

In view of God's mercy #2

Rom. 12:9-21

Last week we talked about the book of Romans and specifically

Rom. 12:1,2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Paul says, in light of the first 11 chapters (All have sinned, Jesus died for sinners, we have new life through baptism, the old law is taken away and now we live in and through the Spirit, which is in us).

Considering all of this (in view of God's mercy); Paul tells us to offer our bodies a living sacrifice and to be different, set apart from the world.

He is going to tell us exactly how that is to be done in Rom. 12:9-21.

In view of God's mercy—the conduct of a Christian

Paul is basically going to give a list of do's and don'ts for the Christian.

We understand that Christianity is not a checklist of commands that we must keep and sins that we must avoid. Christianity comes from the heart.

However, there some things that we **MUST DO** and some things we **SHOULD NOT DO** for our lives to “pleasing” to God...to be a “living sacrifice” to Him.

Paul is going to explain these here in Rom. 12. Paul will deal with 2 aspects of our Christian life: He will show us that a transformed life changes me...and then a transformed life changes how I treat others:

I. A TRANSFORMED LIFE CHANGES ME (V. 9,12)

Rom. 12:9

Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Abhor means to detest, hate

Cling means to hold fast, stick to, or remain attached

Because I am living a transformed life that is NOT conformed to the world...I need to view sin and righteousness like Christ does.

Heb. 1:9 (speaking of Jesus)

You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;

Christianity is not just knowing right from wrong; it is developing a love for what is right/good/pure and a hatred for things that are wrong/sinful/wicked.

Ps. 97:10 NCV

People who love the Lord hate evil.

I Thess. 5:21,22

Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

The transformed Christian doesn't say, "How close can I get to sin without actually committing it?"

The transformed Christian says, "How far can I get away from sin because I hate what sin does to me, to others, and to my relationship with God?"

If we want our lives to be pleasing to God, we must hate sin, and cling to what is GOOD!

A transformed life changes me in another way:

Rom. 12:12

rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

This verse is loaded with ways that my life is being transformed into the image of Christ.

“rejoicing in hope”

- Satan might take away your health—he can’t touch your hope
- He might take away your career—he can’t touch your hope
- He might take away your material possessions—he can’t touch your hope

Job 13:15

Job 19:25-27

I don’t rejoice based on how things are going in my life...I rejoice based on WHERE I am going after this life!

2 Cor. 5:1,2 Hope: desire + expectation (notice 2 Cor. 5:8)

“patient in tribulation”

Remember it is Paul that is writing this (around the end of his 3rd missionary journey): He had been through it ALL

- Beatings, stoning and left for dead, imprisonments, mob attacks

Yet, because he was a transformed Christian he was patiently enduring these things because he was looking past the pain and seeing his prize.

Phil. 3:12

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

v.13,14

forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Even in pain and tribulation...because our lives are a living sacrifice...we rejoice in hope, we are patient in struggles...and we do this through prayer...

“continuing steadfastly in prayer”

Someone once said, “When a man ceases to pray, he robs himself of the strength of Almighty God.”

- Prayer is what connects us with God.
- Prayer is what connects us to blessings
- Prayer is what connects us to hope/peace/joy.

A Christian that is living a transformed life will want to be in constant contact with their Father in heaven!!

We will pray without ceasing—I Thess. 5:17

We will continue steadfastly in prayer—Rom. 12:12

We will want our prayers to rise before Him like incense—Ps.141:2

II. A TRANSFORMED LIFE CHANGES HOW WE TREAT OTHERS

A transformed Christian is one that lives his/her life thinking about other people.

Paul is going to show us how a transformed life not only changes us...it also changes how we treat others.

1. **TC's love one another** (I knew a young man whose name was TC, it didn't stand for anything, just TC, his daddy's name was T).

v.9

Let love be without hypocrisy.

Have you ever seen a fake Christian...they are polite and nice as church...but if you see them in the world, they are ugly and hateful.

Paul is saying, you don't need to be like the Pharisees that appear to have great love in their heart...but really they were hypocrites...

Matt. 23: 27,28

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

As Christians we are to have a love that is honest, sincere, and genuine.

I John 4:8

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love

As Christians.....we sing about LOVE....we talk about LOVE....we teach about LOVE....But we also need to live that love and show that love!

Here's how:

v.10

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

He is saying that if you are a TC then you will love your brothers and sister in Christ.

Heb. 13:1

Let brotherly love continue

I Pet. 1:22

love one another fervently with a pure heart,

ESV says, “outdo one another in showing honor”

When we show honor and respect and love for the brethren, then we are also showing that to God!

John 13:35

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- The TC is transformed to love like Christ
- To give honor to his neighbor, like Christ

To “outdo” one another not in wealth or knowledge or abilities...but in showing honor for the brethren!

2. TC's serve one another

Rom. 12:11,13

not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

When we love one another and when we are trying to be like Christ...it would be natural for us to serve our fellow man.

Notice how we serve the Lord...by distributing to the needs of the saints and by being hospitable.

Paul started this chapter by telling us that in view of God's mercy(because of what He has done for us)...we should offer our bodies a "living sacrifice".

That means, we give our lives in service to Him and His glory!

- When I am serving those in need, I am serving the Lord
- When I am being kind, hospitable and compassionate, I am serving the Lord
- When I am giving my resources and my time for others, I am serving the Lord

Heb. 13:16

But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Remember this:

Heb. 6:10

For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

This isn't why we serve...we serve because we are TC's...but this is a benefit and a result of our sacrifice and service to others!

3. TC's have the same mind toward one another

Rom. 12:15,16

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

TC's rejoice when others are rejoicing...they are happy when others have success and when their life is going good.

We have no envy, jealousy, or covetousness...we are truly happy when others have success and when they are happy!

Not only do we rejoice...but we also...

Weep with those that weep (v. 15b)

- When others hurt I should hurt
- When others are struggling I should struggle
- When others are in pain I should feel their pain

Story is told of a slave lady that lost one of her neighbors.

The owner of the farm went to the slave lady and said, "I'm sorry to hear of your friend's death." You must miss her greatly?" You were such friends"

Yes ma'am said the servant, I am sorry she died, but we were not friends."

Why, said the lady...I thought you were. I've seen you laughing and talking together lot of times. Yes ma'am that's so, we've laughed together and talked together, but we are just acquaintances. You see, we have never shed any tears together...folks have got to cry together before they are really friends.

Heb. 13:3

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also

v.16

Be of the same mind toward one another.

Isn't it good to be around people that are like-minded!!

I think this is probably what I love most about the Lord's church...is when we come together...I know we are all of ONE MIND.

We have...

- The same goals
- The same beliefs
- The same convictions
- The same mindset
- The same direction in life
- The same principles

Sure, we are going to differ on some things. We are not all going to like the same things in life.

But when it comes to God's word....when it comes to the things that really matter...WE ARE ALL OF THE SAME MIND!!

We are of the same mind...

- about the Lord's church
- about baptism
- about worship
- about faith/works

There are no divisions among us!!

Ps. 133:1

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

4. TC's pursue peace with one another

Rom. 12:14; 17-21

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

v.17-21

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

If he is thirsty, give him a drink;

For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The world says: "Get even."

Jesus says: “Bless.”

The world says: “Treat them the way they treated you.”

Jesus says: “Do good.”

The world says: “Don't let anybody take advantage of you.”

Paul says: “As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

And notice that last phrase:

“as much as depends on you.”

- Paul recognizes that you cannot control everybody else's behavior.
- You can't make everybody like you.
- You can't make everybody treat you fairly.

But **you can control your response.**

- That's living a transformed life
- That's living a life that is Christ centered and Christlike!

Jesus was not overcome by evil, but He overcame evil with GOOD!

This is what a transformed life looks like!

Rom. 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Transformation begins with me
- And it is seen in how I treat others

Paul isn't just giving us a list of Christian rules that we must follow...he is showing us what it looks like in real life!!

If my transformation cannot be seen in my words, actions and in my life...then I am not truly being transformed into the image of Christ.

I want my life to be pleasing and acceptable to God...I want to offer my body as a “living sacrifice” holy, acceptable to God...this is a reasonable response for what He has done for me!