

Romans 12:3-31 Our Response to God's Altar Call

In this final section of Romans, we are invited to respond to the gospel of God. The first verse urges us to review all God has done for us in Jesus Christ as God outlined in the first 11 chapters. What we believe will affect our behaviour, so that without an understanding and acceptance of God's assessment of our condition and remedy for our situation, we cannot really live our lives for Him. So in that light, we are called to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices" to serve God. The implications of such a commitment will be seen in changes in attitudes and behaviour that are described in this section. Such a commitment is a reasonable act of worship and service that pleases God. But the offering of the body must be coupled with a renewal of our minds. The pressure of the world for us to conform must be resisted if we are to respond to the creator's hand moulding our lives. Our mind needs to be completely transformed ("metamorphosis") and we need to become a "new creation", if we are to approve God's good pleasing and acceptable will in our lives. Last week we looked at these 2 verses under the headings 1. Offer your body and 2. Renew your mind. Now we see 3 more results of our response.

3. Know your place v3-8

Having made a personal commitment to Christ by offering our body and renewing our mind we may be tempted into pride now that we can test by approving God's perfect will. But Paul first wants to remind us that we are not on our own. We are part of a body of believers that God is calling out of this world and there is no place for personal pride. Neither is there a need for self-deprecation. We are called to have a "sound mind" or right thinking about ourselves. There are three things given to us.

Faith is given v3. Our ability to think rightly is determined by the "measure of faith" that God has given. There are some who have incredible faith to do great things while others often doubt. Jesus commended a Gentile soldier wanting healing for his servant saying that he had not seen such great faith in Israel. We sometimes expect everyone to have the same measure of faith we have been given. But even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. What is important is that the measure of faith we have been given should grow (2 Cor 10:15).

Place is given v4-5. We are part of the body of Christ, each with an assigned place given by God (1 Cor 12:18). We do not decide our place in the body, neither can we say we are not important. Just as in a human body, every part is essential. We need each other. The local church should reflect that care and appreciation of each other.

Grace is given v6-8. This refers to "spiritual gifts" given to every Christian. Seven are mentioned here but there are 19 specifically mentioned in scripture. The emphasis in this passage is on how we use these gifts. They are not given for "personal" use but for the common good (1 Cor 12:7). No one gift is given to all Christians and it is God who decides what gift you are given. In this passage we are encouraged to use our gift(s) in proportion to our faith, generously, diligently and cheerfully.

4. Change your attitude v9-13

This section has 13 "one liners" about an attitude which should be different in those who claim to be Christians. These start as attitudes of the heart and mind but eventually will show themselves by the actions we take.

Love must be sincere – without *hypokrisis*. There should be no hypocrisy in our love for one another
1 Pet 4:8. We are to love in words and deeds.

Hate what is evil – Abhor, hate with a passion. Those who love the Lord will hate evil (Ps 97:10)

Cling to what is good – Stick like glue to good. The hardest area can be our thought life (Phil 4:8)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love – *philostorgos*. The devotion of parent to child, a tender affection. This is the evidence of being a child of God (John 13:34-35, 1 John 3:10)

Honour one another above yourselves – not just as equals. Expanded with the example of Jesus in Phil 2:3-4.

Never lack zeal – lit "Not slothful in diligence". Whatever you do "give it heaps" (Eccl 9:10)

Keep your spiritual fervour – "boiling". We need to spur one another on in love and good deeds
(Heb 10:24-25)

Serving the Lord – the focus of all our activities. Whatever you do, do it heartily as if working for the Lord (Col 3:23)

Be joyful in hope – Learn to rejoice always (Phil 3:1). Why? Luke 10:20

Be patient in affliction – *hypomeno* = endurance. Testing times will come but we are to be patient just as Christ endured for us (Heb 12:1-3)

Be faithful in prayer – strongly continue, don't give up. Be devoted to, wrestle (Col 4:2,12)

If you are new or visiting; a special warm welcome to you. We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

This Morning
Speaker Ross Pettigrew

This Evening
• JCF 5.00pm

Next Sunday
22nd November - International Sunday

Thursday Kidz Club
6:30 - 8:00 pm
7 - 12 year olds
Ph: Allan Maguire - 4767197

Prayer Items

Jocelyn, Japan, gives praise for the answered prayers for her co-workers mother who had backslidden, however she has since been approached by Christian friends and repented. Please continue to pray for her.

Please pray also for another member of her church Mrs G.M. who is in a low state psychologically. She has her daughter and a new family coming to visit and in chaos getting her house ready has lost all confidence. As a result she has dropped out of all her clubs and volunteer activities in the community and is now talking about withdrawing from church.

Keep in your prayers also the church as a whole as it is currently in a slump at the moment.

Howard and Monica, Mongolia, write; The weather is closing on us, last night was the first frost! We are racing to put the roof on our eye clinic before the first snow begins. We expect to receive enough money to do this during these days. We also need to finish plastering work, and tiles so that we can continue finishing work over the winter months, and open on 20th March 2010. Breathless but rejoicing!

