

His Church – Your Service (Romans 12:3-8 November 27, 2011)



For many weeks now we have ploughed through the hard doctrine of Romans.

This morning's sermon is different – it is one of the most practical parts of the Word of God. This is a section that can revolutionise the way you view your place and role in the body of Christ.

Last week we began a new section of Romans – Romans 12:1-15:13.

This section began with Romans 12 verses 1 and 2. Here is what we learned. Paul gives us:



Power By the mercies of God

What Present your bodies as a living sacrifice

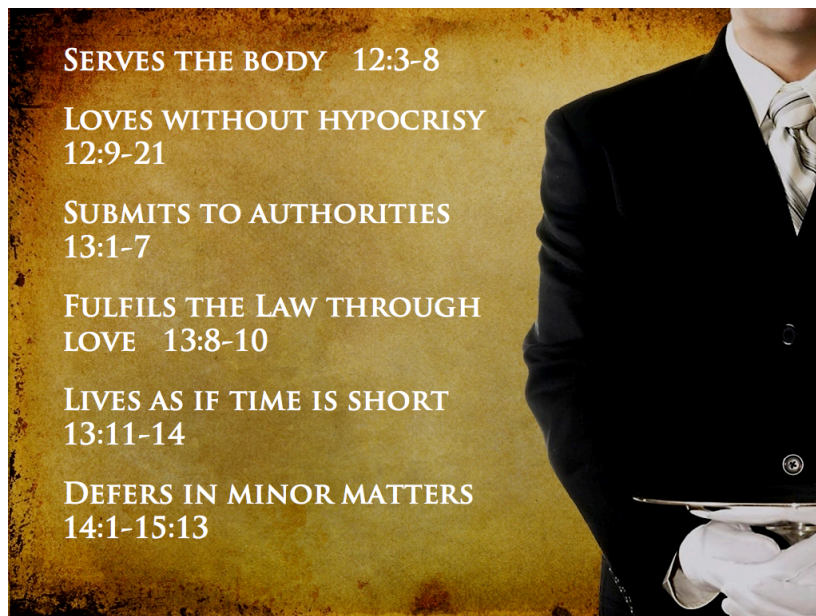
How Resist conformity to the world
Practice transforming mind renewal

This is incredible. We fill our minds and hearts with the mercies of God – this gives us the power to present our bodies, our lives, our time, our money, our gifts – as a living sacrifice. We do this by saying no to the world – and by renewing our minds.

That is the heart of the Christian life summed up in two verses.

But then from verse 3 of Romans 12 to verse 13 of Romans 15 – Paul gives us some very practical examples of what it means to be a living sacrifice – resisting the world with a transformed, renewed mind.

Here are the pictures he paints. One who presents their bodies as a living sacrifice:



Serves the body 12:3-8
Loves without hypocrisy 12:9-21
Submits to authorities 13:1-7
Fulfils the Law through Love 13:8-10
Lives as if time is short 13:11-14
Defers in minor matters 14:1-15:13

And we have to remember why it is so crucial to have transformed lives. Because it is this that declares the glory of God – the power of God to the world.

1 Peter 2:9:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you

out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we say no to the world. When we have our minds transformed so we serve the church, love our enemies, submit to brutal governments, minister to our neighbours, live for eternity and defer to weaker brethren – the world sees the power of the gospel.

But if we call ourselves Christians – but we love the same things as them – sex and money and pleasure. If we only love our family and trample on others. If all our time is for us. Basically – if we live just like them – then the power of the gospel is obscured in us – we are hiding the light of Christ under a bushel.

So – that is the context.

This week, we are looking at this first mark of a transformed life. A Christian who lays down their life as a living sacrifice – **Serves the body**. Romans 12:3-8.

Look with me at verses 3–5:

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

This is a section on using your spiritual gifts to serve the body. Before we dig into this text, I just want to remind us of what the Bible says about spiritual gifts.

When the Lord saw fit to call the church into existence – there are many ways he could have chosen to make the church function.

He could have chosen to make each child of God a King on earth – served by angels and non-Christians. But that would not allow us to reflect the One who came to serve and not be served.

He could have chosen to only give spiritual gifts to selected leaders. They and they alone would serve the body. But that would tend to raise certain members up as more important and others would feel left out and unwanted.

He could have chosen to give every Christians every gift. But that would make us individualistic – we don't need anyone else.

So what the Lord did in His wisdom was to design the church like this:



One body – many members

The church of Christ on earth is one body. But it is composed of many members – each individual Christian alive at that time.

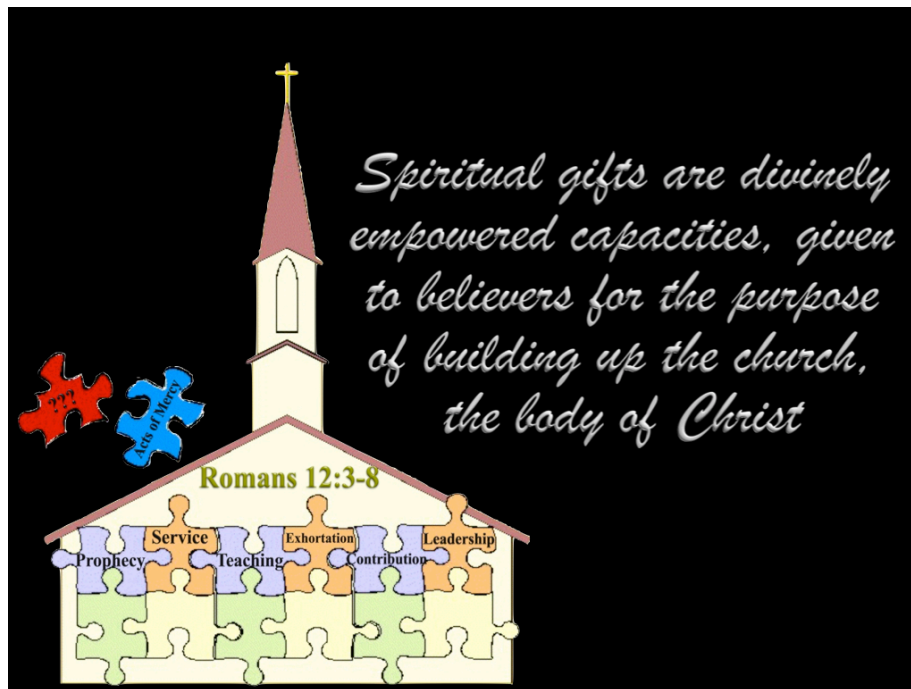
God has also seen fit to divide the whole body of Christ into local congregations and call men and women to be a part of that congregation. One body – many members.

Every member – spiritual gifts

Listen to 1 Corinthians 12:4–12:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Here is my rather uninspiring definition of spiritual gifts:



Spiritual gifts are divinely empowered capacities, given to believers for the purpose of building up the church, the body of Christ.

If you are in Christ – you **are** given a spiritual gift or more than one spiritual gift. This means that if you are a Christian – you are spiritually gifted.

Every week or so the phone rings in the office – it is someone who wants to know about our church. They all have the same few questions. Do you have a youth group? Can you tell me about your music? Are you charismatic?

Now I know what they are asking? Do we speak in tongues and prophesy in our service? But technically they are asking – do we have the grace gifts – the charismata?

I want to say – emphatically yes – we are charismatic – we have spiritual gifts? We just don't speak in tongues or prophesy.

As well, notice that no one receives all the gifts. In 1 Corinthians Paul asks – do all have this gift – no! Do all have that gift – no!

You get the picture – each Christian has a manifestation of the Spirit – but – alone you are not the body of Christ. Together we are the body of Christ.

No one has all the gifts – we need each other.

All serving – all gifts

1 Corinthians 12:18–20:

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there

are many parts, yet one body.

Each Christian is given a gift or gifts that the body needs – service, teaching, giving, leadership.

Together – we have every gift.

Some serving – lacking gifts

But this also means that if any Christian chooses not to serve – the whole body suffers. Some of the gifts the church needs are lacking.

You might think – I'm not that important. Using my gifts or not – won't matter much. That is so wrong. God designed the church such that we need every one of you serving wholeheartedly to make this part of the body of Christ all it can be.

Before we look in more detail at this text, let me comment further on spiritual gifts.

In 1 Corinthians 12 verse 7 Paul says that *each one* is given a manifestation of the Spirit FOR THE COMMON GOOD. NOT to build up ourselves, NOT to draw attention to ourselves, NOT for our own edification BUT, for the good of the entire body.

When you compare the various passages on spiritual gifts, Scripture sometimes speaks of the spiritual gift in terms of an ability – such as the ability to teach – and sometimes as a gifted person – such as a teacher.

God gives gifts to an individual. That person becomes gifted. Then God gives that gifted individual to the church – to edify the whole body.

When Charles Spurgeon was so wonderfully converted at age 15 in the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Artillery Street, God bestowed on him the gift of teaching. Then in October 1851, when he was just 17, God gave this gifted man to the Waterbeach Baptist Chapel as a teacher.

There are two terms that Paul uses to express spiritual gifts. The first one is – $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$. It comes from $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\mu\alpha$ or Spirit. This term expresses the source of these gifts – the Holy Spirit. But there is another term Paul uses, $\chi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$. This term comes from the root word $\chi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha$ or grace. Literally they are 'gifts of grace.' Just as salvation is unmerited, so too are spiritual gifts. God bestows them not because we earned them in some way, but because He sovereignly chose to gift His church. $\chi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ is the more common term for spiritual gifts used in the New Testament. The term $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ is where we derive the name 'charismatic' from.

There are a few questions you might have about spiritual gifts. Let me attempt to answer those questions.

FIRST, who gets spiritual gifts? Obviously, the baptism in the Spirit occurs at salvation so only genuine believers are saved and gifted. But, do all believers get gifts or just some? Are gifts just for the spiritual few?

1 Corinthians 12 verse 7, “But to EACH ONE is given the manifestation of the Spirit.” EVERY believer, EVERY person who loves the Lord has been graciously given a spiritual gift at salvation. And we know that it has absolutely NOTHING to do with spirituality or great faith. The Corinthians had ‘every spiritual gift’ in their church and yet they lacked spiritual maturity. As I already said, these are ‘gifts of grace,’ they come freely from the hand of God to all who are in Christ. They are never earned.

A **SECOND** question. Can you choose which gift or gifts you get? At salvation can you ask God for certain gifts. “Oh God thank you for saving me. Larry who led me to salvation says that his church is poor in many gifts. So please give me teaching, administration and leadership. Those gifts are the ones we need. Thank you.”

Or what about years after salvation? Could you ask God to make you a teacher because all the teachers in the church have died and you need one? Or can you develop a spiritual gift? Could the Corinthians learn to prophesy?

The answer to all of these questions is NO! As we have already seen in verse 13, the gifts come AT SALVATION – as a divinely bestowed gift. When you were born, God had decided what hair colour you would have, what height you would reach, what sex you were. No amount of wishing will let you grow six more inches. Similarly when you are born again, God sovereignly bestows spiritual gifts. Those are yours and no amount of wishing or pleading will change those gifts.

It might take time to grow into your gift.

Also, it does not mean you can only serve in areas you are gifted. But just accept how God gifted you and gave you to the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12 verses 14 and 15 we read about those who want other gifts. Paul uses the analogy of a body. The foot wanting to be a hand, the ear wanting to be an eye. God knew that the human body needs two hands, two feet, two eyes and two ears to function properly. A body with four hands and four eyes but no feet or ears is useless. So too God knows just what the body of Christ needs and He created each of us with a blend of talents that suits the needs of the body. EVERY gift is vital to the body of Christ and not to be spurned.

A **THIRD** question you might have is this. Do I just get ONE gift or do I have a NUMBER of gifts? When we look at various men spoken of in Scripture they DID have more than one gift. The disciples were given the gift of being Apostles. But in Acts 2 we also see that they had the gift of tongues. As well, Acts 3 shows that Peter had the gift of healing and Peter himself tells us he had the gift of prophecy. So clearly it was possible for God to gift a man or a woman with more than one gift.

Some people have one gift that predominates. Charles Spurgeon had teaching. George Whitefield had evangelism. But many of us have a blend of two or three gifts in which we are strong without one gift standing out far above the others.

There is a **FOURTH** question that you might ask.

Scripture has several lists of the spiritual gifts. Are these lists exhaustive or are there spiritual gifts other than those specifically mentioned in Scripture? For example, a gifted musician. He uses that gift to edify and serve the body in a wonderful way. Would it be fair to say that he has the spiritual gift of music?

There are four main passages that refer to spiritual gifts – either the gifts themselves or gifted individuals. They are 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4 and Romans 12.

So if you use these lists as a basis, the gifts you have mentioned in Scripture are essentially these:



Foundational

- APOSTLE
- PROPHET
- DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS
- WORD OF WISDOM
- WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
- FAITH
- GIFTS OF HEALING
- WORKINGS OF MIRACLES
- TONGUES
- INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

Continuing

- TEACHER
- PASTOR
- EVANGELIST
- EXHORTATION
- HELPS OR SERVICE
- ADMINISTRATIONS
- GIVING
- LEADING
- MERCY

None of the lists in Scripture are identical. Most of the lists have gifts that are exclusive to it and some that are common to other lists. The fact that not every list is identical makes it likely that each time the author was just presenting representative lists of the gifts.

So can we add a gift to the list – like music or Web site management or crafts?

That is a hard question. Those who wrote the lists were inspired, we are not.

I personally feel that any talent used for the glory of God is a spiritual gift – but perhaps we are safer to put them under one of the headings we are given in Scripture.

A musician who plays to the glory of God. Perhaps this comes under the category of service or exhortation – rather than choosing to come up with our own gift categories.

But I don't have strong feelings either way of this. If you serve the body in some way – what we call your gift is less important than serving.

A **FIFTH** question. Do all the gifts continue?

We have been talking about this in adult Sunday School.

Again a very difficult question. In my understanding, Scripture does not have crystal clear texts saying that certain gifts ceased. But a number of texts seem to indicate that some gifts were given for the founding of the church.

Ephesians 2:20:

[The church is] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

As the church matured, as the gospel spread, as the Bible was written – the need for these gifts passed.

Other gifts were for the edification of the church in every age and they remain.

We see some gifts as foundational and some as continuing. This is our basic position here – but we try not to make it a point of division.

SIXTH. Is there a difference between natural abilities and spiritual gifts? Does God just take a natural inclination and turn it into a spiritual gift? For example, does He just take someone with the gift of the gab and after salvation channel that gift into teaching? OR conversely, does God sovereignly choose to take someone who is afraid to speak in public and transform them utterly at salvation into a dynamic proclaimer of the gospel?

This is another hard question.

Clearly some gifts were entirely supernatural – prophecy, healing and so on.

But what about the continuing gifts? They do seem to rely on natural talents, developed and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and now used for the glory of God.

We have to be careful drawing too rigid a line between natural and spiritual gifts. It may just be that they are spiritual because of the motivation and power and purpose they are used for.

The **SEVENTH** question we need to answer is this. Are any of the gifts more strategic than others? Interestingly enough, the answer is YES. Some gifts **are** more foundational and vital to the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul enumerates several gifts in order of their strategic importance. He wrote:

And God has appointed in the church, FIRST Apostles, SECOND prophets, THIRD teachers, THEN other gifts.

After that, in verse 31 Paul says:

Eagerly desire the greater gifts.

The church (not individuals) should desire to have these greater gifts. Apostles and prophets were foundational for the church. Teachers were vital to its health. These were gifts that had more basic importance than others.

A body can function without an arm, but not without a head. Similarly, a church will be weakened and certainly less effective if it has no members who have the gift of mercy or helps or giving. But if there are no leaders or teachers then it will grind to a halt. Some gifts are more necessary at a foundational level. If you sent out a few people to plant a church in a new suburb we would try and send some people with gifts such as pastor, teacher, leader. If there were none with these gifts, the foundation of the church is lacking.

Having said that in our passage in Romans Paul makes it clear – don't think of yourself more highly than you ought.

If you have a more strategic gift – that does not make **you** more important. You have to guard against pride and being puffed up.

Question **EIGHT**. If I know that I don't have a gift, am I excused from that area of service? If I don't have the gift of evangelism, am I excused from ever sharing my faith? If I am not blessed with the gift of mercy, does that mean I can be as hard hearted as I want to? If I don't have giving can I use all my time, money and resources for myself? If I don't have service as a gift does that mean I don't come to workdays or help with church cleaning?

I don't really need to answer this question, you know the answer. God gifts individuals in a special way to serve the body. But, those without the special gift are still commanded to contribute to the body in those very same areas. Matthew 28 gives the Great Commission of sharing the good news to EVERY believer, not just to those who have the gift of evangelism. In Luke 6:36, Jesus said, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." All must show mercy. In 1 Corinthians 16 we are all commanded to give,

not just those with the gift of special giving. You might say you aren't a teacher, well you MUST be a teacher for your children and those younger in the faith than you.

In fact I would give you this advice. Find your weak areas. Just say you know that mercy is a weak point. Then work on it. Be aware that you struggle in this area and make a special effort to be merciful. You will never outdo those with the gift of mercy but you can do your best.

Then FINALLY, the question many of you want to ask. How do I know what gifts God gave ME?

Some of you might say, "Look, I've unwrapped my spiritual present and the box seems empty. I don't think I have any of the gifts mentioned in Scripture." Impossible. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says the Spirit gives gifts to EACH one.

Others might say, "Well, I know I must have gifts, the Bible says so, but I have no idea what they can be." Let me give you some advice for working out what your gifts are.

FIRST, make sure you are saved.

SECOND, ensure your life is consecrated to God. The gifts are to serve God's church not for your own prestige. Make certain that you have fully dedicated your life to serving God in ANY way, in any position or in any circumstances.

John Newton tells the story of two angels who were sent from the throne of God to serve on earth. One was sent to rule over a great kingdom. The other was sent to sweep the streets of a small village. Yet it mattered not one whit to either angel which task was theirs. They were consecrated to God and their joy came from serving God - not from the prestige of the area of service. They would serve in whatever way, whatever position, under whatever circumstances. When you can say the same, you are on your way to knowing and using your gifts. This is perhaps the most important step of them all.

THIRD, study the Word of God to understand what the gifts actually are and how they can best be utilised.

FOURTH, ask God to show you how He has gifted you to serve His church. Pray for wisdom as to how you are equipped to do his will.

FIFTH, just begin serving. Minister to the body. It will become very clear very quickly how you are gifted. Ask those who know you best what giftedness they believe you have. They can often see the hand of God in your life better than you can.

Just serve in the areas you see a need, you think you can help, that will glorify God.

Far better to serve where you might not totally fit – than not to serve at all.

Now, believe it or not – all of that is just the introduction to our passage. Look again at Romans 12, verse 3:

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Reading between the lines of verses 3-8 and in the context of the chapters that follow, it seems that there were some Christians who thought too highly of themselves. They thought that the successes in the church were due to them. They had more gifts, more abilities, more talent than others. They were among the truly important members of the body of Christ.

Since Paul lists prophecy first – this might be one of the gifts that was sought after and making some a little puffed up.

Paul challenges them and us. He basically says – Don't think yourself too high and mighty. When your mind is renewed you come to understand the truth. The truth is what Jesus said in John 15:5:

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

The reality is that anything we do – is done via the gifts, strength and power of Christ. Without Him we can do nothing.

Without Christ, nothing can happen in the church. It is Christ who builds His church. It is Christ who raises up leaders. It is Christ who brings in the lost. It is Christ who gives the increase.

Without Christ there is no church. No matter how talented and gifted you might be – you can do *nothing* without Christ.

There are no great men in a church – only a great Saviour. And whenever we think we are great, we draw the glory from the Saviour.

That is why Paul says we are to think of ourselves with sober judgment. With the understanding of a renewed mind, we have to realise our limitations and the source of real power.

And to ram home his point, Paul adds a final phrase – according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Paul's point is not that some have been given a big serving of faith therefore they are more important. No! Quite the opposite – every Christian is given the same allotment of faith.

Paul is saying we all have been accorded the same faith, the same gospel, the same truth – we should not ever see ourselves as puffed up.

You didn't save yourself. You were saved when the Spirit of God imbedded a measure of faith in your heart. Without that you would still be lost in your sins and transgressions.

Since every believer, Apostle or teacher, elder or member, man or woman – all received the same faith. There is no hierarchy among believers. We are all equally helpless and lost in our sins apart from the faith and grace of Christ.

Paul starts this section here because pride is so endemic in us. We have to battle it every day. It is one of the seven deadly sins. It has caused the fall of so many men.

On July 20, 1969 when man set foot on the moon for the first time. Richard Nixon, the President of the United States declared, “It’s the greatest day since creation!”

It’s the greatest day since creation?

Getting a little carried away aren’t we? The truth is that God created man, the moon and the universe. The truth is that the greatest day since creation had nothing to do with human effort. It was when the Creator Himself breathed His last upon the cross of shame so that you and I might live.

Unfortunately, pride doesn’t end at salvation. Christians are prone to pride – and this happens in the area of spiritual gifts.

I got teaching and leadership – what did you get? Service and giving! – Oh – bad luck.

Paul’s point is this. Any gifts you have – natural, spiritual, occupational, stewardship – they come from God. Don’t you boast or think more highly of yourself.

A healthy church needs **every** believer and every gift.

Verses 4-5:

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



Not everyone has the gift of helps, not everyone has leadership or pastor.

But a healthy church needs them **all**.

Yes – some gifts are crucial. You need pastors and teachers. But imagine a church with no helpers, no musicians, no sound guys, no morning tea, no cleaners, no gardeners.

A church can survive without faithful kitchen workers – but it is so much more pleasant with them – believe me – you don't want Dave and I in the kitchen too much.

And if the leaders spend too much time doing other tasks – some crucial things are missed.

If you examine the spiritual gifts, together they reflect the gifts and abilities of the perfect man – Jesus Christ.

But no one man or woman has all the gifts.

So God gave the church built-in humility. I need you and you need me. I can't do the task alone and neither can you. If we are going to reach this world, if we are going to be the church we are called to be – we *have* to work together.

We need the whole spectrum of gifts. And we have to swallow our pride and link arms and join together to do the task entrusted to us.

But, the problem is that our pride keeps welling up.

Exalting certain gifts. The Corinthians exalted the gift of tongues. Some churches exalt teaching or leading. Some exalt evangelism.

We see it manifested in different ways. Some individuals are destroyed by their gift. For example, I heard of a very gifted preacher – very gifted. But he knew he was gifted. And he thought that all the church needed was preaching. The other gifts were very secondary. It destroyed him and the church.

Similarly, churches as a whole can exalt certain gifts. Evangelism can become the only worthy gift. Or teaching. Or giving. And other gifts can be neglected.

Paul sums up in verses 6-8:

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Again, I don't see this as an exhaustive list. This is an appeal to serve the body of Christ fully with whatever strength you have with whatever gifts you have. Not for self glory – but to build up the body for Christ's glory.

Let me appeal to you. What do you do for the body of Christ?

God gifted you, placed you here, we need you – what do you do for the body of Christ?

It is NOT enough to have a spiritual gift, you must use it wholeheartedly in serving the body of Christ.

Just imagine that I scrimped and saved for years to buy Dena a gift. Finally I was able to buy it. A beautiful sapphire ring. On her birthday I gave it to her waiting expectantly to see what it looked like on her finger. Then she asks, "What is it?" It's a sapphire ring. "Oh that's nice." And she puts the unopened box up in her cupboard. How do you think I would feel? That is exactly how God feels when His children fail to minister with the gifts He so graciously bestowed on them.

We need your gifts. God is sovereignly putting this church together. And each of you are gifted by God specifically to minister in this local church that you have associated yourself with. If you fail to utilize your gifts here then you are defrauding this part of the body of Christ.

Remember the slave who buried his talent. He failed to use what was entrusted unto him to benefit his master. Listen to the words he heard. "You wicked lazy slave .. take away the talent from him ... And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Stewardship of what God entrusted to you is serious stuff. If you love God you will serve Him.

I want to end with this thought. Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is hard.

Finding the time to serve the body of Christ is hard.

It doesn't come naturally.

If you are like so many of us – struggling to find the time and the motivation to do something for Christ, then Paul tells where to find the motivation.

Look back to verses 1 and 2. Initially I found it strange that Paul didn't say:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Do this by the mercies of God.

No, Paul starts this section with the power – the motivation.



What is it?

Therefore, by the mercies of God. The mercies Paul has outlined in the previous 11 chapters.

Consider these mercies:

Every man woman and child, Jew and Gentile, slave and free is condemned by their sin to an eternity in hell. No works, no good deeds, no actions can possibly save anyone from this fate. But God in the richness of His mercies has provided a way. Through Christ – we who richly deserve hell – can become righteous. Condemnation becomes no condemnation. We have the power to resist sin, to live holy. We know nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We know God has been faithful to His promises to His people.

Therefore in light of these mercies – the child of God can do nothing but present their bodies as living sacrifices.

When you are stunned by the grace of God in saving you – when you deserve hell. You don't have to suck up some guilt to serve.

You cry – God I have to serve you because I love you.

If all your life is about you. Family, work, house, cars – and God gets the crumbs. You aren't smitten by the mercies of God. If they possess you – you have to serve – you have to lay down your life – you have to give all for Him.

You don't have to work at it – it just happens.

If you struggle to serve – meditate on God's mercies. Then you will desire to serve – and the body will be blessed and God will be glorified.

If you struggle to do any of the things Paul is about to talk about – loving, submitting, deferring – then meditate on God's mercies.

We who know the mercies of God – we must serve.

And when we all serve – the body is healthy – the church declares the glory of God – the lost are saved, the saved are built up, and God receives the praise.

This is our acceptable sacrifice of spiritual worship.