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Living Sacrifice  
Rom. 12:1

As long as I can remember there have been debates on religious subjects. I must confess that I have never seen much good in them. But there is one debate that I would like to hear if it were possible. You know there are people to day who say that there is nothing to doctrine. They say there is no use having a system of doctrines. Just let people believe as they like. They say also that they do not care what people believe. Let the church go to the law ways and have a big Y.M.C.A. building for the town. It is on this subject that I would like to hear a sure enough debate between such advocates and St. Paul.

Oh how St. Paul believed in doctrine. How he believed in having something to believe. Before he gave the practical duties of these Romans he gave a long discourse on doctrine. The first eleven chapters of the book of Romans are taken up in discussing election, calling, justification, our relationship to God, what God has done for us, and kindred topics. He comes then to twelve and says, "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto to God which is your reasonable service." In other words he turns now to the practical side of the proposition to show us our duties right here in every day life. The practical growing out of the doctrinal.

I beseech. This is a very strong word he has put in here. You may solicit a person or persons to do something. We have many solicitors so many that we pay little attention to many of them. You may go a step further and entreat people to do a thing and you will get more done because entreaty is hard to turn a cold ear to. But stronger than either one of these is "Beseech". It carries with it so much of earnestness and anxiety that it appeals to most any one and every one at any time.

New Paul says, "I beseech you brethren." He has something he wants them to do. In this matter there is not to be any sham, hypocrisy, or make believe but reality is to be the note. A crisis is at hand. The world is being contested for. Christian forces are small but they can and must be mighty. The devil is in high places and Christians are being watched and unless they stand right up to their possibilities men are going to hell and nations are going to destruction. I beseech you therefore brethren. How strong it is written!

I come to you in this earnestness not because of myself. Not that at all. But listen, men, men of God I come to say by the mercies of God I beseech you. What does he know about the mercies of God? If he does not know any thing he had better be saving his breath. So had you brother. If you know not God in His mercies you are wasting time trying to get men into a saving knowledge of God. Your talk will be without fire, without teeth, and without piercing, and without consolation.

Yes he knew about the mercies of God. He had served a God who had no mercy. So unmerciful was his former God that he could go in His name and persecute the followers of Jesus. He could hear the shrieks, cries, and prayers of the innocent and yet see them die. But one day I can almost hear God as He said to Jesus yonder goes Saul, step down from heaven and speak to him. So Jesus the Light of the world crossed Saul's path and Saul's life of error in the light of eternal Truth was so frail that he fell to the earth and gradually he was ushered in through the revelation of God as given in Jesus to that blessed atmosphere where he saw God not as a tyrant but as a merciful Father. Yes indeed he could talk about it because he knew. And so can we when we learn about it.

I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, the tender mercies of our Father, by the mercies of Him who has done all for us, that ye present. Now wait a minute. Something big is going to be done here, I am beseeching you by the mercies of God that you come clean now

and do the big square thing. Listen, I want you to face God at this hour when the right is calling for the best in you and make to God a presentment.

New friends you know what it means to present things. Suppose your father has given his all for you and you go home this Christmas and carry him something. How cheap you would feel. But you do not do that but you carry him a suit of clothes. Not something you have worn out but a new one and you present it to him. You know the joy that both of you receive from the gift or presentation.

Now Paul is wanting these people because of God's mercies and because of the real need of the hour to make a presentation, not of clothes, sheep, oxen or any thing of that kind out of their living bodies. I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Sacrifice has been a rite all down the ages. It was made in the O.T. times by the use of things from the vegetable kingdom or the animal kingdom. With either one salt was used to indicate purity. The very best they had was offered. There were three kinds of sacrifice made. Sin offering, burnt offering, and peace offering. The burnt offering was the offering of consecration. The animal was burnt up entirely. This is the sacrifice Paul is talking about, that of consecration. And just as all the flesh of the animal was burnt so we should put our fleshy desires in so far as they are sinful on the altar of God's truth and let them be destroyed. A living sacrifice.

That is not all. It is to be holy. With out spot or blemish. You may fear that term but you and Paul fear that. I will listen to you debate and I will see your fur fly. Holy acceptable to God. Now this is not too much for you but is just our reasonable service.

Paul spoke to brethren. That is he spoke to the church. It was his idea that the church is to put Christ's program across. The church is the only institution that can carry out the program of Jesus. And you brethren by giving yourselves a living sacrifice can put it over and Jesus means for us to do it.