



Reading through the New Testament—Week 26

July 2-8

Reading Plan available on
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Becoming more like Jesus—growing in His Word

As we continue to read in the book of Romans this week, notice what Martin Luther had to say about Romans:

This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

In this epistle we thus find most abundantly the things that a Christian ought to know, namely, what is law, gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, righteousness, Christ, God, good words, love, hope, and the cross . . . Therefore, it appears that he (Paul) wanted in this one epistle to sum up briefly the whole Christian and evangelical doctrine, and to prepare an introduction to the entire Old Testament. For, without doubt, whoever has this epistle well in his heart, has with him the light and power of the Old Testament. Therefore, let every Christian be familiar with it and exercise himself in it continually. To this end may God give His grace. Amen.

(Reprinted from the introduction to Romans in The Lutheran Study Bible, p. 1905.)

See the sermon outline on page 2

THIS WEEKEND'S SERMON OUTLINE

"Sacrifice"

Romans 12:1-2

"Service and Sacrifice"

Romans 12:1-2 "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."

What is "sacrifice" in Romans 12?

The first step towards sacrifice: _____
". . . to offer your bodies . . ."

The substance of our sacrifice: _____
". . . offer your bodies as a living sacrifice . . ."

The nature of our sacrifice: _____
". . . holy and pleasing to God . . ."

The purpose of our sacrifice: _____
". . . this is your true and proper worship."






The result of our sacrifice: _____
"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed . . ."

The impact of our sacrifice: _____
". . . what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will."

The motive for our sacrifice: _____
". . . in view of God's mercy . . ."

New Testament in a Year—July 2-8

Romans

Chapter 9  10  11  12  13 

Additional Reflections from this week's reading

Romans 9 In contrast to Jewish belief that the physical descendants of Israel will naturally inherit everlasting life, Paul argues that only descendants born as a result of God's promise are the "seed." In other words, the offspring receive the promise by faith.

Romans 10 For those who want to make salvation "conditional," reread what Paul says in 10:13. Also, what is the purpose of the questions in verses 14:17? How does this underscore the importance of sharing our faith?

Romans 11 Based on Paul's writings here, what difference, if any, is there between Jew and Gentile before God?

Romans 12 What does 12:1 add to your understanding of true worship? How can you present your body as a living sacrifice in everyday life?

Romans 13 How does government relate to God in terms of its origin? Power? Purpose? How is that different than the world's way of governing?

Blessing the World

Thank you! Over this past week, we have seen people volunteering in amazing ways during the Kingdom Keepers Vacation Bible School. It was a great reminder that we can be the hands and feet of Christ to the world around us in a lot of different ways: providing craft supplies, painting canvases, buying cookies, making snacks that look like foxes, cutting pool noodles, and refereeing jousting matches. There was a place for everyone... and there continue to be places to serve throughout the summer! Check out the Parish Notes for ways to be hands and feet, from giving blood to bringing your kids to the Back to School clinic. If you aren't sure which serving opportunity is right for you connect with Pastor Shawn (pastordavis@stmfw.org or calendly.org/pastor_shawn).

Belonging in Community

This week as we talk about sacrifices we are going to pay close attention to the phrase "living sacrifices" I Romans 12:1. It is easy and natural for the concept of dying to be tied to sacrifice. In fact, Paul uses the image of death quite a bit in his writings. Romans 6:6, 8:36, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21 to name just a few. However, our God does not desire that we die rather than we live for Him. We are given a picture of this in the next verse:

"Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2

During our time together we are going to be spending time reflecting on areas of our lives and what it does and could look like to live sacrificially, giving up our thoughts and opinions as well as the actions that follow, to the will of God. It is important to keep in mind that living sacrificially doesn't stop at removing and changing the sinful thoughts and behaviors. It goes beyond that into the giving of ourselves (personality, opinions, behaviors, and treasures) when asked in order to join in with what God is doing.

In each of the areas below, take some time to:

- 1 - Define what that area of life looks like.
- 2 - Use the verses listed and any others that come to mind to talk about how God teaches us to live.
- 3 - Share (maybe on a scale of 1-10) each person is individually doing at living sacrificially in that area.

- Mind - Philippians 4:4-9
- Heart - Matthew 5:2-16
- Body - Luke 11:34, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Psalm 139:14
- Relationally - 1 Peter 4:8, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

This list is not exhaustive. Are there other areas of yourself that you would like to discuss? Please do so.

As you close, read and remember Matthew 11:28-30. Focus on the truth that we are to learn from Jesus. What a great teacher for learning how to be a living sacrifice! We are not alone in this and because we are yoked with Him in our baptism and by the Holy Spirit we are able to learn this sacrificial walk of life. Knowing that it's not about earning our salvation but instead it's about being a part of His kingdom work so that others may come to know His truth.