

Session 8: Devotion.

How can we live full on for God?

Welcome to Session 8 of our teaching series on Romans. In this session you will find worship song suggestions, a sermon outline and a written prayer.

KEY VERSE:

‘Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.’

ROMANS 12.1-2 (NIV)

BIBLE READINGS:

Romans 12

MAIN QUESTIONS:

How are we to live as Christians in the light of God’s mercy and sovereignty? How can we be transformed, and live lives that are pleasing to God?

MAIN THEMES:

Sacrifice, transformation, love, devotion.

Context:

Paul has spent 11 chapters expanding on the theological foundations of the gospel. These solid foundations have created a backdrop on which Paul lays out the practical implications of God’s mercy. Having marvelled at the gospel and God’s sovereign power, Paul now begins to consider the difference this makes in our lives and the way we treat one another.

Summary:

In the light of the mercy we have received from God, our lives and our minds are to be made new and we are to offer up our lives as a sacrifice, living in a way that pleases God.

WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTIONS:

- We Bow Down (Adoration)
- I Surrender
- Build My Life
- Great Are You Lord
- So Will I
- In Christ Alone
- Lord Reign In Me
- 10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)

Suggested sermon outline

INTRODUCTION

Start with a recap of the previous chapters. In the light of God's mercy, we are called to take action and let our lives be transformed. Salvation is a gift given to us and Paul makes it clear in this chapter that although this gift cannot be earned, our lives do have to be changed in response to it.

Do you have a story or anecdote that could illustrate this point? Perhaps a time where you were moved to action after learning a new truth, or a time where someone's words lost their impact because they were not backed up by a changed life?

Paul calls us to live lives of sacrifice. Here it might be useful to briefly explain the place of sacrifice in Roman and Jewish tradition, and explore how Paul uses this picture to illustrate his point. For more, see the series book.

KEY POINTS: THREE HARD TRUTHS

(FEEL FREE TO EXPAND ON ONE POINT MORE THAN OTHERS, ACCORDING TO WHAT IS MOST RELEVANT TO YOUR CONGREGATION.)

NOTES

1 A changed mind results in a changed life – 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind'

- Paul calls the believers in Rome to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, rather than conforming to the world. The Roman church faced pressures from their culture, just as we do today. As Christians, we are called to test and approve what God's will is rather than our own will or our culture's ever-changing standards. Are there any pressures your church is facing at the moment? How can your church members live in the light of God's mercies and be transformed, rather than conforming to these pressures?

2 Servants in God's family – 'each member belongs to all the others'

- We are called to live out the gospel in community, rather than each one of us going our own way. We are members of a body, with different gifts which are given so we can serve each other. Paul calls the members of the Roman church – an incredibly diverse congregation of rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free – to serve one another and live in harmony with one another. There is no difference in the body of Christ, and each member is called to serve others with their gifts.

CONCLUSION

What now?

Use this conclusion to come up with relevant suggestions for how this chapter can be lived out in different ways. Below are some suggestions you can choose from.

- Renewing of the mind. It all starts here. Could you challenge your congregation to live and inhabit the truths of the gospel every day, by taking time to read God's word and pray, so that they can be transformed and resist conforming to the world?
- Serving each other with the gifts God has given, as one body, is challenging. How can you encourage your members to explore their spiritual gifts, and use them to serve others, rather than to gain status or admiration?
- How can we grow in sincerity, devotion, honouring each other, zeal, hope, patience, prayer, generosity and hospitality? Are any areas particularly relevant for you in this season?
- How can we overcome evil with good in our communities? Are there any testimonies that people in your congregation could share in any of these areas?

READING
SUGGESTIONS:

- *Romans: A Letter That Makes Sense of Life* by Andrew Ollerton
- *The Message of Romans* by John Stott

WRITTEN
PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us this week to live well as your people. Help us to bring peace to a divided and broken world. Empower us with the Holy Spirit to love even our enemies and those we find difficult. Where we face opposition or ridicule, or are treated unjustly, give us extra grace to love and serve. Help us to be radically hospitable, humble and forgiving. Please strengthen us to be salt and light in this dark world. Amen.