

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Our Living Sacrifice

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I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your spiritual service. Much of God’s eternal purpose is unfolding at the crossroads of Romans 12:1.

The “therefore” of this verse connects the Old Testament Law, which could only condemn us due to our weakness of the flesh, with the “mercies of God” through Christ’s perfect sacrifice revealed in the Gospel which justifies us from our sins through obedience of faith. Romans, chapters 1-11, are summed up connecting the Old, which had fulfilled its purpose in God’s plan, to what life should now be like for the Christian under the New as revealed in chapters 12-16.

You cannot help but think of the Old Testament with its continual offerings of animal sacrifices, when God commands us through Paul to “present” a “sacrifice” that is “holy” and “acceptable” unto God. It is Jesus who fulfilled God’s eternal purpose which were typified by the blood of bulls and goats (*Hebrews 10:5-10*). His one sacrifice was “for sins forever” and “perfected forever” humbled souls

who seek to be truly sanctified by God’s revealed Truth (*Hebrews 10:12, 14; John 17:17*). But now at the crossroads of Romans 12, we must present a “living sacrifice.”

We must now present “our bodies” as a “living sacrifice.” Under the Old Law sacrifices demanded an animal “without blemish.” Jesus fulfilled that demand “once and for all” in His sacrifice. But now the Lord demands the offering of our body as a “living” and “holy” sacrifice. Holiness is not about how thin or pudgy your body is, nor how young or old you are, but how separated you are from sin in your total devotion to, and worship unto God.

The Christian lives holy “in all manner of living,” because “God is holy.” (*I Peter 1:15-16*). The true Christian sees his body as a “temple of the Holy Spirit” and therefore “not his own” (*I Corinthians 6:19*). Bodies are kept pure from sexual impurity because the Christian knows he or she has been “bought with a price” – Jesus’ precious blood (*I Peter 1:18-19*). Because of God’s mercy and Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, the true Christian totally serves God applying the comprehensive exhortation: “glorify God therefore in your body.” (*I Corinthians 6:20*).

God does not demand just your heart, but your body as well, as it carries out the desires of your heart. The Christian body will animate with a comforting joyful smile to recipients who receive your “mercy with cheerfulness” (*Romans 12:8*). The Christian body will not become slothful or lazy, but be fervent in “teaching,” and exhorting” others (*Romans 12:8,11*). The Christian will not let evil overcome, but will activate the body for service when one’s enemy is in need. The heart, hands, and feet work together to present needed water and food to a thirsty and hungry enemy (*Romans 12:20-21*).

The spiritual sacrifices we offer are assisted by the physical body. We Christians are “priests” who are to offer up “spiritual sacrifices” through Christ that are acceptable to God (*I Peter 2:5*). We will “offer up a sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our “lips” which make confession to His name” (*Hebrews 13:14*). We will use our lips as they express words praising God’s authoritative name in our lives. Our bodies will assist us in doing “good” and “sharing” with others, knowing God is pleased with such sacrifices (*Hebrews 13:16*). How will you view and use your body the rest of your life?