**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 12*

***Our Lives, Our Worship in Motion ~ The Believer’s Life***

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

Paul makes a turn in his letter with the beginning of chapter 12. He goes from confirming that Jews and Gentiles are justified to God the same way, through faith, to presenting lists of Believer’s conducts, in how they should live their lives.

 The path to salvation with God has been the same since the time of Adam and Eve, The Fall, in Genesis 3. God has not deviated His plan. We see Adam’s son, Abel, come to God in faith and made righteous (Hebrews 11:4). There are not different ages determining the path to salvation. There are ages, eras, epochs and times when God chose to reveal Himself in different ways: walking with Adam in the Garden, Speaking to Moses, Samuel, and wrestling with Jacob. Then there is the incarnation, the ultimate revelation, but, through all these, it’s the same path to reconciliation with God. The promise delivered to Abraham (Genesis 12, Romans 4, Galatians 3) is the same Abel received, the same Jesus preached, the same Paul, Peter, Stephen, John and the rest of the Apostles proclaimed, from Abel to Isaiah.

21 And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.

 22 "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. **Isaiah 45:21-22**

 So, here we read in Romans 12 how the saved shall live: The Believer’s life.

Regardless if a person is a Jew or a Gentile, the *conduct list of life applies.* These are not to be achieved to gain salvation. These are spiritual character traits, highlighting the spiritual product of the Believer’s life. This is consistent with James 2. Genuine faith automatically produces good works. If a person really possesses faith, then there will be fruit of some kind. This is not contrived or forced. These are not done to prove a person is saved. These character traits are automatically produced. They are naturally produced as God empowers us. For it is God who is at work in us for His good will and pleasure (Philippians 2:13). We benefit from God working in us.

 Paul calls upon the mercies of God to be recognized by each Believer. The uniqueness of being a person of God is the adoption of the reality that Believers live spiritual lives. We are to think of ourselves as being joined with God at the Cross, at the Resurrection. Thus, we, too, are called to live sacrificial lives. **Our lives are worship in motion.** With this action, we cannot be conformed to the fallen world. Instead, we live life as a light to the world.

**Romans 7:4** Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God

 Romans 12:2 is packed with the challenge and command not to be conformed to this world. We are called to have a mind renewed. Note the English words “transformed and renewing” presents an active, ongoing process. In our actions and statements, we prove that it is the will of God that is good, acceptable and perfect, not ours.

 This is the process of sanctification. We mature into the person God has planned for our lives (Ephesians 2:10).

SANCTIFICATION VERSES

Romans 6:19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

Romans 6:22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

1 Thessalonians 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

 If sanctification is working in a person then they are saved. If God does not work in a person then they are not saved. God’s Spirit works constantly through each Believer.

COMPLETE VERSES

Matthew 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

2 Corinthians 8:6 Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

2 Corinthians 13:9 For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 2:30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Colossians 1:28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Colossians 2:10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

1 Thessalonians 3:10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself

sanctify you entirely;

and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

James. 1:4 And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Philippians 1:6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good **work** in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at **work** in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Colossians 1:10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good **work** and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2 Thessalonians 2:17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

1 Timothy 5:10 having a reputation for good **works**; *and* if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, *and* if she has devoted herself to every good work.

2 Timothy 2:21 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good **work**.

2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good **work**.

**The text of Romans 12**

**Romans 12:1** I urge you therefore, 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.

 2 And do not be conformed to this world,

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,

that you may prove what the will of God is,

that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

 3 For through the grace given to me

I say to every man among you

not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;

but to think so as to have sound judgment,

as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

 4 For just as we have many members in one body

and all the members do not have the same function,

 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ,

and individually members one of another.

 6 And since we have gifts that differ

according to the grace given to us,

*let each exercise them accordingly*:

if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

7 if service, in his serving;

or he who teaches, in his teaching;

 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation;

he who gives, with liberality;

he who leads, with diligence;

he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

 9 Let love be without hypocrisy.

Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;

give preference to one another in honor;

 11 not lagging behind in diligence,

fervent in spirit,

serving the Lord;

12 rejoicing in hope,

persevering in tribulation,

devoted to prayer,

 13 contributing to the needs of the saints,

practicing hospitality.

 14 Bless those who persecute you;

 bless and curse not.

 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice,

 and weep with those who weep.

 16 Be of the same mind toward one another;

do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly.

Do not be wise in your own estimation.

 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved,

but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written,

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

 20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him,

and if he is thirsty, give him a drink;

for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

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

 **We read Romans 12 and may ask the questions:**

**How do we live the life Paul describes?**

**How do we live the saintly life?**

 In three Gospels, Jesus says:

Matthew 19:26 And looking upon *them* Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Mark 10:27 Looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God."

 In other words, the life to which the Believer is called is impossible without God.

Jesus even calls us to be perfect.

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. **Matthew 5:48**

**Perfect: Strong’s 5046; Greek τέλειος** (teleios)

**Meaning:** having reached its end, i.e. *complete,* by ext. *perfect*

**Origin:** from 5056 **Usage:** complete(2), mature(4), more perfect(1), perfect(12). **Notes:** Lev. 19:2; Deut. 18:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:12-15

Obviously, on our own we cannot live perfect lives. We can stand before God with Jesus Christ as our Mediator, who paid the price for our sins, and be perfect. Remember, God so loved the world that He gave/sent His Son and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

We do not want people to think that you have to go through the God-Jesus to get to the God the Father. There are not two Gods. God is not limited in form, time, energy, and being. God projected himself through the incarnation as Jesus the Son. The Word is God (John 1:1) that became flesh (John 1:1-14). God is not limited to staying in Heaven. God can manifest himself as a person and be in multiple places at one time. This is called omnipresence. Thus, Jesus, is God in the flesh. For our human conception Jesus is the Son. This is the closets representation people can understand to Jesus being an exact DNA replica of God in the flesh. It is a direct match. They are one and the same.

 So why say all of the above?

Jesus teaches that we are to be perfect (Matthew 5:48) because this directs people to face our fallen reality. God and us, know we cannot be perfect. So how is perfection achieved as a goal God has for our lives? Remember, that what is not possible with man, is with God. This challenge is meant to turn people’s hearts to God through His human incarnation, Jesus. Then we can be perfect through Jesus.

**Individual verses Corporate Accountability?**

God calls us to an **individual relationship** with Him. We cannot achieve the life Paul describes through another agency. God does not call us to be zombie-functionaries performing religious rites to achieve right standing before Him. So, how did we go from the **individual call from God** to a **call from man- made institutions** to achieve right standing before God. This took place slowly over time. But it happened early in the Church.

 Evidence of this shift is seen when people respond to the question about their faith. Many will say they are Catholic or Methodist, or Lutheran and so on. They identify their relationship with God through an organization established by people.

It is observed that from the time men constituted the Church under the office of the Bishop in the mid-200’s B.C. (Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, North Africa), there was a shift away from a personal relationship with God to having a vicarious relationship through the office of the Bishop and his church. Thus, the Bishop’s Church was formed. The shift came in surrendering to the call from God to responding to the demands of the Bishop, from desiring God to be at work in a person to a person meeting all the requirements dictated by the office of Bishop. Infant-water-baptism was the first step. Legitimate marriages were consecrated in the Bishop’s Church.

When the Roman Bishop gained political dominance in the 5th century, this man-made system became the rule of law throughout the Roman empire. Everything pertaining to worship was assigned by the Bishop’s Church (State Church). Prayers, music, marriage, infant baptism, priesthood, Lord’s supper, preaching, writing, access to the Bible and all aspects of life came under the Bishop’s Church. The qualification to become a Christian and to stay a Christian under the Bishop’s grace was the goal of the common man. The Roman Bishop eventually claimed he held the Treasury of Merits issued to him by Jesus Christ, and he alone, as Bishop of Rome, was the Vicar of Christ on earth.

 Thus, the life Paul presents in Romans 12 was at best second place to satisfying all the “work” demands of the Bishop-led State Church. After a few centuries, the Believer’s life that Paul describes is not read by any common person. The Bible was withheld for over a thousand years (Dark Ages). The population of the Christian world was politized into an institutional cradle-to-grave bed of death. This system is enforced through fear and intimidation. If you do not satisfy the demands of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical leadership then you are deemed bound for hell or at least considered out of fellowship with the Church and not pleasing to God. Your future is in doubt.

 Today, we have the remnant of the Dark Ages State Church present across the globe. In America, so many are birthed into families who don’t know any better. They are brainwashed with fear and spiritual intimidation from birth. No wonder the H.A.S. community has been a growing (Humanism, Atheism, Secularism population)

 What if we could start over? God give us another chance!

 We see many today respond to the question concerning being a Christian: I am a Catholic or Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopalian, Anglican and so forth. What they are saying is. . . that whatever they believe is defined by the organization they claim. My response has more increasingly become – “Is that Christian?” This stumps them with a full stop.

What if a person defined themselves as being a Christian as a person who loves God, and their neighbor, knowing God loved them first? That loving God means following His plan for our lives, by living life under His love and extending that love to all. I am a Christian not because I define myself through an organization but because of the love of God working in me. I can live the Romans 12 life because of the love of God at work in me. To some, this may sound like an undisciplined life. But NO, God as Jesus is clear.

**2 Corinthians 5:14** For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

**John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

**John 8:31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

**John 14:15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

**John 15:10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

**John 13:34** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**James 2:23** and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

**Galatians 5:22-26**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

 23 gentleness, (=) self-control;

against such things there is no law.

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

AMEN