

**Sermon Notes of  
Guest speaker Koa Shima's Sermon on January 6, 2019:**

**"A Living What?  
(Romans 12:1-2)"**

**[In today's sermon, guest speaker Koa Shima shows that we become a living sacrifice, not by our own efforts, but through Jesus who now lives in us as believers.]**

**Notes**

Opening prayer:

**Romans 12:1 (NRSV), I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God and what is good, and acceptable and perfect.**

- So, in the title, the phrase “living what” means a “living sacrifice.”
- These two verses in Romans show us a new way of living out our lives, which we will discuss.
- Let's read verse one again.

**Romans 12:1, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**

- In this letter to the Romans, Paul is showing all the things God has done for us.
- For example, in Romans 8, Paul is very confident that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
- Because of all that God has done for us, becoming a living sacrifice is our response to Him and His mercies.
- We don't do this on our own – we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice because of all the mercies God has bestowed upon us.
- We love God and others because God first loved us.
- So, since Jesus Christ lives in us, once we become believers, we can then become a living sacrifice in response.

Living sacrifice:

- In a practical sense, what does it mean to “present our bodies as a living sacrifice”?
- Does this mean we try to follow the example of Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice?
- No, Paul has in mind, not our physical bodies, but the lives we live out.
- Paul tells us in verse 2 not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

- This is about living out our lives in a very different way than we used to.
- Now our lives are more than just the one talent that we might excel in.
- When we offer our bodies, it's not just one part of who we are, but our whole being, our whole personality.
- And when we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, it's not just for a few hours on one day of the week, like Sunday at church, but it's every day of the week and everywhere we go.
- So, we need to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice by being humble and being in service to others.
- By being this kind of living sacrifice, it expands our worship to God.
- The phrase "living sacrifice" is a kind of oxymoron, because the word "sacrifice" implies death.
- But we are familiar with other oxymoron phrases such as "jumbo shrimp", or "sweet tart" or "free trade."
- Now in Galatians 2, Paul fills out the meaning of a "living sacrifice."

**Galatians 2:19, I have been crucified with Christ, 20) and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I live now in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

- So, it's about participating in what God and Christ has done for us.
- As Christ lives in us, it sets us free from all of our self-interests and desires that used to dominate us.
- Paul gives us more understanding about this in Philipians 2.

**Philippians 2:5, Let this same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7) but emptied himself taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8) he humbled himself...**

- Jesus wasn't concerned about who He was, but rather he was concerned about who He could be for others.
- Rationally, it doesn't make any sense in becoming a parent because your life is no longer your own as you have to take care of your children for at least 18 years.
- But, we become parents because we do find enjoyment in life by giving of ourselves to others.
- So, parenting is part of being a living sacrifice.
- God stresses the familial element in His relationship with us, like the church is part of His family and God tells that He is a Father who loves us as His children.
- And Jesus stressed that we need to be like children in our relationship with God.
- Here is a quote from one of the church fathers, John Chrysostom.

*"And how is the body, it may be said, to become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil thing, and it hath become a sacrifice; let thy tongue speak nothing filthy, and it hath become an offering; let thine hand do no lawless deed, and it hath become a whole burnt offering."*

- So, living out our lives as a living sacrifice is doing paradoxical things that don't normally make sense to others, yet by doing these inspired things gives us enjoyment and fulfillment.

### The renewing of our minds:

**Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God and what is good, and acceptable and perfect.**

- The concepts of not being conformed to this world and having our minds renewed by God is crucial in presenting our lives as a living sacrifice to God.
- Verses 1 and 2 go hand-in-hand.
- Being able to discern what is the will of God, happens when we do offer our lives as living sacrifice to God.
- Our minds are being renewed through Jesus Christ who lives in us, as Paul told us in Galatians.
- Being a living sacrifice is following Jesus' example by emptying ourselves for others.
- This renewing of our minds gives us a new way of viewing the world and others.
- The renewing of our minds happens because of our relationship with Jesus.
- The living sacrifice that Jesus made for us, which ended with Him on the cross, should really change how we view the world and others around us and how we interact with them.
- So, being a living sacrifice should positively affect our relationship with others in the nearby neighborhood of the Monrovia Y.
- In conclusion, here is a quote from Jurgen Moltmann, a German theologian, that helps us better understand these two verses in Romans.

*“Man seeks God in the will for political power and world domination. If he sees and believes God in Christ who was powerless and crucified, he is set free from this desire to have power and domination over others. Man seeks to know God in the works and ordinances of the cosmos or the course of world history, in order to become divine himself through knowledge.*

*If he sees and believes God in the suffering and dying Christ, he is set free from the concern for self-deification which guides him towards knowledge. Thus the knowledge of God in the crucified Christ takes seriously the situation of man in pursuit of his own self-interests, man who in reality is inhuman, because he is under the compulsion of self-justification, dominating self-assertion and illusionary self-deification.”*

### Concluding thoughts:

- When we look to Jesus, who was the ultimate example of what it's like to live for others, then we can be set free from our dominating self-interests.

- And when we live out our lives as a living sacrifice, we become dead to our own self needs and desires and live the outgoing will of God in our lives.
- Now when we partake of the elements of communion today, we are giving away our self-interests and participating with God, who is always doing outward mission and things for others.

Communion Prayer