

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

### **Elements of a Living Sacrifice**

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Code: 80-414

This morning, we come to the Lord's Table, as you can see, and thought that it would be good for us to think a little more extensively on this occasion because we don't want to come lightly to the Lord's Table. We are warned against that. We're warned to examine ourselves when we approach His table, so we don't partake in an unworthy manner.

And because of that, I want to direct you away, this morning, from the Gospel of John and our ongoing study there and have you turn to Romans 12, a very familiar portion of Scripture I know, Romans 12:1 and 2. If you have been in the church very long, you probably are very familiar with this portion of Scripture, and I don't intend to say anything new, anything you haven't heard, but I do think it's a good place for us to think, even in familiar terms, of the importance of the Lord's Table.

We come here not just to look back and remember His death. We come here to recommit ourselves to obedience and love and devotion to Him, and Romans 12:1 and 2 spells out what that really means.

I remember some time ago having a conversation with a young married girl who said she was really having trouble living the Christian life. She felt that she was doing things that weren't pleasing to the Lord, and she just didn't seem to be able to turn that around, to change that, to make it different. She confessed that she had been "seeking more of God" is the way she put it. She was trying all the spiritual experiences. She had gone into a charismatic environment, and she had tried to speak in tongues. She had even been "slain," as it were, in the Spirit, as they call it.

She said, "I'm trying to get all I can get from God." And my response to her was, "With all due respect, that is exactly the opposite what you should be doing. Your Christian life is not dependent on what you get from Him. It's dependent on what you give to Him."

And I think that even shows up sometimes on the way people view church. They evaluate a church on the basis of what they get out of it, what they get from it, what it delivers to them. That, again, is opposite the necessary perspective, if one is going to live a godly and useful life. It's not about what you get. It's about what you give, and that is crystal clear in Romans 12. Let me read these two verses.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Very familiar verses, perhaps even memorized by many of you, but what they tell us is that the Christian life is primarily an act of worship in which we give ourselves. Now, remember we've had 11 chapters of doctrine about salvation. This is the first practical injunction, with the exception of a few encouragements in Romans 6 through 8. This is where the epistle itself turns practical. And the first thing to say is very important, and the first thing is give yourself as a living sacrifice. Your response to what God has done for you is to give to God a spiritual offering, namely yourself. It's about worship, and worship is about giving ourselves to God.

In John 4, we will remember – not too long ago, we talked about that – that God seeks true worshippers. The Father seeks true worshippers who worship Him in spirit and truth. It's about worship.

The apostle Paul says in Philippians 3, “We worship Jesus Christ. We are worshippers of Jesus Christ.” First Peter 2, Peter says, “We are priests bringing sacrifices to God.” We are priests bringing sacrifices to God.

So to view the Christian life, clearly, is to view the Christian as a priest giving offerings to God. That's what this text is saying.

Now, the nature of it is described in the terms “a living and holy sacrifice.” A living and holy sacrifice. Now, that language is very familiar to us. That's priestly language, sacrificial language, Levitical language. It takes us back to the Old Testament, the sacrificial system, when the priest would come and put an offering on the altar, and it would be slain. So priests were offering dead sacrifices, not living sacrifices. They were offering dead sacrifices that pictured the sacrifice of Christ in death, paying the penalty for our sin.

We're called on not to offer dead sacrifices. That system is gone. It was dismissed when Jesus died on the cross and the veil on the temple was rent. The sacrificial system has gone away, the sacrificial system of dead animals.

Now, there is a new kind of sacrifice in the new covenant, in the New Testament economy, and that is a living sacrifice. It's not an animal. It's you, and it's me. We are to place ourselves on the altar before God as an offering to Him. No more dead sacrifices, now living sacrifices. This is essential and supreme act of worship.

So Romans 12:1 and 2 defines, for us, essentially, the foundation of sanctification – justification, salvation, the theme of the 11 chapters. Now, the believer steps into the picture – 1 to 11, all that God has done. Now, in chapter 12, what is our responsibility? This complete, universal, comprehensive offering of ourselves to God as if we were priests placing ourselves on an altar.

So that's what leads me to say the Christian life is premised not on what you can get from God. You've already received everything you need in your salvation. It's premised on what you give to God – what you give to God.

Now, it's always been that way with God. God was not satisfied with a sacrifice, a dead sacrifice in the Old Testament, from a sinful heart. That's why, in 1 Samuel 15:22, we read, "To obey is better than sacrifice..." Sacrifice had a place. It was a picture of the sacrifice of Christ to come, but God didn't accept sacrifices that came from sinful hearts.

In Amos, He says, "Stop your songs. Stop your offerings. I will not accept them because your hearts aren't right." "The sacrifices of God," says Psalm 51:17, "are a broken spirit and a contrite heart." Those are the sacrifices that God accepts, even back in the Old Testament. So it wasn't that animal sacrifice satisfied God. They symbolized a sacrifice that would satisfy Him, but even then, it was a heart given to Him that satisfied Him.

In Psalm 141, verse 2, "May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering." There, the psalmist is saying, "May my praise and my desire to worship You from the heart be equal to my sacrifice," and, certainly, with God, it was always that He wanted the heart and then the obedience in the sacrifice as a manifestation of a heart given to Him.

But, now, since the cross, the sacrifices of animals – gone, and now it's the heart alone that God wants to be given to Him. We have been called in to dedication, and there's no better place to think about this and to refresh and renew this than at the Lord's Table this morning.

Now, as we look at these two verses, I just want to kind of separate out what is familiar of you a little bit and show you that there are four elements in a living sacrifice. There are four elements here. They overlap and intertwine, but, nonetheless, they can be identified and are identified in the text in four ways.

The sacrifice that is a living sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God incorporates the soul, the body, the mind, and the will. Those are the four elements – the soul, the body, the mind, and the will. And, obviously, they're all bound up with each other, but they help us to see aspects of ourselves that we are to give to God.

Let's talk, first of all, about the soul being given to God, the soul being given to God, and, by that, I mean the inner person, and, by that, we're talking about salvation. And that's implied here because it says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren..." the word "brethren" or "brothers" indicates that he's writing to people who've already given their souls to God. They've already done that.

Matthew 16:26, Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" It says, of the Corinthians, they first gave themselves to God, and that's what we're talking about, initially. First of all, you cannot please God in any way if you don't give yourself to Him, your soul, the essence of who you are. That's the foundation of the sacrifice. It all starts with the soul.

Now, let me expand on that a little bit in the language of this first verse. "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God..." Now, any time you see "therefore," you know that this is simply a transition into the consequence of what has been established before.

For 11 chapters, the apostle Paul has been delineating the mercies of God. We're not talking about "mercy" singular. We're talking about "mercies." What are "mercies"? Things given undeserved. Things given undeserved. That's "mercy" – things that are presented to us, granted to us, applied to us, credited to us, which we do not deserve. There are many mercies of God.

Based upon the mercies of God, we are to present our body as a living sacrifice. Those mercies are all bound up in our salvation. They have to do with the salvation of the soul, so that's why it's the first point. Here our brothers, who have received the mercies of God, their souls have become God's own possession. They've put their souls on the altar.

That's what you do. That's salvation. You come spiritually bankrupt in sin, destitute, needing forgiveness, wanting heaven and not hell. You give yourself to God. You put your trust in Jesus Christ, turn from your sin, and you receive the gift of eternal life. That's your soul being placed on the altar, the innermost self, who you are.

Now, the definition of "salvation" is an expansive and comprehensive definition in the book of Romans. If we just take the phrase "the mercies of God" and expand it, this is what it incorporates, all right? It incorporates everything that's a part of salvation – everything that's a part of salvation that's literally been laid out in 11 chapters, all the provision of God's wonderful mercy for man's sin, salvation with all of its components. Let me separate them a little bit.

Romans has an impressive list. One of the mercies of God is "divine love," and that is celebrated in the first 11 chapters numerous times, starting in first chapter in verse 7 and moving all the way through these chapters and finding its culmination at the end of chapter 8.

One of the mercies of God is eternal divine love granted to an unworthy sinner. A second mercy of God is “grace,” grace to provide the salvation that the sinner cannot earn. You find that, also, in chapter 1, verse 7. You find that as the theme in chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6, and ongoing. The theme of grace, that is a mercy of God.

And then you begin to expand that, and you find that God grants us, as a mercy, the gift of the “Holy Spirit,” the Holy Spirit who takes up residence in us. The Spirit of God sheds, abroad, love in our hearts. The Spirit of God secures us. You find the expansive instruction about the work of the Spirit in chapter 8.

Then, another mercy is “peace,” chapter 1, 2, 5, 8, talks about peace with God that is granted to us as a mercy from God. Twenty times in the opening eleven chapters, “faith” is granted to us, faith to believe and apprehend salvation as a mercy of God.

You find “comfort,” chapter 1, verse 12; “power,” chapter 1, verse 16; “hope,” chapter 5; “hope” again, chapter 8. In chapter 9 and through chapter 11, another mercy that God extends to us is “patience” – patience, forbearance. Another mercy that God extends to us is “kindness,” chapter 2, verse 4.

Another mercy that God extends to us is a “share in His glory,” chapter 2, chapter 5, chapter 8, chapter 9. These are all the mercies of God. God shares with us, also, His “honor,” chapter 2, verse 10, and repeated again in chapter 9.

So let me go back over that – love, grace, the Holy Spirit, peace, faith, comfort, power, hope, patience, kindness, glory, and honor. All of those are the mercies of God all laid out in this marvelous book of Romans and throughout the New Testament, but we’re not through.

Perhaps, leading the list for us is “righteousness.” Righteousness. That’s the theme starting in chapter 1 and running all the way through, chapter 10 – righteousness, righteousness. It appears again and again and again. Righteousness – “the” righteousness of God is credited and imputed to us.

“Forgiveness,” chapter 4; “reconciliation,” chapter 5; and then 15 times, “justification” – justification literally being declared before God as just. Another mercy is “security.” We are secured forever by the Holy Spirit, chapter 5, chapter 8. Another is “eternal life.” Another is “freedom” – freedom from the power and penalty of sin. Another is “resurrection,” chapter 8. Another is “sonship,” adopted as sons. Another is “ongoing intercession” by, both, the Spirit and the Son, chapter 8.

I mean this is a massive list of all the elements that relate to salvation, and they are the mercies of God. This is overwhelming that, in verse 33, at the end of all of this – verse 33 of chapter 11 – as

Paul has now concluded his run through the mercies of God, he says, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

He just launches into a doxology over the mercies of God. Now these, then, become – here’s the point – the motive for us to make the living sacrifice. It’s an act of thanks, an act of worship in response to this massive array of mercies. “Therefore...,” 12 says. “Therefore, I urge you, brethren, based on all these mercies, to make this living sacrifice.”

We’ve been saying this in recent months because it’s been an issue. Some people talk about cross-centered sanctification, that the key to being sanctified is to look at the cross and look at the cross and look at the cross and keep looking. I have expanded that a little bit in the Gospel of John and said, “Well, no, you can’t limit it to the cross. It’s Christ-centered sanctification.” You look at Christ. You look at Christ, and you focus on Him – 2 Corinthians 3:18, you’re transformed into His image.

But if we can even expand that view of Christ to all that Christ provides, we now, then, have it encompassing all the mercies of God. So what motivates me to make my life a living sacrifice? The mercies of God. It’s not narrowly limited. It’s expansive.

Psalms 116:12 puts it this way: “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits unto me?” He was really at a loss for words. He didn’t know what to give. “What shall I give the Lord in response to all His benefits?” Here’s the answer: your life in all its components as a living sacrifice. That’s what you give.

Romans 12:1 and 2 answers the prayer of Psalm 116, and it starts with the soul. First, you give your soul to God in faith in Jesus Christ, and that’s where it starts. It starts with the soul, and then when you contemplate all that salvation is, that becomes the driving motive for sanctification.

Sometimes, people say, “Why so much doctrinal teaching? Can’t you be more practical?” No, the truth of the matter is your orthopraxy is a direct reflection of your orthodoxy. Your ethical behavior is a direct reflection of your dogma. Your duties flow out of your doctrine. It’s what you believe that essentially designs your behavior. That’s a very shallow perception because there is no basis for right behavior except right doctrine, and the more you understand about the greatness of your salvation and the richer your grasp of it, the greater your motivation to offer yourself constantly as a living sacrifice.

You have to keep doing it because we have a way of crawling back off the altar, don’t we? Jesus Himself said, in John 13:17, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” The

assumption is you have to know them in order to do them.

The sweep of Paul's mind goes here in all his epistles. He starts with doctrine, makes a transition with the word "therefore," and moves on to the application, the behavior. Peter actually says – Peter the apostle – that, "Sin is the result of forgetting what happened when you were saved." Second Peter 1:9, he says, "Sin comes becomes you're blind and shortsighted, and you've forgotten your purification from your former sins."

One of the things that we want to do as teachers and preachers is constantly remind you of the glories of salvation so that you don't forget what God has done for you and so that your gratitude affects obedience and sacrifice. Salvation, the saving of the soul, is the first in making a living a sacrifice to God. The soul must be given to God, and then the panoply of realities connected to salvation become the motivation for the rest of the sacrifice.

Secondly, the body must be presented to God, and that's what verse 1 says: "...present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." This is the body, the actual body, and not simply that which is tangible and visible but all the components of being human – how you think and how you reason, all that you are as a human being.

It's a temple term, by the way. "Present" is a temple term. It means to surrender up, to yield up, to offer up, and that is to hold nothing back. Like a priest who brings a sacrifice and lays the whole thing on the altar, you put your body on the altar, and by doing that, you are saying, "I give You, God, my body." That's not hard to understand.

I give it not as a dead sacrifice but as a living sacrifice. I continually offer my body for your purposes, and I offer it as a living and holy sacrifice set apart from sin. This is not new language, by the way.

The book of Romans, if you look back at chapter 6 for just a moment, Paul says in verse 12 of chapter 6, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts." So you there that the body means more than just the material. It means the immaterial desires and lust, as well, but he says in verse 12, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lust," verse 13, then, "Do not go on presenting," there's that same verb, "the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but presents yourselves to God..." and he's talking about the body and the component parts of your humanity.

Down in verse 16, the same thing: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" In other words, you're making a presentation of yourself to obey your master.

Verse 19: "I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. Just as you presented your members, your bodily members, as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification." Sanctification is the result of an active presentation of the soul first and then the body to God.

I know there are people who talk about sanctification as if it's passive. It is not. This is a command. "I urge you to present your bodies." That is an action, and you present your body, surrender up your body to God. That is your duty, and that is necessary for your sanctification. That is so very, very important.

There are a lot of passages that affirm this, but just a couple to think about – 1 Thessalonians 4:4: "The will of God," in verse 3, "The will of God is your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you know how to possess his own vessel or body in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God."

You're a believer. Your sanctification is dependent on you getting a hold of your body and offering it to God. This is not easy. First Corinthians 9:24 and following, Paul says, "I beat my body into submission, lest in preaching to others, I myself would be disqualified."

Now, this is new to some people who would be reading this in the Roman culture because they believed in a philosophical dualism, where mind and spirit was good and noble and elevated, and the body was unimportant. The body was basically evil. You let the body do whatever the body did, and it was inconsequential. That's philosophical dualism. That is unacceptable to God, and Paul is giving a message to the Romans that would that would go against the grain of their accepted philosophy.

God wants your body as a sacrifice offered to him in holiness, not just your spirit and your mind. Sometimes, when you hear people say, "Well, I'm a very spiritual person," if you're talking in biblical terms, I'd like to say to them, "Well, if you're truly a spiritual person, and you're concerned about offering your spirit to God, I've got some news for you. He wants your body, too. How are you doing on that side?"

It's important because vice was rampant then, and vice is rampant now, and there was tolerance, then. It was in the fabric of their philosophy, and there's tolerance now in the fabric of our philosophy, as well. For God to say, "I want not just your soul; I want your body, holy, given to Me as a sacrifice," is essentially the foundation of all sanctification. It's an act. It's an aggressive act. It's an act that demands that we beat our bodies into submission.



First Thessalonians 5:23: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely." What does that mean? Your spirit and soul and body. That's what God wants – a living sacrifice. A living sacrifice. Not a dead one like in the old covenant.

You could compare that to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac was about to be a dead sacrifice, but Abraham, who offered Isaac, was making a living sacrifice. What was he sacrificing? His son, his beloved son, the promises of God, the covenant of God, his heir, his hope, his future – everything, but he was willing to do it out of obedience. That's a living sacrifice.

That living sacrifice encompasses the body, and that becomes explicitly stated in the tenth chapter of Hebrews. Listen to verse 19. This is the language of worship in the Old Testament.

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh," pictures you like going into the Holy of Holies as a priest would do in the past, only you're entering into the very presence of God through the blood of Jesus, "since He is now our great High Priest over the House of God, when we go in," listen to what he says, "draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith," that means you're saved, "and having our hearts sprinkled clean from all evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Every time you hear this language of sacrifice and offering to God, it pulls the body in, as well as the soul and the spirit. So what does it mean to offer yourself to God to be a living sacrifice? You give your soul, and you give your body. "This...", back to Romans 12, "This is acceptable to God, that is pleasing to God, satisfactory to God." *Euarestos* is the verb, and it has the idea of good. It's the right thing, utterly and completely acceptable to God. God will not be satisfied to have a soul given to Him and then the body withheld.

God is satisfied only when the soul is followed by the body offered to Him, and He says, "This is your spiritual service of worship." "Worship" is the word *latreu*. It's worship in a technical sense, in the Old Testament, the Levitical kind of worship, so we're still in this priestly language here.

It's used in Hebrews 9:6 of priests who were performing worship in the service of God, but it's used here of the believer. This is your priestly duty, as a priest before God, to offer yourself. This is your – notice this – spiritual service of worship.

"Spiritual" is *logikos* from which we get "logic." This is logical. This only makes sense. Why? Because in your salvation, you declared God as your sovereign, Christ as your Lord and Master, and this is your responsibility, then, to come to worship Him and to offer yourself as a living sacrifice.

You could translate *logikos* a lot of ways – intelligent, reasonable, sensible, heartfelt – all of those work, but the bottom line is it's the only thing that makes any sense because if you have just declared Jesus as Lord and God as sovereign, and He says, "I want your body," you give your body to your Sovereign.

Real worship is not elaborate. Prayers are not liturgy, not ritual, not candles, not stained glass, not anything external. It is the giving of the soul and body to God.

Thirdly, and this is obvious, the mind must be given to God. Now, these are all interconnected. If you don't give your mind to God, you're not going to be able to sustain giving your body to God.

In a moment, you might present your body a living sacrifice. That might happen after your salvation. It might happen for a while, but, eventually, how you think will take over what you do with your body. That's the way it is. "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is." So the mind is critical.

Verse 2: "Do not be conformed to this world," this *ain*, this age, "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Along with the body, the mind must come. If I, perhaps, even with an experience like we've had today, you get motivated. You say, "I want to give my body. I want to change what I'm doing with my body. I want to set aside the sins of my life. I want to present my body with all of its attitudes and all of its thoughts and all of its actions, and I want to give it to God." You walk out of here with all the good intention.

If you don't program your mind correctly, your body will come off that altar. This is just part of reality. The mind is critical. So how do we deal with the mind? Negative. Don't be conformed to this *ain*, this age.

What do we mean "age"? The world fallen, unredeemed, the system of Satan, the *kosmos* – we use that language. John used that language – the evil world system. The Germans called it the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age, the ghost of the age, all the floating mass of ideas, thoughts, opinions, views, religions, philosophies, theories, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, temptations – all of it.

All the complex of that current at any time in history that dominates your world becomes the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age, the *kosmos*, the system, with a real, real and effective power. It's an overwhelming power. The world, as we've been saying, is the instrument that Satan uses to promote his goals, his aims, his ends, and his ambitions, and he is relentless about that.

So if you're going to present your body a living sacrifice to God, you're going to have to make sure that your mind, which dictates how your body functions, is not completely absorbed into this world system. "The whole world," says 1 John 5:19, "lies in the lap of the evil one." All that is in the world,

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is of the world and is passing away.

The purposes, ethics, standards, and morality are all satanic. It's all the kingdom of darkness. You have been transformed. You have been removed from the world, and you have come out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Now, present your body, but in order for you to keep on presenting your body – present tense – you're going to have to reprogram your mind away from the corruption of this age.

That's a challenging thing to do. I was telling the pastors at Shepherds' Conference, when you think that the average high school student – and this is the latest statistic – spends nine hours privately in front of a computer screen – the average high school student – they're being programmed and drawn in by the spirit of the age.

Not that there's not a lot of good – there is, but undiscerning young people are easily victimized by the spirit of the age. That's why so much of what pop culture is belongs to kids from 10 to 25. They're so susceptible. We can't be conformed to this. In fact, the language says, "Stop allowing yourselves to be fashioned like this evil age." The verb is a very strong verb.

*Suschnatiz* refers to being literally "stamped out" with the world's stamp, molded like the world – mold. Don't let that happen.

On the other hand, "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind..., the metamorphosis of your mind, the transformation of your mind. By the way, that verb "metamorphosis" or "transformation" is used at the transfiguration, where Christ who was Man – visibly Man – was literally transfigured into glorious form.

You need to be transfigured into glorious form. Your outward image, who you are, must come from heaven and not hell. Let yourself be transformed by the renewing of your mind. How do you renew your mind? Paul's epistles are loaded with this. I won't go over all of it.

You renew your mind through the Word of God. The Word of God is the source of renewal, 1 Corinthians 2:16: You have the mind of Christ. Colossians 1: "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects."

You're going to do that when your mind is saturated with divine truth, and there's no shortcut to this. The soul is redeemed. The body, you say, "I want to give my body to the Lord." That's going to depend on the mind because the mind, then, becomes the battleground where the spirit of the age fights with the new nature. Philippians 2: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Reprogramming how you think.

That's why, way back in Deuteronomy 6, when God was establishing His people, He said, "I am who I am. The Lord is one, and I'm telling you you've got to be faithful to Me, so talk about this when you stand up, walk, like down, wherever you go, all the time. Your mind must be committed to this."

The soul is given to God, and then the body can be given to God. And that living sacrifice of the body given to God can be sustained as an offering to God when the mind is constantly being renewed by the truth of the Word of God.

Finally, the will must be given to God. We know things, but we don't necessarily do what we should. Paul says, "I don't do what I should do. I do what I don't want to do." The will is a very important reality. The final word, then, is that you would prove, by your life, what the will of God is – prove not in the sense that you validate God but in the sense that you demonstrate it. You demonstrate the will of God. You put the will of God on display because you do His will.

You show the world the approved will of God by doing it. That's not the idea to test and see if God's will is good or bad or right or wrong. It is good. It is right. It's to put it on display to be the living proof that the will of God is good and lofty and noble.

So to live the Christian life is a strong, strong desire generated by the will based upon what the mind knows of the Word of God which informs what the body does, all in gratitude for the mercies of God granted graciously to us in Christ. This is the sum and substance of the path of sanctification. There's no other way to get there, and these are present-tense verbs because we just continually have to do this.

Be thankful that you have people around you on the same journey, right? Be thankful that you have the resources being provided for you so that your mind can be the mind of Christ. Win the battle and the will. Yield to the things that are right and noble and good. And all of this we do because we're so grateful and overwhelmed at the mercies of God, and that's why we're here – because all those mercies basically come to us through the cross of Christ in His resurrection, don't they? Let's bow together in prayer.

We are grateful again, Lord, that we have been able to consider these things which lay a great responsibility on us, a great duty. But, at the same time, that duty and that responsibility is the pathway to joy, blessing, satisfaction, contentment, peace, usefulness, eternal reward, so we thank you for this reminder.

Now, as we come to the foot of the cross, it's with a new sense of commitment, a new sense of affirmation that we come. We want to offer ourselves, each of us, in his and her own heart, a living

sacrifice – soul, body, mind, will to you. This is our prayer and desire even as we come to this table this morning.

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