

The Home Sunday Worship Supplement

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, 23rd August 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Today, Thea is sharing the magnificent yellow orchard that is flowering on her coffee table. Thanks for sharing, Thea.



Are you feeling a bit swamped with the constant reports on Covid19 impacts and the unbelievable explosion in Beirut? We can become overwhelmed and lose sight of the many wonderful things happening around the world and in our own lives. Sometimes we need to turn off the usual newsfeeds and seek out positive news.

One source is *Positive News*, a UK media organisation dedicated to quality, independent reporting about what's going right. It is published daily online – just type www.positive.news into your browser. For an Australian focus you might prefer the 'Huffington Post Australia Edition' www.huffingtonpost.com.au/news/good-news/

Another way to help cope is to follow Jesus' example and practice compassion. This has been shown to have positive physiological effects on our body and we become happier and live a better life. It also motivates others to be kinder.

May you be encouraged and blessed,
Rev Clyde

Psalm 124

- ¹ If the Lord had not been on our side,
now may Israel say:
if the Lord had not been on our side,
when our enemies rose against us,
- ² Then they would have swallowed us alive:
when their anger was kindled against us.
- ³ Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,
and the torrent gone over us:
the raging waters would have gone clean over us.
- ⁴ But praised be the Lord:
who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.
- ⁵ We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler:
the snare is broken, and we have gone free.
- ⁶ Our help is in the name of the Lord:
who has made heaven and earth.



Romans 12:1-8

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.



Reflection on Romans 12:1-8

From Rev Clyde

Having written of the glorious mercies of God (Chapters 1 to 11 of Romans), Paul now turns his attention to the practical application - the only right and proper response to the mercy that God has extended to each one of us.

He begins with a rather startling exhortation, ‘... *present your bodies as a living sacrifice*...’ At the time of writing his letter, sacrifice of animals upon the altar in the temple was still a common religious practice. Of course, the Jewish and Roman worshippers were never expected to volunteer their own body in the sense of killing, burning and eating for the ritual temple sacrifice. So, what does Paul mean?

In the previous chapters Paul had gone to some lengths to explain that salvation comes through God’s mercy, by the grace of God, through faith. This offering of our bodies is to be a response to God’s mercies towards us as undeserving sinners. It should flow out of gratitude to God who gave us his Son to die for us, who justified us freely by faith, who sent his Holy Spirit, and who made us his children.

We might wonder why Paul has chosen to use the analogy of the Old Testament sacrifice of an animal upon the altar. Why did he not simply say, dedicate or consecrate yourself to the service of God? I suggest that there are two reasons for this:

One reason is because he is speaking out of his Jewish heritage which saw the Old Testament sacrifice as the most meaningful act of worship that God's people can do.

The second reason is because he is wanting to say something more than simply "offer your hands to the service of God".

Whilst you and I may think of a sacrifice as being an offering of the dead body of an animal to God, it is actually the offering of a life to God. This is why it was necessary to spill the blood of the animal, because the blood signifies the life of the animal.

And so, when Paul speaks of offering yourself as a living sacrifice, he is saying to offer your life to God. This means everything that makes you 'you' – what you think, what you do, your ambitions, dreams, achievements, sports, etc.

The implication is that we are to consecrate ourselves to God's service, living not for ourselves but for him. It means consecrating our entire selves, every aspect of what makes me 'me'. In church we readily sing about offering our hearts to God – but it is more than this. We must present our entire bodies to God.

Paul goes on to tell us in the rest of Romans that worship must express itself in concrete acts of service. Our faith should express itself in practical acts of obedience to God in how we live our lives.

In my message today, I wrote about the benefits of practicing compassion; for example, having eyes that look with pity and patience, ears that will listen with compassion, hands that will

gladly wash the dirty dishes at the soup kitchen, tongues that speak encouragement, etc.

Further, Paul says the offering of our life must be done as a 'spiritual act of worship'. This means that it is not just a one-off ritual act but a daily offering of our heart mind and will in obedient service to God. We must consecrate our entire lives to God - and this should become a distinguishing feature of the Christian life.

Our entire self also includes our mind. Paul writes, '*be transformed by the renewing of your minds ...*' This is essentially a call to nonconformity and to holiness. It means not allowing ourselves to be conformed to the 'self-centred' thinking of the world that Galatians 5:19-24 tells us arises out of the sinful nature.

It is a fundamental transformation of character and conduct into the image of Christ himself. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 we are told that, 'we ... are being transformed into Christ's likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from ... the Holy Spirit.

The transformation is an ongoing process that requires a continuing attitude of allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us to gradually change our way of thinking. The outcome is that every Christian should be a mirror of grace – the very image of God mediating Christ, to each other - and then to the world.

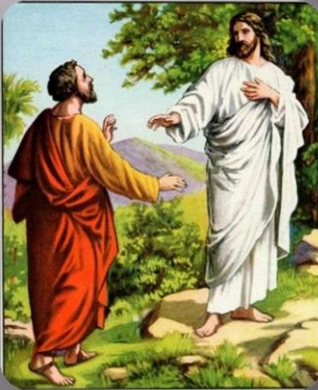
Amen.

Someone once said, "*The only problem with living sacrifices is that they keep crawling off the altar.*" 😊

Collect

O God, fount of all wisdom,
in the humble witness of the apostle Peter
you have shown the foundation of our faith:
give us the light of your Spirit, that,
recognising in Jesus of Nazareth the Son of the living God,
we may be living stones for the building up of your holy
Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 16:15-16



Jesus said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

The next Home Supplement

Will be Sunday 30th August – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Keep an eye on your email on Thursday.

NOTICES

Rector's Leave.

Rev Clyde will be on leave from 28th Aug to 23rd Sep. During this time our very capable LLMs will be writing the Sunday reflections and leading the Wednesday Morning Prayer Service and Bible Study.

Church Online

Perhaps you are missing live church on a Sunday morning and would like to tap into a church service being streamed via the internet? If so, click on the link below to see which Anglican Churches are live streaming or recording services.

<https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/ministry/ministry-resources/online-church/>

Christmas Bowl

Donations are being accepted for Christmas Bowl this year. The best way to send donations would be direct deposit, with reference as “Christmas Bowl” so we know to mark it suitably. If you need the bank details again, please contact us.



**Christmas
Bowl**