

Romans 12:1-2

A Heart Tethered to the Gospel

The Appeal

- Define appeal
- Here the Apostle, with the authority given to him by the Lord makes an earnest plea with the church. This has all the weight of a command, but is tempered with the love of Christ. God through Paul wants this to be a response rightly born out of a new heart, and not an outward display of modifying behavior.

“Therefore”

- In the first 11 chapters Paul lays out the mercies of God through Christ in arguably the most thorough exposition of the gospel written. This would be what the therefore is pointing back to. **In light of everything I shared with you/ In light of all that God has done through Christ.**

The Reason

- Paul then continues in the 1st verse to share the reason or how we are enabled to respond before he shares what the response should be. **The Reason, “By The Mercies of God”. We see a right order in the life of a Christian here. How would we be able to have a faith fueled response without knowing the mercies of God and tethering our hearts to this truth?**
- **“So, faith comes by hearing and hearing through the Word of God.” Romans 10:17**

“Mercies of God”

- Here’s a fly-over of some of the mercies Paul just expounded upon in the first 11 chapters:
- **1) Justified by Faith.**

Romans 3:21-26. “¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of

God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

"Mercies of God" cont.

- **1) continued, The payment we owed for our sins, death, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." –Rom. 6:23. So, Christ being the propitiation or payment God can justly call us righteous when we receive this truth through faith. (Vs.25)**
- **2) Forgiveness of our sins through the atonement of Christ's blood.**
- **Rom. 5:8-9. "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."**
- Our identity is no longer defined by our past and sins we committed or that were inflicted upon us. God now has the right to define us because He bought us back, or atoned for our sins by the cross.

"Mercies" cont.

- **3). God works all things together for our good as believers. God's good purpose for our lives is to be conformed into Christ.**

Rom. 8:28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[a] for those who are called according to his purpose."

These mercies are not a matter of past benefits only, but they continue to exercise God's transformative power in present circumstances, as well as future.

Indicatives VS Imperatives

- The first 11 chapters of Romans could be viewed as Paul laying out distinct Gospel indicatives. Then he shifts to Gospel imperatives in the beginning of Chapter 12.

- **Gospel Indicatives-** Statement of fact. What God has done for us in Christ.
- **Gospel Imperatives-** Statement of command. What we must do in response.

Gospel indicatives are always the foundation or basis for God's imperatives.

Tethering our hearts to what Christ has done (Gospel) enables us to respond rightly

Call to Respond – this imperative starts with the individual.

- In light of the mercies of God Paul makes his appeal for the proper response from the church, believers on a personal level.
- **Proper response: “Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice”. God’s mercies have fully justified us by faith, atoned for our sins completely, and renewed right purpose in our lives as we are being conformed into Christ. So, it is fitting that our response should be presenting our entire person, which includes our desires, wants, or demands, not just our physical bodies. God doesn’t ask for what we can give Him in the form of a sacrifice, but he demands the giver fully.**

Ps. 116:12 “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me.”

Verse 2 – Resist

- **“Do not be conformed to this world,^[a] 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 not be conformed to this world.. Paul is telling his readers to actively and intentionally choose to resist the world system. Pressures and temptations will come from this world system, or secular cultural system and way of thinking that is in rebellion to God. This world will try to conform us to its ungodly pattern, but we must resist.**

Purpose in resisting the pressure to conform

- **“that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,” Phil. 2:15**
- **How will the light of Christ be shown to those lost and in darkness if we look just like the world?**
- **Matt 5:15 “Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.” Jesus is saying, Don’t be a basket headed Christian.**

Transformed by renewing our minds

- **What does transforming our minds truly look like?**
- **It means allowing God’s Word to expose any wrong patterns of default thinking and reorient our minds by God’s mercies to godly patterns of thinking.**
- **God’s perspective shift happens when we tether our hearts and minds to the Gospel (Mercies of God Paul has just expounded upon in the first 11 chapters of Romans)**

2 Common ditches for our minds to get stuck in (Both are self-focused instead of Christ focused)

- **1). Basing decisions on feelings... Example questions in our minds, How do I feel about my job? How do I feel about my wife/husband?**
- **2) Following a system of works apart from the Gospel. What do I do next to get this or be that? This pattern of thinking ignores theology or knowing God rightly and desires a 7-step approach to good life now.... These are both opposed to God’s design of mind renewal.**

Conformed vs Transformed (Self-focused vs Christ-focused) cont.

- **God gave us feelings and displays them perfectly through Christ. But feelings were never meant to be leaders because they make very poor ones. God through His Word should always be the leader of our thinking, actions, and responses. Luke :22:42, Jesus displays a right subjection to the Father**
- **God also gives us a command to be doers. Yet the doing wasn’t meant to be outside of a heart rightly motivated and tethered to the Gospel.**

- The 1st questions need to switch from, How do I feel about... or What do I need to do next to get this or that... What does God's Word say? Or In light of God's mercies what would be the godly response?

A Heart Tethered to The Gospel

- **By continually renewing our minds in God's mercies we can see God's will in our lives to be conformed into Christ progressively through all relationships, circumstances, suffering, all things. This leads to seeing with new eyes all these things we go through in life as an opportunity to glorify God as we embrace His sanctifying work.**
- **Question for heart exam. As you think about all the sphere of your life, Church, work, home.**
- **Do you see any areas where you are prone to or are allowing the world to conform you in thinking or action? What does it look like for you to seize this as an opportunity to display gospel transformation in this setting, relationship, or circumstance?**