

I. Introduction

- A. If you grew up going to church, you remember stock over-used prayer phrases
1. These varied from church-to-church, so your list will be different from mine
 - a. “*Guide, guard and direct us and bring us back at the next appointed time*”
 - b. “*Give our speaker a ready recollection of things he has prepared today*”
 - c. “*And give us a home with Thee in that upper and better kingdom in heaven*”
 - d. “*Let us lay down the cares/concerns of world as we come before Thee in worship*”
 2. Think about that last one. We don’t pray that anymore, but we act like it’s expected.
 - a. We come here to worship and leave the cares of the world in the parking lot
 - b. There’s this artificial barrier between the two worlds—church and real world
 - 1) Church is about God and worship; the real world is problems and distractions
 - 2) To really worship acceptably, we must detach ourselves from the real world
 3. Problem with that is He is God out there too—as we sang, He is “*God of the heavens*”
 - a. God is God over “*real world.*” We serve Him is what’s rightly called “*worship*”
 - 1) But we don’t wait for Sunday to roll around so we can come and worship Him
 - 2) We don’t wait until we’re in mood to sing, “*I’ll bring you more than a song*”
 - b. All life is **worship** and **service** (is the “*worship service*” really *worship* or *service*?)
 - 1) We can’t set aside our problems to worship, then pick them up at the back door
 - 2) We lay both ourselves and our problems down before God’s feet (**1 Peter 5:7**)
- B. We continue our study of *Unashamed: The Message of Romans*, and enter Part Three
1. **Part 1: (**Rom. 1-8**)**. Theological fact that all are saved by grace through the gospel
 - a. **Basic Problem:** Struggle between how Jews and Gentiles saw this gospel play out
 - 1) Jews don’t have an advantage before God because of their background in Law
 - 2) Neither do Romans have advantage because of their status as Roman citizens
 - b. All have sinned and need God’s grace— all are equal recipients of God’s grace
 - c. Paul isn’t writing a theological textbook on grace; he’s laying a foundation for later
 2. **Part 2: (**Rom. 9-11**)**. (*just finished*) Paul says we can trust God to keep promise.
 - a. Paul argues that God didn’t reject the Jews as His people—they rejected Him
 - b. There was a “*remnant*” of Jews who like Paul accepted Christ and pleased God

3. **Part 3: (Rom. 12-16)**. This is the practical section, and the main point of book
 - a. This WHY he wrote; they need to make changes in their lives... *these changes!*
 - b. His answer here is, “*Live graciously with one another despite all your differences!*”
 - 1) Jewish and Gentile Christians had totally different ways of looking at the world
 - 2) Paul will deal with a variety of things that are HARD when people are different
 - 3) Most of this won’t apply to us at Denbigh since most of us are so much alike!
4. **Today: Romans 12:1-2** is basically overview that sets the table for this section
 - a. Paul begins by dispensing with the notion that worship and life are different things
 - 1) He speaks here of **worship**—using both the words “*sacrifice*” and “*worship*”
 - 2) He’s talking about **everyday life**— “*offer your bodies*” and “*renew you mind?*”
 - b. Paul will discuss very specific material in the section that follows--
 - 1) He says to stop think so highly of themselves (*a problem for many of them*)
 - 2) Hospitality will mean associating with lower ranking folks (*know who you are*)
 - 3) Tells them to pay their full share of taxes (*quit preaching, gone to meddling*)
 - c. He begins by telling them the heart of worship is placing themselves on the altar
5. Let’s read this familiar text and then pull it apart a bit (**Reading: Romans 12:1-2**)

II. The Heart of Worship: Three Points

- A. **First**, we are to offer ourselves as “*living sacrifices*” to God (**Rom 12:1a**)
 1. The characteristic form of worship in the Old Testament was animal sacrifice.
 - a. That was true from the beginning (*Cain-n-Abel*) to the end (*Malachi*) of the OT
 - b. This brutal, bloody ritual showed the high of price of sin and value of holiness
 - 1) Worship in OT wasn’t done “*decently and in order.*” You got blood on you!
 - 2) Left worship with bleating of lambs in ears, smell of charred flesh in nostrils
 2. We no longer have to do that— which is good for us, and better if you’re a sheep
 - a. The repetitive sacrifices of OT system were taken way by the cross (**1 Pet 3:18**)
 - b. We remember the sacrifice that Jesus made; we participate in in each week
 - c. But we no longer make “burnt offering” as dead sacrifices in worship to God
 3. The only sacrifices we offer God are our bodies as “*living sacrifices*” (**Rom 12:1a**)
 - a. Word “*offer*” (NIV) or “*present*” (ESV) literally means “to *yield or hand over*”
 - b. It’s the word used when Paul was handed over to the authorities (**Acts 23:33**)
 4. That’s what we are to do— just hand ourselves over to God as living sacrifices

B. **Second**, this does have something to do with how we are to worship (**12:1b**)

1. Our English translations might at first blush seem to saying slightly different things
 - a. That's because we want to limit "worship" our formal Sunday morning context
 - 1) **NIV**: "holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship"
 - 2) **ESV**: "holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship"
 - 3) **NET**: "holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service."
 - 4) **NASB**: "sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."
 - b. I like the way that the *International Standard Version* puts this together
I therefore urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to God, for this is the reasonable way for you to worship.
 - c. Think about "a reasonable way to worship." There are **two key words** here--
2. **Spiritual**: If someone says, "Worship was so spiritual today!" What did they mean?
 - a. What did they mean? Likely, they FELT it, connected emotionally. *Interesting ...*
 - b. Paul's word here for "spiritual" (ESV/NASB) is the word λογικός or "logical"
 - 1) Is that really "logical." It basically means "genuine or true to the real nature."
 - 2) Why the NIV has "true and proper." Douglas Moo suggests here "informed"
 - c. Worship shouldn't be judged by its emotional impact! Not "better felt than told?"
 - 1) Not about the holy wow! Don't judge the worship experience by experience!
 - 2) Paul isn't looking at the worship; he is rather looking at the worshippers!
3. **Worship**: What exactly is Paul talking about when he is talking about worship?
 - a. There are different for "worship" in NT, the most common is προσκυνέω
 - b. Imagery of kissing ground or ring of king; Paul uses different word here: λατρεία.
 - 1) Originally the meant "wages" and came to mean "service given to God"
 - 2) Some versions (NET/KJV) translate it "service." "Ministry" is another choice.
 - 3) **Point**: Focus here is not on what the worshipper does, but on the worshipper
 - c. Problem with worship is we want to leave it at the building. *Always been true!*
 - 1) That was the problem when Isaiah had the big megachurch (**Isa 1:10**)
 - 2) Problem here is that he's not preaching to Sodom but Israel (**Isa 1:11-13**)
 - 3) Their worship wasn't matching up to their lives—not logical (**Isa 1:16-17**)
 - d. Like Isaiah, Paul is pleading for **logical** worship, one that begins in obedience
 - 1) You can't worship and treat others in hostility, prejudice, injustice (Jew/Gentile)
 - 2) That's not reasonable worship. That's not spiritual service. Not then or now!

C. **Finally**, thus we cannot let ourselves look like the world around us (**Rom 12:2**)

1. *The Message* frames Paul’s warning here as one against becoming too well-adjusted
Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking.
 - a. That is the danger; we don’t have to be encouraged to fit it— we just seem to do it
 - b. Don’t decide to stand against prevailing tide of values/beliefs of culture, we fit in
 - c. In parts of the Far East they train monkeys to salute to entertain tourists in Far East?
 - 1) How? You don’t want to know, but I’m going to tell you because it’s so us!
 - 2) Trainer tells a dog “Salute!” Dogs can’t salute, and the trainer beats the dog
 - a) Monkey watches for days. Finally, trainer says “Salute!” and kills the dog!
 - b) Then tells monkey, “*Salute!*” Almost every time monkey immediately salutes!
 - d. The culture we live in is constantly telling us to salute, and we obediently salute!
 - e. We listen to the constant stream of the standards, values and beliefs of the world
 - 1) There’s an overwhelming instinct in us to conform, to in, be like everyone else
 - 2) We know by experience that the nail that sticks out is one that gets hammered!
2. Paul says rather than be conformed, we are to transformed with a totally new mind
 - a. The word here for “transformed” is the word from which we get “*metamorphosis*”
 - 1) Process by which the caterpillar comes out of the cocoon completely difference
 - 2) Not just a little lighter, not just a little smarter, but a complete *metamorphosis*.
 - b. This is the same word that is used in **Matthew 17:2** when Jesus was transfigured.
 - 1) One minute he was just like them, the next minute he was completely different
 - 2) That same transfiguration is to happening little by little in us (**2 Cor 3:17-18**)
3. Not reasonable to think this can happen if we only see standards and values of world

III. Conclusion

- A. Each Sunday, I stand up here convince you (and myself) to take God a bit more seriously
 1. Frankly, what I’m trying to do, to put something of an edge on it, is to **convert** you
 2. I’ve got 30 minutes and meager skills I’m not the only one trying to convert you.
 - a. Hollywood, NBC, FOX, Dems, GOP, Coca-Cola, Toyota, Apple, Calvin Klein...
 - b. Their all trying to convert us, right? And they have more money and time and skills
- B. Competition for our attention, our dollars, our time, and our very souls is relentless!
 1. That’s why we must intentional about our salute. That’s why we must worship.
 2. We must decide not to salute the systems of world. We must have no God but God!
 3. That means not trying to “wow” God with worship—but to give Him control of lives