

The Basis of Our Sacrifice  
Romans 12:1

*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. 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 having established in the first eleven chapters of his epistle to the church at Rome, the great doctrinal truth that our salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in the work of Christ alone, to the glory of God alone now presents those very mercies of God as the basis for the believer to offer himself as a living sacrifice to God. It is the mercies of God that calls us to a loving service not a service born out of some slavish fear. Calvin states it thus, "Paul, that he might bind us to God, not by servile fear, but by the voluntary and cheerful love of righteousness, allures us by the sweetness of that favor, by which our salvation is effected."

It is with such awareness that I desire to present these first 2 verses of Romans 12 under the following headings, 1) The Basis or foundational reason for presenting ourselves a living Sacrifice to God; 2) The Nature of the Sacrifice and 3) The Manner of our Sacrifice.

A. What is the basis, the starting point, or foundational reason for presenting ourselves a living Sacrifice to God?

1. The basis is to be found in 5 simple words that Paul uses, "by the mercies of God".
  - a. It is most necessary and very important to understand the basis for offering ourselves to God.
  - b. Lest we conclude that the basis for serving God is "do this and live", for if that were the basis it would be based upon the Law of God not the mercies of God.
  - c. If that that were the case we would be without hope.

*Rom 8:3-4 For what the law **could not do** in that it was weak through the flesh, **God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh**, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled** in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

- d. We do not have to bind ourselves to the law in order to be received by God.
    - e. Because Christ fulfilled the Law in our behalf.
  2. The basis of our service is . . . Christ, in loving mercy, did it for us therefore let us respond out of love.
    - a. Calvary not Sinai is where we find our hope and comfort
    - b. The law is not the means of our salvation
    - c. The law is only **the guide** to direct us in our gratitude.
  3. It is because we have been redeemed by the mercies of God that Paul instructs us to present our bodies a living sacrifice.
    - a. Since you have been justified by grace alone, since you are saved through faith alone present your bodies a living sacrifice
    - b. Since you are no longer in the first Adam
    - c. Since you have been purchased by that great and most precious price the very blood of Jesus Christ --- serve Him
    - d. Since you now belong to the second Adam --- serve him
    - e. Since your salvation is **all of mercy alone** ---- serve Him.
  4. Brings us to this question, "What is mercy?"
    - a. Not getting what you deserve.
    - b. You do not need mercy if you are not guilty, you only need justice.
    - c. But we are guilty of the crime.
    - d. Meaning of throwing oneself upon the mercies of the court.
  5. Paul understood the meaning of mercy by personal experience

- a. He had experience God's mercy on the Road to Damascus
- b. Paul had been trusting in his own righteousness, he was a Pharisee of Pharisees. he was a self-righteous Pharisee
- c. He was breathing out threatenings and slaughter
- d. As a Pharisee of Pharisees he had been persecuting the church thinking he was doing God a favor
- e. Instead he was guilty of persecuting the Lord Himself
- f. On the road to Damascus he was made aware of his terrible guilt.

*1 Tim 1:13-16 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And **the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant**, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners, of whom I am chief**.*

- g. Paul had been a chief enemy of God, he had deserved the wrath of God.
- h. On that day - - - on that road to Damascus he was saved from the wrath of God
- i. Instead of wrath – he received forgiveness, he received Mercy
- j. Paul knew what it meant to be a debtor to mercy alone

6. Why Paul referred to himself as a “slave” of the Lord Jesus Christ

- a. On that road to Damascus he had become a surrendered servant of the Most High God. –

*Acts 9:6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "**Lord, what do You want me to do?**"*

*Rom 1:1 - Paul, a **bondservant of Jesus Christ**, called to be an apostle, **separated to the gospel of God**.*

- b. Paul's life is an example of one who had presented himself a living sacrifice to God because of the mercies of God.
- c. Having been a recipient of the mercies of God he responded with thankful service .
- d. A bond slave is someone who sees himself as “better off” being a slave of his master.
- e. We are better off as slaves of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Therefore, since we are recipients of mercy alone, Paul therefore exhorts us earnestly to express our thankfulness by presenting ourselves a “living sacrifice”.

- a. Paul uses a word here that the people of his day understood.
- b. Seen animals killed and burned as an atonement, as a covering for sin.
- c. Even the pagans had experience sacrifices as an appeasement to their gods.

8. Paul is pressing us to present ourselves a living sacrifice, not to better ourselves before God, but to better ourselves in God.

*1 Thess 2:11-12 “. . . (I) charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, **that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory**.*

- a. Paul is saying walk worthy as an expression of gratitude.
- b. Paul now says present yourselves as an expression of gratitude

9. It is not God saying, “I saved you now prove yourself worthy of being saved”.

10. Indeed then, it is the mercies of God that calls to a loving service not a service born of a slavish fear.

- a. There are those who think that the doctrines salvation by sovereign grace reduce ones' desire to live for God
- b. They simply do not understand how an awareness of God's mercy brings one to a joyful obedient walk with God.
- c. Indeed there are no precepts or sanctions that could drive one to obedience as does the awareness of God's love to His redeemed people.
- d. For in fact, a service born out of slavish fear brings one only to a hatred of God and a rebellion.
- e. On the other hand the mercies of God brings us to a burning desire to serve him.

CONCLUSION: Now do you see the importance of those 5 words. **By the mercies of God.**

This is why we desire to love Him, because He first loved us.

This is why we desire to serve Him, because He humbled Himself and as a servant of the Most High suffered the penalty of sin in our place.

Because He who knew no sin presented Himself as a sacrifice in our place.

Could there be any greater reason for desiring to serve God.

Little wonder Paul said, Therefore I exhort you BY THE MERCIES OF GOD to present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God.