

Romans 12:1-8

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[0 : 00] I'm so thankful to be gathered. Will you take your Bibles, turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. This morning we're going to be in verses 1 through 8. Romans chapter 12, verses 1 through 8.

So let's just go ahead and get into it. If you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together. We read the Word of God found in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 through 8.

Paul, writing to the church at Rome, says here, but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

For just as we have many members and one body, and all the members do not have the same function, so we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly. If prophecy according to the proportion of his faith, if service in his serving, or he who teaches in his teaching, or he who exhorts in his exhortation, he who gives with liberality, he who leads with diligence, he who shows mercy with cheerfulness.

[1 : 39] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you again for this day, and we are so excited, Lord, to be gathered together. Lord, to read your Word and to hear your Word. And Lord, we now pray that your Word would speak to us, that it would show us our hearts and minds, it would reveal our very selves to us.

Lord, that we would come not to a better understanding of ourselves, but Lord, we would come to a greater understanding of you. And Lord, as we encounter you, that we would live lives for your glory and honor.

And we ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus. Amen. You may be seated. The book of Romans has been a great journey for us, as we have made our way from Romans 1 to Romans 11, and now we're beginning to go into Romans 12.

The book is divided up into three major sections very easily. You see Romans 1 through 8, the great teaching of justification by faith alone, that you are saved by faith and not by works, lest any man should boast.

That you are saved completely not on the work of yourselves or the efforts that you put forth, but rather you are saved completely upon the grace of God displayed in the work of Christ extended to you. That it is not your works, it's not your doing, it's not your effort.

[2 : 47] That it is His love that is aimed at you and compels you and draws you to Himself. And we end up in Romans 8 with this great truth that those who are in the hand of God shall never leave the hand of God.

We call that the eternal security of the saints. That nothing can remove you from the hand of the Father. That neither death nor height nor powers that be nor principalities of the air. And it ends up saying neither no created thing, which by the way you are a created thing.

The Bible says that before you were born you were knit together in your mother's womb. You were created. So you yourselves cannot take yourself out of the hand of God. That's great news. You are eternally secure in Christ.

And then Paul transitions in chapters 9, 10, and 11 and gives us an illustration of God's eternal security with a case study in history really about the nation of Israel.

And again we saw these great truths being applied that what God intends to bring about, God always brings about. That the work of God that has been foreknown and predetermined according to His time frame and His alone always comes about.

[3 : 57] that God's work is secure and the people of God are eternally secure. And that those whom He loves He calls to Himself and He saves them in a glorious manner. And all those things make us go amen and amen and amen.

And we rejoice in the great teachings of Romans 1 to Romans 11, which shows us that it is in spite of ourselves, really while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us and God called us to Himself and He gloriously saves us and we find this security in that we didn't earn our salvation and we do not have to work to keep our salvation.

We find this great news that God saves us in spite of us and He keeps us oftentimes in spite of us. And we want to jump up and down and shout hallelujah. And then Paul transitions to Romans 12.

And right there in Romans 12 where it says, Therefore, at least I'm in the New American Standard, I know some of the other ones say, I beseech you, my brethren, therefore, it says in the King James.

There's some other translations that say it differently. But when you get to the therefore, you might as well circle it and you put under it, oh no, oh me, here we go. Because the great truths that make us say amen in chapters 1 through 11 oftentimes make us go, oh no, in chapters 12 through 16.

[5 : 17] Because the great truths which Paul applies is not given to us just so that we can gain the mental knowledge of all that God has done. Paul never wrote nor spoke for the impartation of information, which means he never got up for the purpose of teaching somebody something just so they can know it.

He always preached for a purpose. He always preached with an end in view. He always wrote with an end in view. He always had something he was aiming at.

And usually his aim hit the mark, and it's the heart of the believer so that he could move and motivate the feet of the believer. Paul always made a transition from the theological to the practical.

It is one thing to nod your head and to say, Yes, yes, Paul, yes, I get it, Paul. Isn't that good that God saves me in spite of me? Isn't that good that I don't have to work for my salvation?

Isn't it good that I don't even have to work to maintain my salvation? And then we get to this part where it says, Therefore, because these things are true, let me tell you what you should do.

[6 : 25] And it is right there that many people break off from Paul because we love the truths he teaches. But we don't like the Paul who says, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Kill me if you want to. That's okay. Beat me if you must because that's great because I'll bear in my body the brand marks of Jesus. Let me live in great. I'll tell the churches. We don't want that, Paul.

We don't want that standard. We don't want the shipwrecked, the beaten, the hungry, the naked, the tired, the stoned, the left for dead Paul. We want the Paul who says, I've learned to abound in much.

And we're like, yes, we want to learn to abound in much. But Paul says that much was only for a short time. There's the sufferings, the requirements, the standards, the other side of the coin, the great balance of because these things are true, your life will look difficult.

Now, my friend, if this is your first Sunday joining us in the book of Romans, I'm not going to apologize. But I'm going to encourage you, go online. And if you so choose, you can listen to the rest of the messages that got us to this point because those truths are good enough to demand this application.

[7 : 46] This morning, I want you to see how we as believers can live out our credited righteousness. The Bible tells us that Abraham believed God and it was credited unto him as to righteousness, which means that God counted him right in his sight because he believed.

And Paul uses that in the book of Romans as saying, And because we believe in who Jesus Christ is, God looks at us and accepts us and credits Christ's righteousness to our account, which means that he has made this great deposit in our life.

Now we are acceptable and pleasing to God. Now God can welcome us into his presence. Now we can come and live before him and not hang our head in shame. Now we know we have a home residing for us in eternity.

Now we know that we are eternally secure. Now we know that we are well-pleasing and well-beloved in his sight. Now we know that his riches are our glory.

Now we know we have been adopted into his family because the Bible says, Through the spirit of adoption, we cry out, Abba, Father. All because God put that into our accounts. And because we know those things, life is different.

[8 : 59] And we have to live that out. And we have to take action upon it. And Paul starts it here in Romans 12, verses 1 through 8, of the believer's life to live according to his credited righteousness.

We start, first of all, with our motivation. Everything that I have been telling you is our motivation. I want to answer three questions for you this morning. Why should I?

How should I? And where should I? Why should I do it? How should I do it? And where am I to do it? And the first one is your motivation.

Paul says, therefore, I urge you. Paul says, I urge you. King James says, I beseech you. That word means I am begging and pleading with you.

I am praying that you will do this thing that I'm asking you. I am urging you with all of my being. I am coming to you trying to compel you to do something.

[9 : 58] My friend, if these things are true, and they are. If God loves us so much that he'll call us to himself in spite of us.

If he dies for us when we are unworthy to redeem us. If he loves us that much, Paul says, I am begging you, my brethren.

Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God too. And we'll get to the rest of that in just a minute. He says, the only motivation you need is the truth I have told you.

My friend, listen to me. If the glory of salvation does not motivate you to live differently, then either one, you have misunderstood your salvation. And I'll say this in all love.

Or number two, you have never really been redeemed. That's the truth of the matter. If the glory of salvation, the fact that you don't deserve it, but you have it.

[10 : 57] The fact that I am the enemy of God. Romans 1, 2, and 3 talk about how no man has done right. No, not one. That all men have went astray. All have fallen short of the glory of God. Every one of us have denied him.

And by the way, that includes me, that includes you, that includes everyone, includes everyone, right? That all have went astray. And then we make this transition. But while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.

That whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. All these great truths. If the glory of salvation is not enough motivation to lead you to live your life differently, either you don't understand your salvation, or you've never received salvation.

That's the only two options there are. Now, I know the first one is a very deep reality because I misunderstood the glory of salvation for so long.

Oh, I used to think, well, I'm saved because I made a prayer, or I'm saved because I made a decision, or I'm saved. No, listen, all of those things are essential. Did I pray? Yes. I said, but I did this. Lord, I can't do it anymore.

[12 : 00] I just want you to take control of my life. I surrender it all, just like that song says. I said, Lord, I'm making a mess out of my life. I'm trying to be pleasing to you. I don't know how to do it anymore.

Lord, would you just take control? So I prayed. Did I make a decision? Yes, I made a decision. I made a decision to give up, to quit, to forsake trying anymore, to give up on all my efforts.

Was there a place and time? Yes, I can take you to 201 Canova Court in Shelbyville, Tennessee. I can take you. You can walk in the front door. When you walk in the front door, you're walking into the living room. If you turn to the right, there's a bedroom.

If you walk into that bedroom, there used to be a bed on that wall right there, and that bed would come out from that wall. And on the corner of that bed, the left-hand corner of that bed, in that bedroom, right in front of the bathroom door, is where I hit my knees at about 2 a.m. in the morning, when everyone else in the house was asleep, and I made a decision.

Those are the things I did. But you know what? The only reason I did that is because no one comes to the Father lest he be drawn. And no man be drawn lest God loves him first.

[13 : 02] The only reason I ever made that decision at that point in time, a couple of months before my 21st birthday, was because God was already doing the work. And he was already loving me, and leading me, and calling me, and pulling me, and urging me.

It wasn't anything I did. It was all his work. It was all his effort. It was all his doings. And when I look now, and it says hindsight 2020, and when I look back and see that the only reason I got to that point is because God for years had been leading me to that point, now I begin to see that it's his work.

It's his actions. It's his efforts. It's not me. There are some of you, you can't remember the date, the time, the place, or the location you accepted Christ. Well, friend, listen to me.

That's good news because you don't run the risk of trusting in a moment in time. You can look back, and the question is never, have you been saved? The Bible never asked that.

The Bible never asked a past tense question because God doesn't see things in the past. God sees everything in the eternal present, right? He sees yesterday, today, and tomorrow all at the same time. God is outside of time because he created time.

[14 : 12] Think about that for just a minute, and you won't have time, right? It'll blow your mind. But anyway, you sit there, and you look at that, and God doesn't see something you did in the past. He sees you as you are. And the question is not, have you been saved?

The question is, are you saved today? Do you know him as your Lord and Savior today? Not, did you make a decision yesterday?

Because again, it's not about a decision you did. And here's the glory of salvation. And when we understand that, that today I am a child of the king, today I am his, and it is all because of his love for me.

Friend, that is the motivation. And if that cannot motivate us, then there is something desperately wrong. Desperately wrong.

Something is missing. Not with the salvation of God, but with the truth of that salvation in our own lives. And if we can listen to these truths, and we can nod our head, and we can give mental assent to them, and we can walk out the door and never change the lick of our lives because of them, then my friend, we may have them, but they do not have us.

[15 : 20] And we may know a lot of facts, but we're not walking with the Savior. And I know that sounds harsh, but it's the most loving thing I can tell you. Because we see the motivation to live a life differently.

Number two, so we have all the motivation we need. I do not have to tell you to go out and live your life differently because there are going to be streets of gold in heaven, though I read that in Scripture.

I do not have to tell you to go live your life differently because he who overcomes will be given the crown of life, that you will get a great crown, because I read that in Scripture, but the difference is you don't keep that crown, you throw it at his feet.

I don't have to tell you to go out and live your life differently because there's a mansion waiting for you, because there's some interpretation differences. That may just mean dwelling place, or it could mean mansion. I don't want to upset any of you with, because we have some great hymns.

I know King James and others translate that word mansion, but some, New American Standard and others, many dwelling places. And same word used in the original language, dwelling place mansion. We like mansion because it sounds better, right?

[16 : 25] It appeals to the flesh. But what if it is just a broom closet? Would it still be good? Yes. Because there's no night there, I don't need anywhere to sleep. And since my body's never tired, I don't plan on hanging out. If it's a mansion, it's going to be empty.

I'm not going to be there. I'm going to be hanging out with Jesus and some other folks, okay? I'm just letting you know there's a lot of people throughout church history I want to go meet, I want to hang out with, and there's a lot of stuff I can do when I'm not tired anymore.

I don't have to tell you to live your life differently because of the crystal sea and all pearly gates and all these beautiful things that are there. The only motivation we need is the glory of the salvation that's been expressed.

So number two, how are we going to do it? What is the method? What is our method? This is what Paul says. Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, here's your method, to present your bodies.

Paul just, he went to a whole other level right there, right? He didn't just say your mind. He didn't say you get the right truths. He didn't say your heart. He didn't say as long as you get goosebumps and your senses are moved.

[17 : 29] And he didn't say all that. He said your bodies. That's your everything. That's everything about you. That's who you are. That's what you're living in, right? That's your daily life. He says to present your bodies a living and wait a minute and holy sacrifice acceptable to God.

Now, all of a sudden, the rubber begins to hit the road because what you do in your body does matter because you are taking that body and presenting it to the king of kings and lord of lords and you are giving it to him as a sacrifice.

And by the way, I read all throughout the Old Testament, which helps us to understand the New Testament. You don't bring that God a messed up sacrifice. You don't bring him a blind lamb or a broken leg.

You don't bring him what's left over from the flock. You don't bring him something damaged. You bring him something perfect. And the Bible says you present your bodies to him a holy and living acceptable sacrifice.

And just so you know, this is not a one-time presentation. This almost got me excited. Last night I was sitting around. We had a long day and we were out last night and Carrie had built a fire. And I know that sounds, hey, my baby, she's a fire maker.

[18 : 34] She's like, I think she may have been, I don't say too much, but if somebody wants to build a fire, there are things I had never been able to catch on fire. Carrie knows how to catch it on fire. I don't ask any questions. I was like, okay, you know, go ahead.

But at the end of our long day, I was trying to finish up mowing the yard. She built this fire and we're sitting out there on the patio. And she's like, it's going to be another long day for you tomorrow. And I said, oh no, I get to preach tomorrow. And I said, I'm in Romans 12 tomorrow.

Tomorrow and then I got a little carried away. She said, oh no, you're getting a little excited out here. Neighbors may be trying to go to bed. But, you know, listen to this. This is so good. I told her, her and Kylie, I said, you got to listen to it tonight because you'll have to hear it again tomorrow too.

When Paul says, therefore, present your bodies, it's not like a one-time presentation. Because you don't come before God and be like, God, here I am. And then you go out and live the rest of your life. Literally, that word means to offer every day anew.

To do it over and over. To continue to present your body. The wording is to continually, daily bring your body and set it before your master and say, here I am, master.

[19 : 33] Do with me what you want to do with me. That's what it means. It's a big word and it means a lot, right? Because you brought your sacrifices. I'm reading through the book of Leviticus right now. And if you want to know anything about the sacrificial system, some of you are going through that Bible reading program.

They bring sacrifices to the temple every day. And they bring a number of sacrifices to the temple every day. And the blood is being poured out in the temple every day. And the Bible tells us now that we are the temple of the Lord.

And we are to continue to bring our sacrifices every day. And we are to present to him again today. Here is my body, Lord. Do with it what you want to do with it.

Which means I need to be careful what I do with my body today. Because tomorrow I got to take it back to him and present it to him again. And I need to be careful what I do with my body tomorrow. Because the next day I got to present it to him again.

Every day. Because his salvation is so good. Because his salvation is so glorious. Every day, all day, I bring my body. And I say, Lord, I don't have much to give.

[20 : 33] But what I have to give is this. I have this life you've given me. I have this body you've presented me. With its limitations, its faults, its shortcomings, its mess ups. But Lord, I'm trying to keep it as pleasing and acceptable to you as I can.

Thankfully, the blood that is shed for this sacrifice isn't mine. It's the lamb slain before the foundation of the world who is Jesus Christ. So, Lord, I come with that blood spilled and my blood flowing.

And I'm saying, here I am, oh, Lord. Take my body. Use it for your glory. And do with it what you want to do with it. Now, friend, let me ask you something. Wouldn't every day look a little bit different if we did that on a daily basis?

Because then everything God lets you do that day shows you that's where he wants you that day. You say, well, I just go to work.

Really? Because, see, I believe in a God that's in control of all things. I believe you get to go to work. You say, oh, I just go do this and I just go do that. Or I'm having to do that. Or I'm stuck at home.

[21 : 33] No, you get to be there. Then when you present your body to God, listen, something on the altar no longer has a right. Once it's laid on the altar, that belongs to God.

And when you lay your body on the altar to God, then all of a sudden God determines what he does with that sacrifice. And God puts you where he puts you all day long for his glory.

This is the how am I going to do it. Present your body. Start off, he says, present your bodies as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

The word spiritual is kind of confusing there because when we think of spiritual, we think of, you know, like this mysterious thing in the air. Really, the word spiritual means your reasonable service of worship. I mean, this is the least you should do.

That's how good salvation is. It's just, it is just, hey, this is the least we could do is say, okay, God, here's my body. And do not be conformed to this world. We're continuing the how.

[22 : 33] Do not be conformed to this world, which means don't be a chameleon. Don't blend in. I've never had a problem with this. I always had just my temperament, my nature.

I'm not a blend in type of guy. I don't know if many of you know that about me. Some of you do. I've never really bothered me to stand out. As a matter of fact, it bothers me more to blend in. Yesterday, I had to officiate a wedding.

I got to officiate a wedding after the Easter egg hunt. And when I asked them, what do you want me to wear to the wedding? They said, oh, well, just a black suit and a white shirt and a black tie.

It's fine. So I asked like four times, what do you want me to wear? Oh, just a white shirt and a black tie. I want to tell you, just me, your pastor, being honest with you, it killed me wearing black pants, white shirt, and black tie yesterday. It just killed me.

Why? Because I was so bland. I just blended in. I looked at Kylie. I didn't have my coat on. I said, what is this? You know, I mean, that's just my temperament, my personality.

[23 : 29] I want to, it's not showy. I don't want to be seen. It's just, I don't want to blend in either. That's some of you. You want to get to the wall and you don't want anybody to see you.

That's fine. That's a mind frame. It's a temperament. We can, that's the way God made you. But listen, there are still other habits in my life that are chameleon-like, right? Other habits that want to adapt to the world.

Do not be conformed. This is how. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, which means we need to let God start from the inside out to transform us in this world he's placed us in.

To be his sacrifice. To be his service. So that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. So there's the how.

How do you do it? How do you do it? Present your bodies. Not just a body that looks like the rest of the world. Not a body that looks like everything else. But a body that's been renewed from the inside out. A body that is being transformed. A body that is fresh and new.

[24 : 29] And I'm not saying you're going to be perfect. None of us are ever going to be perfect. We're going to fall and falter. But God is changing us. And we offer it to him. We say, here we are, Lord. Use us where you want to. And he puts us where he needs to. And we serve him where he places us.

That's the how. Now let's see the means. Where are we going to do this at? This is why I love Paul. One thing you can't do with Paul.

If you really read Paul and you accurately read him. And I promise you I won't be long on this point. One, because I'm starting to sweat a lot. And it's okay. Don't turn the air down because we're okay.

It's good temperature in here. It's just me. You can't read Paul and isolate yourself from other believers. You really can't.

Do you know every truth, every great letter in the New Testament, every promise that God extends to the believer in the New Testament, all has its connection in the local church. Every one of them.

[25 : 30] That's why when the Bible says, forsake not the assembling together one another, it's not a bad thing. It says, so that you can understand these great truths. Look at what Paul, and this is no different. Because Paul is going to show us our means to living a life of righteousness.

How are we going to do it? Where are we going to do this at? It says, for the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, which means we ought to be humble, but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

So we don't see ourselves, and this is important as he goes into this, we don't see one another differently. We don't see ourselves as, well, I'm up here and you're down here. Not to think too highly of yourselves. Be humble. For just as we have many members in one body, and all the members do not have the same function.

We understand that. Paul used the image of the human body so often. Our body is made up of various members and various parts, but they're all one body. And then he makes this easy transition. So we, writing to the church, he says, my brethren, so we, who are many, here we go, here's the means, are one body in Christ.

He said, yes, I'm part of the capital C. That's the church. That's universal church. I meet people who are not connected to a local church, and I'm not, if you're not, and I'm not trying to be disparaging or anything like that, I just want to be biblical.

[26 : 53] I've met people throughout the ages who want nothing to do with the local church, nothing at all to do with the local church. And they say, well, I'm a member of the universal church, and I'm a member of the capital C, the universal church.

I say, well, that's great. But they love the capital C, the universal church, because the universal church is all believers from all over the world in all places. But the problem is, is that the capital C church never meets at any time.

It's kind of an invisible being. And it's easy to be a member of the invisible being because there's no accountability with any other part of that being, right? I mean, you're just kind of, I'm a member of the universal church.

But look at what Paul says. We are members of Christ. We are many members of Christ. And individually, you see this, members of one another, which means you are connected to everything else.

You are members of one another. He says, you are individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us, now the individual, is to exercise them accordingly, if prophecy according to the proportion of his faith, if service in his serving, or he who teaches in his teaching, or he who exhorts in his exhortation, he who gives in his liberality, or he who leads with diligence, he who shows mercy with cheerfulness.

[28 : 08] Now, this is not a complete list of the spiritual gifts, but I just want to give you this in closing. Here are the means. Paul says, if we want to live our lives, live out the righteousness that has been credited to us, we do that through the church.

Because we are members one of another. And he said, here's the great thing, that God in his grace, when he called you to himself, gave you an individual gift.

He puts serving along leadership here. He puts mercy with exhortation here. And each of these mean different things. And I don't have time to get into them. But what he says is, God gifts the believer with a spiritual gift.

But he does it. We get this from Paul's other writings, 1 Corinthians 12, and other places where he refers to the spiritual gifts. Your spiritual gift was not given to you for your benefit.

It is to be exercised for the benefit of others. Which means if you're by yourself, you cannot receive the benefit of someone else's spiritual gift.

[29 : 14] And others aren't receiving the benefit of your spiritual gift. Because I've said this over and over again. You need me.

You need me. But I equally need you. Because I don't have the gifts God gave you. Some of you may have the gifts that he gave me.

Some of you may say, I don't know what kind of gift you think you have. Well, by the way, one of my gifts is not public speaking. I don't really like public speaking that much. But the spiritual gifts God gave me are not for my own benefit.

They're not. And the spiritual gifts he gave you are not for your own benefit. But praise be to God, he gave us a place where we could live out those gifts on equal footing, not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to.

You say, well, I don't know how much of a gift I have. All I know, I mean, I'll do anything you want me to do. He who serves, he who serves with all diligence.

[30 : 24] I mean, we're better to serve than alone somebody who doesn't have your gift. Isn't that the beauty of a body? I don't need my finger to help me to walk because I have another part of my body that will help me do that.

But I need that finger to help me do other things. The beauty of the body is we need one another. To fulfill the ultimate purpose that God's called us to, and that is his glory.

Friend, I know I've went a little long, but the question is, are you living out your credited righteousness? Because God has called us to be motivated to live a life differently for his glory and for others' benefit.

He does not save us and redeem us for ourselves. Rather, he does it for his glory and for the benefit of others. What a joy to live a life that never runs out of the righteous.

I am accepted in Christ. I am welcomed into his presence. He'll never deny me. He'll never forsake me. Never leave me nor abandon me.

[31 : 35] No matter what I do, no matter how good I am, no matter how bad I fall, he will always hold me. And when that's taken care of, now I can live for him. Now I can live for him.

Because I'm not trying to earn his favor anymore. Now I'm just living for him and living for you. What about you? Where are you at, my friend? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for all you've done.

God, we thank you for the glory of your salvation. Lord, we pray that we would take that glorious truth and we would live it out in daily application. Lord, may you be honored, may you be magnified, and may you be seen from what every part and every individual of your body accomplishes for the sake of the kingdom.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[33 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.