

Refresh (September 19, 2021) “Lives of Worship”

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ Romans 12:1-8

1. What is evident about God’s mercy that should motivate believers to offer their bodies as “living sacrifices” from:

Romans 12:1

Romans 9:15 and 9:18

Romans 11:25-32

2. “The word ‘living’ may mean that the sacrifice is a constant thing. The word ‘sacrifice’ actually means ‘to kill.’ That makes it a ‘living killing!’ It means that we must continually renew our positions as wholly obedient and at God’s disposal. It is what Jesus meant when he said that a follower of his ‘must deny himself and take up his cross daily and...[lose] his life’ (Luke 9:23-24). This is what a ‘holy’ life looks like (Romans 12:1). To be holy is to be a daily giving over of our lives and our bodies in obedience to God, motivated by the view of God’s mercy that we have as we stand at the foot of the cross and see his Son dying there for us.” (Romans 8-16 For You p. 104 by Timothy Keller)

Compare and contrast the sacrifices of animals with the offering of our bodies as “living sacrifices” (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 10:1-18; Leviticus 16).

3. Share examples of ways to offer living sacrifices and the reason(s) for doing so.

4. Give the definitions of “conform” and “transform” (Romans 12:2). How can we not conform to the world? Expound from 2 Corinthians 3:18, Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:14 how “transformation by the renewal of your mind” occurs.

5. Paul warns believers to “not think of himself more highly that he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment.” Read Romans 12:3-5 and share why Paul is giving this warning.

6. Consider the following excerpt from the book, Romans 8-16 For You (p. 112-113 by Timothy Keller) concerning the gifts of grace from Romans 12:6-8:

Prophecy (v. 6): This is probably not the gift of giving divinely inspired messages from God...Paul is saying that a prophet must not prophesy in a way that contradicts Christian doctrine. Now, if prophecy were a divine word direct from God, why would such a rule be laid down? It could be that the word “prophecy” has more than one meaning. Here in Romans 12:6, it seems to mean preaching or anointed utterance.

Service (v. 7): This is the word *diakonia*, which means ‘practical service.’ People with gifts of service are good at the practical tasks, and good at administration. They are great team workers and do not need the spotlight.”

Teaching (v. 7): This is the gift of making truth clear and understandable. A good teacher may not be a good preacher and vice versa. And teaching gifts can vary greatly; some are better in small groups; others in large groups; some with children, some with peers, and so on.

Encouragements (v.8): This is the word *parakaleo*, which means to “come alongside.” “Encouragement” is a good translation, but also includes most of what today we would call “counseling”—support, inspiration. Encouragers are not necessarily trained, formal counselors. They can serve as advisors, supporters, greeters, and welcomers in many ways.

Giving (v. 8): People with this gift not only enjoy giving in unusual proportions, but are wise in their gifts. Their generosity is spiritually very fruitful.

Leadership (v. 8): Leaders are people with the gift of getting people to follow them. They can put vision before a group and inspire them to get there.

Mercy (v. 8): This is the gift of people specifically moved to work with the poor, the sick, the weak, the prisoner, the addicted, the elderly, and so on.

How do we discern our own spiritual gifts?

What gifts God has graced you with to serve the body of Christ?