't they? Having scaled incredible heights until in chapter 11 he's way out there in the glories saying, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways passed finding out, and who has known the mind of the Lord and who has been His counselor, and of Him and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be glory forever, amen." And he's way out there and he says, "Now, present yourself a living sacrifice. He always ends up with his feet on the ground.

In the epistle to the Galatians, he's got four chapters rolling with doctrine and he hits chapter 5 and says, "For freedom Christ has set us free, therefore stand fast," and he comes to duty in chapter 5. In Ephesians, he has three chapters of doctrine, and then in chapter 4 he writes, "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy." And he comes to exhortation after the foundation of doctrine has been laid. After the testimony of chapter 1 in Philippians, he says, "If there therefore is any consolation in Christ, or comfort of love, if there's any fellowship of the Spirit, if there's any tender mercies and compassions, then fulfill my joy and be likeminded," and he goes on with the exhortation.

He does the same thing in Colossians. After presenting two chapters of great truth, chapter 3 begins by saying, "If you therefore then are risen with Christ, then seek what's above." He does the same thing in 1 Thessalonians. It's the pattern that all behavior is predicated on doctrine. Ethics rise out of dogma. We have to know what we believe before we can apply it, right? That's very basic.

In just another verse to sort of put in your notes, in John 13:17, it's an interesting word, it says this, "If you know these things, happy are you if you...what?...do them." But before you can be happy in

doing them, what do you have to do? Know them. If you know these things, then happy are you if you do them. That seems rather significant to me.

And if I read Peter's epistle right, Peter says, "Sin is the result of forgetting what happened when you were saved." And James says the same thing, "Don't be...what kind of a hearer?...a forgetful hearer." Salvation is where it all begins and the doctrine has been established, the saving of the soul is the first thing, regeneration of the inner man.

So, when we say that we are to present ourselves a living sacrifice, that has to begin with the soul. And that is to come to Christ and receive Him as Savior and Lord and receive the salvation that He offers, that's where it starts, give your soul to God.

Secondly, then the text tells us the body must be given to God. O how important this is. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." Now "present" here is a temple term. It has the idea of surrendering up, of yielding, of offering. It also is a technical term for the Levitical offerings, to bring it as an offering, to bring it as an actual sacrifice. And what God wants here is our body.

Now please, let's not assume anything more than the text says at that point. What he means by that is exactly what he says...the body. What God wants is the body. He already has the soul, right? He already has that inner man. He already has that real person, that real self, that eternal me that has been transformed by His saving grace. And now what He wants that real me to give Him is the body...that new me, that new creation is now called upon to present the body in which it exists. So we are to be priests who offer up the body.

Now that isn't always easy because the body is the place where our humanness resides, isn't it? If you don't think so, then you've missed the point of death. Because when a person dies, their spirit goes to heaven, their body goes to the grave. And once that separation is made, there's no problem. The body is that which contains our humanness and our humanness is that which contains our flesh and is that which contains our sin as Romans 6 and 7 so clearly point out to us.

So, it is essential then that we yield the body. Now this isn't the first time Paul has talked about this. Go back for a moment to chapter 6 and you'll be reminded, I'm sure, of what we learned when we were there. In verse 12 of 6, it says, "Now, you have been redeemed, your soul has been given to God, so let not sin therefore reign in your mortal...what?...body." Sin will no longer reign in your soul, that's transformed. But it will still be there in your body.

And by the way, your body is not just that which you can touch, it includes your mind and your will, as we'll see in a moment. So it's very difficult to make exact dividing points in the unity of man. There is so much unity that you can't clearly cut him in half. But the soul has been redeemed, the body is

unredeemed, as chapter 8 says, we wait for the redeeming of our body, our soul has been redeemed. So sin therefore still resides in our mortal body and we cannot allow it to reign there, or to be supreme or to call the shots. Verse 13 says, so don't yield your bodily members as instruments of righteousness to sin, but yield yourselves unto God. So there's the call to yield the body to God in chapter 6. Verse 16, it says, "Know ye not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether sin unto death or obedience to righteous...whoever you yield yourself to you indicate that's your master. So he says, in effect, yield yourselves to God. At the end of verse 19, yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, Paul says, "What? Know ye not that your body is the...what?...temple of the Holy Spirit?" Dwelling within our humanness, dwelling within this flesh is the Holy Spirit dwelling in our redeemed soul. That redeemed soul, that ever present Spirit is encased in our humanness. It is in that humanness that sin finds its expression. That is why Paul says in Romans 7, "When I sin it is not I, not that redeemed soul, but sin that is in me....where?...in my flesh." And I don't want to go all the way back through Romans 6 to 8, you can check that out in the tapes as you wish. But suffice it just as a reminder to say what we learned there was that the soul is redeemed, the spirit is redeemed, it exists within a body of flesh which has a bent toward sin, that's why we are still waiting for the redemption of that body and the receiving of a glorified body that doesn't have that bent, but until then we still struggle with sin. And that's why Paul says, "With my redeemed self I desire the law of God, with my body I serve the law of sin."

So what we have to do then is take that body and offer it to God as a living sacrifice. We cannot offer it to the world. We cannot offer it to its own desires. We cannot allow its lusts and passions to run rampant. Our redeemed spirit already His must make a presentation to God of our body. Such an important thing...such an important thing.

In Paul writing to the Thessalonians, "Every one of you should know how to possess his vessel, his body in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of evil desire like pagans who know not God." And again he's saying the same thing. You who are redeemed must know how to possess your body, how to take hold of your body, which he calls in Philippians 3:21 this vile body. And he says there we long to get rid of this vile body and to be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. We long for that, don't we? But until that time comes, we must present these bodies a living sacrifice.

And, frankly, it is a fearful thing the way the body can dominate the redeemed soul, isn't it? It's fearful. Here we are redeemed creatures with redeemed souls transformed inner man, indwelt by the...by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, the almighty God living in us and yet isn't it remarkable how much power is still there in the body to retard, as it were, the work of the Spirit, to dominate the redeemed soul? The body is the center of desire. The body is the center of disease. The body is the center of depression. The body is the center of doubts. And it must be brought into subjection, it must be offered to God as a living sacrifice. And it must be continually offered...continually

presented.

Paul gives us an insight into the difficulty of this in 1 Corinthians 9 where he says in verse 27. He says, "I keep control of my body and I bring it into subjection lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be disqualified." Here he says I preach and I represent Christ and in order to do that effectively, I have to control my body, that human part of me that wants to serge with its desires and take control. The body has tremendous power.

I heard just in the last couple of days about a very well- known and prominent servant of God who has become a castaway because he did not bring his body under subjection and immorality has destroyed his ministry. It is not uncommon, tragically, even in those who minister to say nothing of those who are ministered to.

Now it's important at this juncture to say a word about this in the Greek culture. The Greeks took a very low view of the body. They depreciated the body. They had a dualistic philosophy that said spirit is good, body is bad, don't worry about the body, it's just the body, it's nothing more so let it do whatever it wants to do, it doesn't mean anything, it's the mind, it's the spirit that is the part of man that matters. But God doesn't take that dualistic view. God doesn't just throw away the body or slough off the body or ignore the body. I've even heard preaching that said we should never discipline in the church because when you're disciplining Christians, all you're doing is disciplining their unredeemed body and you've got to let the unredeemed body do what the unredeemed body's going to do anyhow. So why discipline an unredeemed body? What else do you expect out of an unredeemed body? And it isn't their new creation doing it, it's only their unredeemed body doing it and you can't correct an unredeemed body.

Well, the answer to that biblically is you can bring an unredeemed body under the subjection of the power of the Spirit of God. And the body can become, according to Romans 6, an instrument of righteousness. It can and it does. Whenever your body is used for the purposes that are divine it becomes an instrument of righteousness. Whenever it used, whenever it is fulfilled in something that displeases God, it is an instrument of unrighteousness. So God does not just slough off the body and say, "Well, the body is only the body," that kind of dualistic viewpoint is not tolerated in Scripture.

And it is also important to note, too, that vice was so rampant in those days, much like it is in our day, that people tended to be tolerant of those kinds of sins.

And people today do as well. I am absolutely amazed at how many Christians will go and watch a movie that is filled with adultery. I'm amazed by it. I'm amazed that people will sit in front of a television and watch a film or a program that is all about adultery, or a soap opera or whatever, or listen to music that is sung about fornication or adultery, even those those terms aren't used. I'm amazed at that. But we have all become sort of mesmerized by our system and we have learned to

tolerate those kinds of things. They're not so bad. They're not so distasteful to God, they're sort of normal intolerable things. And that's why we need to be refreshed in what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 12 and 13, he says, "All things are lawful unto me but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any, I will not allow myself to become a victim of anything." And then he goes on at the end of verse 13 to say, "The body is not for fornication but it's for the Lord and the Lord is for the body." The body is not something that's just for fornication and evil so let it alone. The body is for the Lord. He can't work through you unless He works through your body, isn't that right? If you're going to speak, you've got to speak through your mouth. If you're going to hear, you've got to hear through your ear. If you're going to see, you have to see through your eyes. If you're going to go, you have to go with your feet. If you're going to help, you have to help with your hands. If you're going to think, you have to think with your mind. The body is for the Lord. And the Lord is for the body.

Not only is the body for the Lord, did you get it?, but the Lord is for the body. He wants it. So there is no sanctification at all which does not include the body. There's no sanctification which does not include the body. And that is why 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says the very God of peace sanctify you holy, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That was his prayer. I pray not only for your spirit and soul but your body as well.

Before you were regenerated the body was what expressed in the old nature, now that you're in Christ the body is what is expressive of the new nature. That's God's desire. And so, part of offering ourselves as a living sacrifice is offering the body.

Now what does it mean to offer the body as a living sacrifice? Well, it's just a contrast with the Old Testament. They offered the body of an animal as a dead sacrifice. What God wants is a living one. Well, what does he mean by that? Let me give you a couple of thoughts. First of all, a living sacrifice is a sacrifice which lives, which perpetually lasts. An animal was put down and burned up. It was a one-time deal. What God wants is a perpetual offering. What He wants is not something that you bring once and it's burned up, but something that is perpetually offered and never dies and is never consumed, it's just always offered, always offered, always offered.

And furthermore, a living sacrifice is...not only conveys the idea of something which is perpetual, but something which is offered in a living reality rather than a dead reality. And what do I mean by that? I guess the best illustration of that would be Genesis 22 which you don't need to turn to, I'll refer to it. And it's the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham was told by God, you'll have a great nation, your children will be as the sands of the sea, the stars of the heaven. Whoever blesses them will be blessed. Whoever curses them will be cursed. You will be the father of a great nation. I will bless you. I'll multiply your seed. And He gave him this marvelous Abrahamic covenant. Abraham looked at his wife and said, "It can't happen, we don't have any children." God through marvelous intervention gave them the son of promise by the name of Isaac. Then God came to Abraham and

said, "Abraham, I want you to do this, take Isaac, come out Moriah, lay him on an altar and kill him...kill him.

Isaac was Abraham's son. He loved him. Isaac was Abraham's beloved son, the son of promise. Isaac was Abraham's heir. Isaac was the key to all of God's promise to him. Isaac was the key to the covenant. Isaac was everything. And yet Abraham took Isaac and tied the sticks on his back to carry up the hill that would be the funeral pyre for his own consuming fire. And he lifted a knife ready to plunge it into the heart of his son. Now Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice, but Abraham would have made a living sacrifice because he would have been saying this, "I will live the rest of my life if you tell me, God, without my son, without my beloved, without my heir, without Your promise and without Your covenant I'll live the rest of my life without anything that I hold dear." That is a living sacrifice.

Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice. Abraham would have made a living one. It isn't that God is saying to you, are you will to go get burned up? Are you willing to go out and die? What He is saying is, are you willing to say to God I will live the rest of my life without anything that I now hold dear if that is Your will? And that is a perpetual and lasting commitment. That's the stuff of which a living sacrifice is made. And Abraham was willing. He was willing. That is a great man. That is a man who walks with God who is so willing. He was saying, "I will surrender to You, God, if You tell me no matter what it is You tell me."

This living sacrifice, this surrender of self in a humble submissive act to God, this, as Paul put it, bearing about in my body always the dying of Jesus Christ, this kind of living sacrifice is the basis of true worship. It is the foundation of all Christian dedication. It is what Paul meant when he said, "For to me to live is Christ and...what?...die is gain." He said, "I have many things but," in Galatians he said, "I count all things manure compared to what I have in Christ."

There was a great Christian in China, Lu Fook(?) was his name. He was moved with compassion for his own countrymen when they were taken to South Africa to work as coolies to work in the mines. This very prominent man sold himself as a slave to a South African mine company for five years. He became a coolie slave with slaves in order to reach them with the gospel. He died as a slave in South Africa but not until he had won over 200 of his fellow men to Christ...a living sacrifice.

Devorow(?) Spratt(?) was a somewhat well-known Englishman who in 1641 was captured by the Algerian pirates and made a slave. As a slave, this nobleman, founded a church. And when his release was finally settled, accomplished by his brother back in England, he refused to accept the release and said he would remain a slave until the day he died in order to serve the church which Christ had privileged him to found among the slaves. Today there is a plaque in a church in Algiers that bears his name.

David Livingstone, that great missionary to Africa, said, "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God which we could never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with such a word. It is emphatically no sacrifice, it is privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering or danger now and then with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life may make us pause and cause the Spirit to waver and sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His fathers thrown on high to give Himself for us," end quote.

And it's one thing that we might note that those who make a living sacrifice usually don't see it as such. Someone wrote, "I counted dollars while God counted crosses. I counted gains while He counted loses. I counted by worth...my worth by the things gained in store, He sized me up by the scars that I bore. I coveted honors and sought for degrees, He wept as He counted the hours I spent on my knees. I never knew until one day by the grave how vain are the things we spend our life to save."

This is a living sacrifice that God calls for. And it involves the body, presented to Him holy...look at it...acceptable unto God. Do you remember that the body of the animal presented in the Old Testament sacrifice was to be without what? Spot and without blemish. It was to be the best, the cleanest, the purest. And that is what Paul says, when we present ourselves we present to Him a holy sacrifice, spotless, without blemish. The word used here is the very familiar word hagios. The word in the Greek classic sense meant set apart. It didn't mean pure, it didn't mean undefiled and it didn't mean without sin. Do you know why? Because there wasn't a word to mean that in their language connected with religion because their gods were as sinful as the men who worshiped them. So when they were set apart to a deity, it had no implication of holiness that we see in it. It had no implication of purity. It had no implication of unspottedness from sin. Christianity sanctified the word. Christianity sanctified the word sanctified. Christianity made holy the word holy. And it carries for us the sense of pure and undefiled and free from sin. God wants your body, beloved, I mean your physical body, your mind and all your humanness, He wants it brought into subjection and offered to Him as a living sacrifice.

We have become so comfortable in this society. We hold things to tenaciously in our hand. We're willing to serve the Lord if it doesn't cost us a little extra time, if it doesn't take a little too much energy, if we don't miss our favorite television program. We want to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God but we want to hold a little over here so we can indulge in the world and enjoy its allurements and its entertainment. What God wants is an unspotted, unblemished self sacrifice.

I see...I see many willing hearts and I see many people who say, "I want to serve the Lord...I want to go in the ministry...I want to be the Lord's servant." And they're nowhere near an unblemished, unspotted total self-sacrificing offering to Him. And I guess it makes it a little difficult to get the work done when you're dealing with half-hearted people, or with people who from time to time, like all of us, are half-hearted in our commitment. What are you offering God? I mean, when you say, "Oh, I want to give my life to the Lord," what is it you're giving? An unspotted, unblemished, holy, pure and total devotion? For that alone, notice it, is acceptable unto God. The rest is not...the rest is not.

Are you like the people in Malachi? The Lord through the prophet Malachi said, "You offer polluted flesh upon the altar." You know what you're bringing? Instead of bringing the best you have, you're bringing the rotten meat. You're bringing me a rotted carcass. You don't want to bring me a good one. It may have been that they were actually picking up a dead animal and bringing it rather than bringing the best of their flock. You're offering the blind to sacrifice. You're giving Me a blind or a lame or a sick or a maimed animal. He says, "Would you offer that to the governor when you go to pay your taxes?" Not on your life, but you're offering it to God. Will you do out of fear what you will not do for God out of love? Only a holy sacrifice is acceptable to God. The word acceptable means well-pleasing, satisfactory. God is not satisfied with anything less than that, not satisfied.

With the sacrifices of total commitment, of purity, God is satisfied. To do good, Hebrews 13:16 says, to share, forget not for with such sacrifices God is satisfied. With goodness, with virtue, with generosity...that pleases God. He's satisfied, then, when we offer our bodies totally holy, set apart, pure, undefiled, and this is, notice at the end of verse 1, this is your spiritual worship. The word "service," or "worship," is latreia, it is used in the Septuagint which is the Old Testament Greek text to speak of the worship of God according to the Levitical law. And again we're talking still about that priestly kind of language, language of sacrifice. The priests came to worship. And that's the word used for worship in the Old Testament. And here it's still worship. You come to worship God with an offering. What are you bringing Him? Are you bringing Him a defiled carcass? Are you saying, "O yes, Lord, I give You myself," in the midst of all your defilement, of all your sin of all the garbage in your life? Maybe it's a lot, maybe it's a little, but either way you're not unspotted. God only accepts a holy sacrifice.

The word latreiais also used in Hebrews 9:6 to refer to the priests who perform the service in the temple, the sacred service. And here it is used of the believer priest offering up his body in consecrated sacrifice to God. And this worship it says is...some of your Bibles say reasonable...the word is logikos from which we get the word "logic." It is reasonable, that's a fair translation, it is intelligent, the idea is though that it is of the reason. It is of the inner man rather than of the outer man. In other words, in the Old Testament they offered a dead sacrifice which was external service. You understand? Now he is saying offer Me a living sacrifice which is an act of internal worship, or spiritual rather than physical. He's not asking for a mechanical outward form, but an intelligent



heartfelt consecrated devotion to God. Here is the true worship of living sacrifice of which dead ones were only shadows, the true spiritual intelligent rational worship of giving our bodies and all they do to God in holy consecration.

And so I say to you, real worship is not elaborate prayers, it is not liturgy, it is not ritual, it is not candles, robes, stained glass, Bach music. Real worship is not feeling spiritual goosebumps in a church service. Real worship is right here, the intelligent spiritual act of giving to God my body in all of its expressions holy, set apart unto Him. That's what God wants.

God isn't looking for your talent, folks. God isn't looking for your innate gifts of leadership. God is looking for you to give yourself. So the Christian who would offer himself as a living sacrifice begins with the offering of his soul and then the offering of his body. There are two more, and we need only look at them briefly to sum the message up.

The third one is the mind must be given to God. And verse 2 says, "Be not conformed to this world." O could we say so much about that. "But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." And here he tells us that one of the very basic keys to being able with your soul to offer your body is to be sure that your mind has been what? Renewed...renewed. The mind must be presented for renewal.

You know what? It is in the mind that our new nature and our humanness find their mix, right? It is in the mind that we make choices as to whether we will express that new man in holiness or allow our flesh to act in unholiness. So if the soul is to present the body, the mind must be renewed. And notice how he presents it with a negative and then a positive. "Be not conformed to this aion," not kosmos, not world, but age, to this age. The age is the fallen unredeemed philosophy of life, Trench says it so well, "The floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations at any time current in the world." The whole pile of the world's stuff. Be not conformed to that. The Germans used to call it the zeitgeist(?) the spirit of the age of which Satan, of course, is the prince and ruler.

Believe me, the world is an instrument of Satan. Oh, it's an instrument of Satan. To promote his goals and his ends and his ambitions, and you can see it, you can see it everywhere. You can see how the spirit of this age is a spirit of pride, a spirit of boastfulness, a spirit of almost ugly ego. We see it in professional athletes all the time, don't we? If you haven't seen it lately, watch a tennis match. The spirit of the age.

I read an article written by a columnist in the Chicago Tribune. He said there was a radio station in San Antonio that decided to give an evening with the Motely Crew, which is a heavy metal hardrock group. And so they had a contest on their radio station KISS FM in San Antonio and a teenager was to write, "I will do the following for the privilege of spending an evening with the Motely Crew..." Your mind wouldn't begin to conceive of what 13 to 17 year-old kids wrote. I read about 15 different letters,

such as, "I would shave their bodies and where they bled I would suck the blood out of them." That was a...that was a minimal low-key response. Frightening spirit of this age...frightening. It comes through the music. It comes through the movies. It comes through the media. It comes at us from everywhere. And we are called by the Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul here to not allow ourselves to become conformed to the purposes and ethics and standards and moralities of our time which are Satanic. Remember what John said, the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one, 1 John 5:19. Be not conformed.

Stop...literally it says "Stop allowing yourselves to be fashioned like this evil age...stop allowing it to happen." The assumption is that it's what? It's happening. Stop it. Call a halt to it. Don't sit there and allow it to be done. That's the point. The word here is a tremendous verb. I don't like to confuse you with Greek terms but I want you to sense this word, it's the word sunshematizo, schema, scheme. And schematizorefers, listen carefully, to the act of assuming an outward expression that does not come from within, putting on an act. Great word, masquerading. And what he is saying is, "Look, don't masquerade as if you belong to the world," you see it? "Don't masquerade wearing the spirit of the age which is inconsistent with what's really in you," see that? And the addition of the prefix conjunction sun, s-u-n, adds the idea that the expression is patterned after a definite model. Don't pattern yourself, don't allow yourself to be continually patterned after the world and the spirit of the age which is not connected to what you are on the inside. Don't wear the mask of the world." Inconceivable that a Christian who is a new creation in Jesus Christ would want to wear the mask of the world. But, boy, we get sucked into it. We want to wear the clothes they wear. We run down to buy every new thing that comes along. We want to be a part of all the systems that come floating through. We want to have their entertainment, stay up with all the latest stuff. We're just caught in that whole wash.

Kenneth Weist(?) had the idea when he wrote, "Stop assuming an outward expression which is patterned after the age, an expression which does not come from within nor is representative of what you are in your inner being as a regenerated child of God." Stop the masquerade.

On the other hand, he says, "Be ye transformed," metamorphosis is the root idea, totally changed. And here the idea is to change your outward appearance. No, change your outward appearance to match what you are within, right? That's the word. It's a perfect use of words. In fact, it's the word used in Matthew 17 where it says Jesus was transfigured, metamorphosed, that is His outward appearance was made to be exactly like His what? His inward. He was God in human flesh and for a moment His human flesh manifested the God that He was inside it. And you are to be transformed on the outside to match what your redeemed self is on the inside. And it's a present passive imperative as is the word "conformed." Stop allowing yourself to be conformed and start allowing yourself to be transformed...continually. And that, by the way, beloved, is the work of whom? The Spirit, it's the work of the Spirit who changes us from one level of glory to the next, conforming us to the image of Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:18.

How do you do it? By the renewing of what? The mind...the mind. The word "renewing" here is renovation. The renovation of the mind. How do you renovate your mind? David said it this way, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not...what's the key to a renewed mind?, it's right here, isn't it?, it's the Word...it's the Word...it's the Word...it's the Word." That's the key to the renewed mind. We've seen this so many times over and over and over in our studies. The renewing of the mind through the Word. The key is if you're going to walk worthy, you've got to know the Word of God. You've got to know the Word of God. Just a simple profound truth.

And in Colossians 1:28, Paul says we teach every man all wisdom in order to present every man perfect. A perfect life comes out of perfect knowledge. In Colossians chapter 3 and verse 10, put on the new man that is renewed in knowledge. Colossians 3:16, let the word of Christ..what?..dwell in your richly.

I'll tell you, I've seen this so many times. The renewed mind is a mind that is saturated and controlled by the Word of God. Do you spend as much time in the Word of God as you do in the allurements of the world? What are your reflexes? Things of God? Have you set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth? I mean, when something happens in your life, is your involuntary response biblical? That's a renewed mind, a mind saturated with the Word of God, a mind whose constant preoccupation is the Word of God, the Word of God, the Word of God, the truth of God. That's one of the things that's been such a help in my own life. And I bless God not only for the ministry that I have but for the privilege I have all the time when I'm not preaching to be in the Word, in the Word preparing because it's that that has renewed my mind. And it is the renewed mind that resists conformity to the world and allows itself to be transformed, you see. It's that constant influx of the Word of God that brings about the transformation to a renewed or renovated mind so that a renovated mind then can more readily present the body to God. I mean, it's not mystical at all.

And finally, we must present the will to God...the will. And when we've presented the soul and the body and the mind, we will approve what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We will say I approve of Your will, God. We will give our will up and we will say You're good and You're perfect will, I approve. That's what I want. I don't want what I want, I want what You want. Good, genuinely good, I mean, really good, acceptable, perfect will of God. See, it calls for giving up our own will ultimately. I don't want my own will, I want Your will. Can you say that? I don't care...I don't care where I live, I don't care what I possess, I don't care what I have and don't have, I just want whatever You want, that's all...that's all.

A renewed mind, a renewed mind will be expressed in a submissive will and in a body presented as a living sacrifice. It all comes in one package. You can't present your body unless you have a renewed mind because you won't have the will to do that. But when you have a renewed mind, your will will be submissive to God and you will offer your body as a living sacrifice. And the key is a saturated mind,

an obedient will, body presented.

You say, "Do you do this once in your life?" No, you do it how often? All the time, every waking moment, it's a conscious renewing act. Give Him your mind renewed by the Word. Give Him your will, submitting to His will. That's all you want is His will, His will, His will, nothing more. Stop exercising yours all the time and grabbing for this and grabbing for that and I need it and I want it. The controlling factor is the will of God.

And you never need to fear the will of God, do you? It's good, it's acceptable, it's perfect. So the renewed mind, the submissive will and the consecrated body go along with the redeemed soul. O sweet simplicity. I don't like complicated things. I resist that. And I love it when you can take eleven chapters and literally knock us over with the profound treatment of God's redeeming work. And then in sweet simplicity boil it down to two verses and say here's what you should do. I love that. Give Him your mind, your body, your will.

Let me close with this. And I know I went over a little bit of time, but listen to this beautifully stated. Watchman Nee(?) wrote a book called The Normal Christian Life and this is how it ends.

"I always like to think of the words of the great woman of Shunam(?) speaking about the prophet whom she had observed but whom she did not know very well, she said, 'Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God which passes by us continually,' 2 Kings 4:9." He said, "It was not what Elisha said or did that conveyed that impression, it was what he was. By his merely passing by she could detect something, she could see. What are people sensing about you? We may leave many kinds of impressions. We may leave the impression that we are clever, that we are gifted, that we are this or that or the other. But no impression left by Elisha was an impression of Elisha, it was an impression of God. This matter of impact upon others turns on one thing, and that is the working of the cross in us with regard to the pleasure of the heart of God. It demands that I seek His pleasure, that I seek to satisfy Him only and I do not mind how much it costs me to do so. There must be something," he says, "a willingness to yield, a breaking and a pouring out of everything to Him which gives release to that fragrance of Christ and produces in other lives an awareness of need, drawing them out and on to know the Lord. This is what I feel to be the heart of everything. The gospel has as its one object the producing in us sinners of a condition that will satisfy the heart of our God in order that He may have that. We come to Him with all we have, all we are, yes, even the most cherished things in our spiritual experience and we make known to Him, Lord, I am willing to let go of all of this for You, not just for Your work, not for Your children, not for anything else but all together and only for Yourself."

And then he says this, "O to be wasted, it is a blessed thing to be wasted for the Lord." Let's pray.

Our Father, our hearts have been convicted, mine has. It's almost as if I stand outside my preach...myself and preach to myself as to these people for I do not set myself up as the perfect model of the living sacrifice, but you know the desire of my heart is to be that every moment. I pray that that will be the desire of all of us for Christ's sake...amen.

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