

Romans

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the epistle to the Romans, chapter 12, verse 1.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The epistle to the Romans, chapter 12, and verse 1.

I will begin by saying that this is a wonderful word for a preacher and people to consider.

And I would be glad if God in his mercy should help us to consider it in the spirit in which the Apostle Paul was inspired of God to pen it.

[1 : 35] The opening word is very significant. I am very much afraid that in pondering this subject I have had many searchings of heart because it has been made plain to me that this line of things is not so much manifest in the preaching of the gospel as it ought to be.

How often do you hear preachers? I am not criticizing any other preachers. I am only stating what is a truth.

How often I say, do you hear preachers in preaching the gospel adopting language like this?

I am not criticizing the gospel of God. I am not criticizing the gospel of God. I am not criticizing the gospel of God. I am not criticizing the gospel of God. I am not criticizing the gospel of God. Here the Apostle Paul's heart overflowed to these godly Romans.

He felt deeply concerned about the church at Rome, although he had not yet been to Rome, but had great desires and longings to be permitted to go there, to preach the gospel.

[3 : 01] He felt deeply concerned about the gospel of God. But his heart, I say, overflowed with his loving desires that they might reduce to practice the gospel that by the grace of God they profess to love.

To love. And now, this is a unique word. I said it was a wonderful word. Because, I cannot tell you it is a precept.

And yet, it has got somewhat of that nature about it. I have told you sometimes about the precepts.

And preachers, when they dwell on the precepts, need to be filled with much of the Spirit of Christ. And to adopt this line of thought.

I beseech you. Therefore, brethren, he is addressing people thought of God. And he does not go on to say, You have been baptized.

[4 : 14] You have made your profession of the name of Jesus. And you know what you ought to be. And I warn you. If you do not keep up toward the pattern that you ought to be, God will deal with you.

No, no. You are not to preach the precepts like that. You need to be in a special frame, a prepared frame of mind.

To hear the Gospel preached when it is the preceptive part of it. And remember, these precepts are to be attended to.

When on the bow rich fruit we see, it is then we cry, a goodly tree. And now, to illustrate this, for it is very interesting to me.

Suppose it was the Apostle James. With his line of things. How would he be preaching? Be ye not hearers of the word only, but doers.

[5 : 32] Doers also. And that might hit some people hard in listening to it. And if they were not in a spiritual frame of mind, they would find many things well enough in their minds against doing it.

But, this is the way. When the Apostle Paul was called by grace on the Damascus road.

When he saw Jesus. When he was so favored as he was. His heart was so saturated as it were.

With the grace of God. That you will find in every epistle of his. Whichever church it is that he writes to.

In his introduction. He always dwells. On this line of thought. That he desires for them.

[6 : 37] Grace. That they might be. Fruitful trees. To the glory of God. And let their lives and acts express the holy gospel they profess.

And. He approaches them. At the church of Rome. From this viewpoint. I beseech you.

Therefore brethren. And what is his argument. There are two viewpoints of this subject. One is. The appeal.

I beseech you. And he addresses them as brethren. And now he uses an argument. That is very forcible.

And. Dear friends. It should be forcible to you. Preacher and people too. As though Paul. Should say.

[7 : 42] Call to mind. What you know. What you know. God has done for you. Singled you out. From the mighty mass of mankind.

Shown you. Mercy. Brought you to his feet. As a humble. Supply. And blessed you.

With an interest. In his everlasting love. Numbered you. With his people. Keep these things uppermost. In your thoughts.

And then. Seeing what God has done for you. Do not forget. What you should be doing for him. And now that is his argument.

One in writer. Says. Not with the terrors of a slave. Do they perform his will. But with the noblest power.

[8 : 42] They have. Do his commands fulfill. I have never forgotten. In my teenage life. As an apprentice. To the printing trade. Going back to the office.

One afternoon. And seeing. A mother. Driving her. Big daughter. To school. Across. Wantage marketplace. Driving her. Across the marketplace.

With a cane in her hand. Because she. Gibbed it. Going to school. And. At last. She did not turn out well. In the ultimate issue. I just use that. As an illustration. You do not learn the truth.

Like that. Nor do you. Keep the precepts of God. By having a cane behind you. So that you have a stroke. For each time. When you begin to fail. To be according to the pattern. No. No. Listen.

Listen. To be according to the pattern. In vain. Only women. Do a great deal. And make quite a show. In vain. Very simple. And only men. In vain. Don't.

[9 : 38] Be into rest. In vain. In vain. Do all things. Unless. Don't. In love. You can do a great deal. And make quite a show.

If even men. You can do a great deal. You can do a great deal. In vain. You can do a great. Little. Don't. show in a profession of the name of Jesus but when you get down to bedrock is it out of the abundance of the heart that this is flowing from oh this is the argument and it should have some weight with many of you I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God did ye present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service and you know some of you many of you what God has done for you and now I'm coming right down to bedrock true what have you been doing for God is the outcome of what he has done for you

I am afraid preacher and people alike will have to plead guilty here we shall have to stand alongside good Ezra if grace is given to us to do so oh my God I am ashamed I blush to lift up my face unto thee what opportunities have been missed of doing good what words could have been spoken on God's behalf which were never said what opportunities to do so to show whose you are and whom you serve and you have let it go by alas what a mercy it is there is a fountain open for sin for uncleanness where we may have our sins of omission sins of commission blotted out but I do want you to weigh up this subject and let us begin with this argument it is a a very convincing argument there can be no greater argument and says Paul to the godly Romans and he says that to the godly under Union Chapel Room

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God and now how shall we begin to set forth the mercies of God how great they are some how high they rise can ne'er be known beneath the skies but these mercies of God are covenant mercies the mercy that God has shown to you in as much as it can be said in you hath equipped and who were dead in trespasses and sins oh that mercy is a covenant mercy and it means that before time was born where the world was built when God formed this everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure your name was included therein and you have lived to be born into this world because God designed you should be born again and you and I should never lose sight of that mercy look round the world at the present time with hell let loose in it look round the land you and I live in our own homeland and the chaos and confusion there is in it and then to think in the midst of it you are here in the attitude of worship before God and you are not here without God and without hope and that is a mercy unparalleled no preacher can set it forth in the magnitude of it and that mercy alone should keep you on the stretch to live unto God whose you are and whom you desire to serve covenant mercies and think of this mercy that you know the mercy of what it is to have to do with God many of you and how came that mercy to be granted you

God has had to do with you and that is a wonderful consideration hundreds of millions of sinners are in the world at large and hundreds of millions of them do not want anything whatever to do with God or godliness and they just live as they were born and you are here in the attitude of worship and let your consciences tell you many of you desire to worship God arise you should never lose sight of that mercy as though Paul said to these godly Romans I beseech you never to forget it that what you are you are by the grace of God oh it is a great testimony dare you make it by the grace of God

[16 : 32] I am what I am and thinking upon the mercies vouchsafe to you along life's way our good guidance saviour has helped us thus far and tis by his favour we are what we are I know that what we are is not what we ought to be and many of you are well aware of it your conscience gives you many a reminder in everyday life wherein you come short of the pattern of the profession that you have made there is not a day in your life but what you must ever end it God be merciful to me a sinner and yet it is by the grace of God you are brought into that place before God with whom you have to do

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God I want to enumerate some of these mercies and there is a wonderful declaration in the Ephesians epistle but God who is rich in mercy follow this along for his great love wherewith he loved us and now the mercies that have been made known to you whereby you were here before God desiring to be a true worshipper all those mercies flow from his great love wherewith he loved you keep that in mind for his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with

Christ by grace you are saved and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus listen that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus first of all God is love and he is that last of all I say with great reverence and so the mercies of God come to you and to me and as I have said you must ever admit and confess our good guide and saviour has helped us thus far and tis by his favour we are what we are we are not what we should like to be a long way from that pattern set up in our hearts and consciences but still we do desire to be following on to know the

Lord and desire more grace that we may live according to the pattern his word sets forth and now there are these quickening mercies can it be said of you and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins you were either alive or dead you say I often feel dead as regards to things of God a rather strange confession it is to make because the dead know not anything but what you were talking about you said I often feel you feel there is a death in your soul experience and not the liveliness that you would be glad to be the subject of but then it is a sign of life within to groan beneath indwelling sin

I remember being amazed in reading regarding good Mr. Philpott's experience that he was on a walk one day meditating on his soul's experience in what a dead dried up state he was and he had come to the conclusion there hardly seemed to be one evidence of life great man that he was in the things of God and as he came to that conclusion he was passing by a pool it was a rainy time and he saw a big bubble rise up on the pool and burst and he thought there is air underneath to produce that and that set him going again regarding his soul's experience that there must be life to make him conscious of what he felt to be before

[22 : 30] God in the lack of those things he desired to possess in his soul's experience in the aching void which the world cannot fill is a sign of life although it does not give you happiness comfort in the possession of it but it is preparatory to receiving it dear friends and this word should help you from that viewpoint a new heart will I give you a new spirit will I put within you I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh I will give you a heart of flesh it is a heart of flesh it feels like you do God has done great things for you it is by the mercies of God these things are known and felt I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of

God there are quitting in mercies the eyes of the blind are opened the ears of the deaf are unstopped the heart is opened to receive the things of God as the things of God and to desire to participate therein and to be after the spirit the things of the spirit and then what shall we say about the mercies of God as regards supporting mercies some of us are in life's evening time and we have journeyed far in life's way and we have come through great and sore troubles too and we have been brought to which end therein and we have been brought at times very very low and we could only just muster up leave not my soul destitute margin make not my soul bare and say with the psalmist

I am feeble and sore broken and we thought some troubles all in them we should sink to rise more but we did rise and here we are by the grace of God and the mercies of God have supported us and you see when you begin to reckon up these mercies I ought to have told you that before you must begin here it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed and because his compassions fail not if God had dealt with us sometimes according to what our behavior was in our departures from him in our profession of his dear name when we grew so cold and formal alas he did not deal with us as we deserve but he continued his mercies to us although he made us to realize as many as

I love I rebuke and chasten be zealous therefore and repent it is supporting mercies which has brought you to be before God in the attitude of worship what shall we say about the mercies of God as providing mercies some of us do know the name of the Lord to be Jehovah Jireh the Lord will provide and you must admit if you tell the truth and you ought to do that having obtained help of God I continue unto this day lack to anything by the way and they answered nothing you have proved and so have I they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing it does not say great thing it is a mercy to learn to be content with such things as you have but when you look back over your life long you can see that goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life and it is attending you still providing mercies and then there are protecting mercies you think where some of you have been in journeying along life's way surrounded with snares and dangers threatening you especially those who had to know what wartime meant and be engaged in it and yet here you are by the mercies of God and you realize those mercies to be protecting mercies

I like Arim writer a sovereign protector I have unseen yet forever at hand remember that but there are other mercies of God and they come in this category here I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God and now dear friends how about correcting mercies which is a wonderful mercy if God does correct you blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord and teachest him out of thy law that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity tea I'm very pleased with a petition of Jeremiah's and it is a striking one and I know

[29 : 17] I have at times entered into just a little only just a little to what Jeremiah felt like and he says O Lord correct me I would not be altogether unpunished oh that is a great petition but in the mercies of God you were made aware at times that you were brought yourself before God with a need be for correction and why I have heard and strayed like a lost sheep seek thy servant for I do not forget thy commandments and God in his mercy corrects you

I can remember the time in my life when one word of the psalmist was made a great word to me I know oh Lord that thy judgments are right and that thou hast in faithfulness afflicted me and I was helped to thank God for his correcting mercy whom the Lord loveth he correct it and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth dear friends reckon up the correcting mercies of God which he has made known to you in his dealings with you his chastenings therefore prize the privilege of a saint the mercies of

God and then there are what we should like to feel even this sabbath day reviving mercies sometimes in our soul's experience we go a long while and there seems to be nothing outstanding to show no particular way mark is set up no high heap is raised but as dying and yet behold we live but you do not want to live at a dying rate and then God in his mercy makes known reviving mercies when we are wounded by sin and scarcely a prayer can repeat the mercy that heals us again is mercy transportingly sweet the mercies of God and you will be asking for those reviving mercies some of you revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy reviving mercies what what you would be glad to be the subject of you would like a revival of how you have felt at times before

God in his dealings with you in years by gone you would like to feel as you felt when he first of all began to deal with you in your eye of faith first beheld the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world when your soul was filled with happiness as you realized God had shown you mercy and now you were following on to know him and his truth wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God there is another mercy and of all the mercies of God that one is the outstanding one and you know what mercy

I'm going to tell you pardoning mercy oh some of you will say if I could only realize what that is in my soul's experience I should be brimful of happiness but alas as yet that mercy has not been granted to me but assure as you know others of these mercies of God that mercy pardoning mercy is laid up in store to be bestowed upon you Moses speaks of the Lord keeping mercy for thousands and for every one of those thousands he has kept not only the mercies of God but especially pardoning mercy so that sooner or later each one asking the way to

[35 : 04] Zion with his or her face ditherward will realize what that mercy is you say it seems too good to be true concerning me you are not to doubt it or dispute it for that is God dishonoring what are you to do believe what the word of God tells you the vision is for an appointed time though it tarry wait for it in the end it will speak and not lie it will surely come it will not tarry I have told you many times in my long ministry I tell you once more none ever miss it there may not be the evidence given to those left behind but none ever miss it because God has guaranteed to finish the good work which he has begun and that must inevitably be the finish of it pardon in mercy known and felt forgiveness is a joyful sound to malefactors doomed to die oh may this bliss in me be found may I redeeming grace and joy says our hymn writer and you say amen to his petition but I will look at the subject from yet another viewpoint

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service you know it is there is no question about that if God has done so much for you and is doing what he is at the present time upholding you along life's way and will be making known his mercy to you in time and eternity to it is your reasonable service to be doing all you can on his behalf among his people and as opportunity is afforded you to do good unto all men and especially they that be of the household of faith but there is this word a living sacrifice and now that takes us back to Old

Testament times when the Israelite who had made some breach of the law had to appear before the priest bring in a lamb and it must be living and then the man's position was made plain the priest dealt with the sacrifice the lamb was slain and Matthew made right before God and man that that Israelite could take his place in Israel as a nation again and be clean but it must be a living sacrifice it was not at all acceptable to bring a dead lamb it must be a living lamb without blemish and without spot and now these things are brought home to us from another viewpoint that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice what does that really mean your bodies animated by your never dying soul in which

God has lodged his grace it must be a voluntary offering remember that not anything to do by compulsion but it is a voluntary offering and now dear friends I must try as the Lord helps me to bring these things right down to you on God's behalf you have sung in bygone days you may sing it again were the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my life my soul my all you joined in the singing of it what have you done before God and man in regard to fulfilling it to present your bodies a living sacrifice and that means our minds to be wrought on by the spirit of

God that you might seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all other things be added to you it means our talents whatever ability God may have given to us and you may begin to question as to whether you have any ability you must leave God to decide that you ask him for grace to do what this word tells you to do if your name is on the church rule or if it ought to be that you present your bodies a living sacrifice and it means that you cannot give to God that which costs you nothing do remember that I like David when he said to Ornan I will not give unto God that which costs me nothing and neither can you or I do it as grace is given and what said the scriptures regarding this oh it is a wonderful word to contemplate and may you have grace to reduce it to practice what know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy

[42 : 26] Ghost which is in you which ye have of God and ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's you see the great thing that is wrong with mankind today the great majority is this they say we are our own who has dominion over us we are our own we can do as we like and we design to do it and so they will until God designs for them to do otherwise but you brethren sisters ye are not your own you cannot do as you like your bodies are to be a living sacrifice and what you do you are to do it before God with whom you have to do be it ever such a little giving a cup of cold water to a disciple for doing what you can for Jesus sake for those you love because they belong to Jesus too it will take up your time it will mean that you have got to use any ability

God has given you and your minds must be centered on it but Jesus will look down and say in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me and he will not overlook it I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice now come to this word sacrifice it means much more than black and white letterpress in the pages of the word of God it means that you may be called to sometimes sacrifice your worldly prospects and you have to do things in your everyday life and do them before God seeking his honour and glory and not what might be for your financial good if you did that which was offered to you many people taught of

God about to refuse good situations where their income would be much more than it is but they have refused it for Jesus sake aye there comes sacrifice into it let your yea be yea and your nay be nay lest ye fall into condemnation you may be called to sacrifice your reputation my old pastor told me long years ago when I became union chapel pastor I should never have any reputation because the cause at that time had not got a very good name round about I told him I know I am doing what God has led me to do and I leave God to do his will with whatever my reputation should be but you must be prepared to sacrifice it to have people perhaps turn their backs on you and in your business life you must be prepared at times to make a sacrifice because you cannot do business on the lines of the ungodly you will be saying like Nehemiah so did not I because of the fear of God oh how much there is in this line of things

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy you see godly fear must govern it holy acceptable unto God and now dear friends you know how much I love you as Union Chapel people do keep this in your mind that when you are brought to a pass in your lives and there are matters to be attended to in attending to them let this thought be uppermost is this acceptable unto God if it is the Lord bless you and the Lord will bless you but oh if your conscience tells you it is not acceptable to God there is something in it which is contrary to presenting your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto

God do not go forward in any such matter holy it must be and that is you can appeal to God what your motive is in regard to it holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service and now in concluding my sermon I want just to give you a little incident in my pastoral life for as I was thinking upon this subject it came to my mind in how many of you union chapel friends who were older still having your remembrance our old singing leader

[48 : 57] Mr. John Oliver when he came down toward the end of life's journey he was in a very poor state of health and for a while he was laid aside and he had many infirmities and it was not always that you could have conversation with him through his frailties that was profitable and good but I used to go in and see him as he laid on the rose court roof and the last occasion I saw him it suddenly came upon my mind that I would go and see him once more and I did and I was glad that I did though at the first I seemed to make no headway but after a while

I tried to pray for him and I said John I must go on my way now to do more work from the pastor's viewpoint and all at once he looked up to me and he said great father of mercies thy goodness I own and the covenant love of thy crucified son all praise to the spirit whose whisper divine seals mercy and pardon and righteousness mine and that was the last word he ever spoke to me as the pastor and what a word that was to speak and that summed up his religion what he was before

God when he was in a right mind and now that is what I long for you all by the grace of God to be led into some of you by his grace have been led into it you have known much of the mercies of God you dear young people who has yet received the mercies of God and never say thank you to God for them the Lord grant when you go on in life's journey that you may be made you belong to him and his mercies be made sweet in your soul's experience and that you may be led into his truth and arrive at length where many of our dear union chapel people are at the fountain head where his mercy endureth forever amen amen