

## Are You Willing to LIVE For Jesus? Rom 12:1-2

During the Korean War, a story is told of a time when the Communists occupied a small village. It happened on a Sunday and many of the villagers were at worship in the village's only church. The soldiers burst into the church and rounded up all the members. One of them tore down a picture of Jesus and threw it to the ground. There they lined up the entire congregation and told them to spit on the picture or die. The first several did. Then a 15 year old girl came. Weeping and scared she knelt down and wiped the spittle from the picture with her dress. The soldiers marched her out and shot her.

This young girl was willing to die for Jesus. I believe most of us here would be willing to die for Jesus. What I wonder, is how many of us are willing to LIVE for Jesus? That's a lot harder to do, because it takes a lifetime commitment, not a momentary one.

### PRAYER

#### I. Sacrificial Pictures

##### A. Understanding Sacrifice

1. Most of you know what a sacrifice is, so I am just going to refresh your memories.
2. Sacrifices were items dedicated to a deity.
3. For our purposes, we are going to look at the sacrifices offered to Jehovah.
4. When a sacrifice of an animal was done, the person would bring their animal, usually a lamb to the priest at the Temple. Standing at the altar, the priest would remind the person of their sins and the innocence of the animal about to be sacrificed. He would tell the person that the blood shed by the animal was a substitute for the blood of the person. Then the person would hold the animal's head ask for forgiveness of sins he had committed and confess those sins. The priest would slit the animal's

throat and the sinner would watch as the priest caught the blood in a bowl and the eyes of the sacrificial animal dimmed in death for him.

5. It was a powerful and solemn moment.
6. That's the picture to have in your mind as we read Paul's words about a living sacrifice.

#### B. I appeal to you

1. Paul speaks to these Christians with an attitude of love for family.
2. He could command them, but he doesn't; he appeals to them as brothers to do the right thing.
3. He wants them to live lives of sacrifice to God, not to gain God's mercy but BECAUSE of God's mercy.
4. This is important for us to realize today.
5. There are a couple things I want you to remember after you leave here and the first is that what you do in service to Christ is done BECAUSE of what he has done for you.
6. Not as a sense of obligation, but unmitigated joy in the mercy of God.
7. 1 John 4:19 (ESV) — 19 We love because he first loved us.
8. Our actions and love towards others are based on our REACTION to God's love for us.

#### C. Present yourself

1. I believe Paul very carefully chose his words. Remember, he is writing to a mostly Jewish audience.
2. The symbolism of the temple would be very much in their minds as they heard and read this part of the letter.
3. In bringing the sacrifice to the temple; The person would point the head of the animal to the West of the Temple where the Holy of Holies was.
4. This was the dwelling place of God for the Jews. It was symbolic recognition that you were bringing this animal to God and he accepted it.
5. We are to bring our bodies to God so that God will find us acceptable.
6. Think that through, folks. This is a powerful and convicting thought.

7. You aren't doing something to please the church, but God himself.
8. It isn't the church that accepts your living sacrifice, God does.
9. I may not see your offering for what it is, either good or bad, but God does.
10. He will accept it or reject it based on the purity of your heart.

## II. Living Sacrifice

### A. Living as a sacrifice

1. Paul urges these Christians and all Christians to present their bodies as living sacrifices.
2. Given to God, dedicated to God in totality.
3. How they lived, how we live, is to be dedicated to God.

### B. Holy and acceptable to God

1. All that you are is offered to God.
  - a) When you work, you do it in a way that brings honor to God.
  - b) When you are with your family you act in a way that brings honor to God.
  - c) When you play, you do so in a way that brings honor to God.
  - d) When you are in the places no one knows what you are doing, bring honor to God.

### C. Your spiritual worship

1. When you live totally dedicated to honoring God, your life becomes worship to Him.
2. Worship is far more than what happens here on Sundays
3. It's every bit as much about what happens everywhere else Monday through Saturday as well.
4. I think we forget that when we try to compartmentalize worship to just our Sunday morning actions.

### D. Do not conform

1. How do we become a LIVING sacrifice?
2. Paul gives us a two part equation.
3. He tells us in verse 2. “do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”
4. What I find heartbreaking is that the world has influenced the church instead of the church influencing the world.
5. We are more concerned about being like those around us rather than showing them why they need to be like God.
6. We tend to be living sacrifices for work.
  - a) I overheard a recent conversation between 2 Christians. One asked why the other was gone so much. The reply as was. “My life is work. I don’t have time for anything else.”
  - b) You can’t be a living sacrifice to God when your life is work. You are a living sacrifice to work.
7. Some of us are living sacrifices for sports or other activities.
  - a) Everything seems to take precedence over our commitment to God.
  - b) If we are too busy in life to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God, then we are a sacrifice to busyness not God.
  - c) We are conforming to the pattern of the world.
8. Pattern is also part of the morality of our culture.
  - a) One of the biggest areas of tension in churches today is over sexuality.
  - b) More and more we see churches that back away from saying immoral lifestyles are wrong because they don’t want to deal with the backlash of their members.
  - c) So, we don’t deal with sin in the church because it’s too painful.
  - d) It’s kind of like not dealing with cancer in our bodies because it’s too painful; the result is a dead body.
  - e) No one relishes hurting those we love, but I would rather face their discomfort and hope they see we truly want them to be right

with God than deal with God's judgment of our lack of confronting sin and trying to turn the sinner around.

f) As you have seen in our Revelation studies on Sunday afternoons, most of the churches were condemned because they didn't deal with sin in the church.

9. The world is all about sin. They have no qualms with sin.

10. We're told not to conform to this world.

#### E. Be Transformed

1. The second half of Paul's equation is to be transformed.

a) We used to send wire hangers to Malawi. Their first purpose is to hold clothing in a closet. That's what hangers are for. Yet, when they get into the hands of Malawian children, they are transformed from hangers for clothing to galemoto's. A child's toy

car made from those hangers. They will no longer hold clothing in a closet, they will be a toy.

b) Transformation

2. We are worldly people.
3. We get caught up in worldly things.
4. We focus on what matters here on earth.
5. We enjoy the sinful self-centered things of this world.
6. We want to be like all the other people around us.
7. But God calls us to be transformed from that worldly person to a spiritual person.
8. Instead of focusing on worldly things, focus on spiritual things.
9. Instead of enjoying the pleasure of this world, enjoy the pleasures of God's world.
10. Instead of trying to be like all the people around us, transform into being what God calls us to be; Christians living in the world, but not living LIKE the world.

F. By renewing your mind

1. Paul then tells us how to transform. We need to renew our minds.
2. Growing up, I remember watching the movie West World. It was an amusement park filled with robots to fulfill the wishes of the humans that went there. In one part, you could be an Old West gunfighter and pick a fight with a robot who is just a bit slower than you. You win the battle and the girl. But something goes terribly wrong and the robots turn on the

humans they were created to serve. They had to destroy the corrupted robots.

3. That is an apt description of mankind.
4. God created us to think and act in a certain way, but something went terribly wrong and sin entered the world and messed up what God had created us to be.
5. The only way to fix what had gone wrong is to bring people back to God and renew their minds or allow them to be destroyed.
6. God in his incredible love, is doing everything within his power, short of taking away our free will, to bring us back to have our minds renewed.
7. But a day will come, if we continue to reject his pleas to return, that we will be destroyed.
8. That's the only other option left to us.
9. Seems like a stupid choice to me, but one that far too many people choose.

#### G. Invitation

1. This passage is so powerful; so thought provoking.
2. It end with another major self-reflection thought.
3. It ends with a challenge to us. "discern the will of God."
4. The will of God is for us to live right.
5. Will you choose to be the living sacrifice God calls you to be or will you take the stupid option?