

The Challenge of the Lord's Death

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the urgent call for believers to present themselves as living sacrifices to God, leading to transformation and effective church function.

Duration: 20:51

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Consecration", "Transformation"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices to God, drawing from Romans 12:1-2. He highlights the urgent need for personal consecration and the transformative power of renewing our minds to align with God's will. Brandon urges the congregation to actively participate in their local church and support new believers, stressing that a church cannot function properly unless all members are dedicated to God. He illustrates the contrast between being conformed to the world and being transformed into the likeness of Christ, encouraging believers to live out their faith passionately. Ultimately, he calls for a collective commitment to lay ourselves on the altar for God's service, promising that such dedication will lead to profound spiritual growth and transformation.

Transcript

Let's look at these two verses, Romans 12 verses 1 and 2. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies or the compassions of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. As we all know, the key word in Romans is righteousness, and that's mentioned 31 times.

Its twin brother is justification, and that's mentioned 16 times. In Romans chapter 1 to 3, it's righteousness needed. At the end of Romans 3, it's righteousness required.

And when we come to the fourth chapter, it's righteousness received on the principle of faith. When we come to 5, 6, 7 and 8, it's righteousness enjoyed. And what enjoyment.

And when we come to the end of Romans 8, it's righteousness secured. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Romans 9 and 11 are chapters righteousness rejected.

But in Romans chapter 10, it's righteousness communicated through the gospel. But when we come to 12, 13, 14 and 15, it's righteousness manifested in the faith of the Lord. Now we're going to see the beginning of this.

First of all, he makes an urgent appeal, and this is hardly repeated in the writings of the Apostle. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice. Then he shows to us, by using one or two words, the very nature of consecration.

Then he shows to us the remarkable effects of consecration. Be not conformed to this world. And then he uses this brilliant word, transformed, by the renewing of your mind.

And then he shows us the act of consecration. It's not an emotional act, but it's a reasonable, it's a religious, it's an intelligent act. Consecration.

Now we have seen a few people professing faith in the Lord Jesus almost every night. And there are a number that are quite near the kingdom, and we hope to see them in tonight. But as you all know, we need a spiritual local church to look after them.

So that when these new converts come to a prayer meeting, you're there. When they come to the Bible reading, we're all there. You see, we're going to function now in such a way as to be an encouragement to them.

One lad has already brought two of his friends, and I believe one has been saved because he saw the change in him. And the other one who was there last night seems to be seeking. So can you see God is moving, and we give him all the praise.

But we do need to get back to consecration, beloved. Now the way to see this word, beseech, is to go first of all to see how the apostle preached. If you went to hear the apostle preaching, you wouldn't hear a casual lecture.

You wouldn't even hear a sermon. You would see a man seized with the compassions of God. And you would hear that man pleading with people, beseeching them to be reconciled to God.

Now if you can visualize that, then you can see now the way he uses this word. He's going to speak on how a local church should function. And he's going to show us in a lovely way that we're going to function as a body, and all the members are absolutely necessary.

And therefore he's going to make this urgent appeal that all the members should be laid upon the altar. Beloved it's not you members that we need, and you know I'm saying this in love, it's those in fellowship we need now to be laid on the altar, and to become a living sacrifice for the Lord. And therefore he makes this urgent appeal.

Now why? An assembly cannot function until all the members are laid on the altar. Can I repeat that? A New Testament church will not function correctly until all the members are laid on the altar. You see if there's carnality in the local church, the spirit is grieved, and when he's grieved, things don't work correctly.

And therefore we need to be released so that we may lay ourselves on the altar. Now how can this become practical? It's lovely to see young marrieds here. When I was here three years ago, you weren't married, but now you are, and it's lovely.

But don't settle down. God can mightily use you. Lay yourselves on the altar as young married people, and God will bless your family, and bless you.

There's so much more in Christ. Now there are one or two young men and young women who may not yet be on the altar. Get on the altar today.

You'll never know Christianity in all its joy until you're on the altar with the Lord. Now there are some in fellowship, and you've reached middle life. That's dangerous.

And when you reach middle life, you can settle down. Don't do that. Lose life.

Lose the good life. Have the Christ life, and he'll bless you. Lay yourself on the altar in your middle life.

Now the danger point. When you have worked a long period, and sometimes you come home and you feel tired, when you're nearing 65, there's retirement in view. Don't waste it.

The autumn of your life can be a spiritual springtime. Don't run away from the assembly. Give yourself to the Lord, and there can be tremendous blessing.

Now take that from the Lord, because we have seen in the old country, so many elders leaving the assembly, especially the London assemblies, and many of them died, because the leaders had gone. Now what about the nature of this consecration? Now many people have said to me in my own country, we tried it, but it didn't work. And they were honest.

You see, when it comes to theology, we must bring it right down to earth. There's a lovely book in the Bible called, not the principles of the apostles, but the acts of the apostles. And we must make our theology practical.

Now how is consecration going to be practical? First of all, if it's going to be practical, we must get to a point of confession. You see, consecration doesn't begin when we climb to the top of the moral ladder, and we say, Lord, I've made it. Consecration begins when we fall from the ladder, and we cry out, oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me.

Have you ever been there? Have you ever been in the presence of God with tears and said, Lord, I've done it again. I have, on many occasions, wept because of failure. Now when we are utterly broken, and we examine our flesh life, and we say with the apostle, in me, that in my flesh there dwells no good thing.

That's the beginning. Because when we are there, we go back to the cross. And we are saying two things, not that the Lord Jesus is there, but we shall see that all that we were in the flesh has been crucified and put to death by the Lord Jesus.

When he died upon the cross, he not only dealt with our sins, but he dealt with the root of our sin, which is the flesh, and he condemned it. And therefore, no Christian will go to hell because of his flesh sin, it's being condemned at the cross. But then the Lord will put a knife in your hand, and he will say this, he that is in Christ, Galatians chapter 5, has crucified the flesh with the lust and affections thereof.

A young man came to me, and I smiled when he said this. He said, Peter, if I could take my flesh life out, I would prick it like a sausage. Now that was tremendous.

He had learned to discover that in his flesh there was no good thing. He positively hated, but if he could take it out, he would prick it and crucify it. But he says, I can't do that.

What does it mean? Well my dear friends, what crucifying the flesh means is simply this. I learn to say every day, no to the overtures of the flesh. No, and sometimes you have to say it 20 times a day.

And then you say yes, to all the loving overtures of the spirit. And as you say no to the dictates of the flesh, and yes to the overtures of the spirit, you are crucifying the flesh day by day. And then, what happens to my body? I take my body, and I take it realistically.

I get away to a room that's empty, and I'm going to lay it on the altar, and I don't misremember. I take my mind first of all, and I yield it up to the Lord, and I say, Lord, think through this mind. It's yours.

Then I take my eyes, and these are vital today, and I yield them up to the Lord, and I say, Lord, see through these eyes. Then I take these ears, and they're vital too, and I yield them up to the Lord, and I say, Lord, listen through my ears, so you can't listen to gossip then. And then, I take my lips, and I say, Lord, upon my lips, create the fruit of praise, so I can't gossip then.

Have you got it? Your lips are the Lord. And then I take my hands, and I yield them up to the Lord, and I say, Lord, through my hands, meaning service, serve through me. And I take my feet, and I yield them up to the Lord, and say, Lord, I want to walk in the light continuously.

And then I take the heart, the heart, and I give it to the Lord. I'm not talking about the thing that pumps the blood. I'm talking about the very center of your being, and I say, Lord, fill that heart with your love.

And I yield it myself to the Lord. Now people have challenged me, and rightly so, we should challenge preachers. And they said, that's an exaggeration.

Surely he doesn't expect us to live like that. Now listen to these facts. At home, every Friday night, I take two elders with me, and I do a pub crawl.

I'm a completely teety. I don't touch alcohol. But I go into the pub and preach.

Don't go in alone. And when I've come out, on many occasions, I've heard the respective elders say this. If we had 20 Christians devoted to drink like these people are, we'd shake the place.

You see their living sacrifices for drink. Then sometimes I go into a football stadium. I'm hoping to get into Spurs.

And there'd be 35,000 people there. And they give me just five minutes half time. And I take two men with me.

And I've seen people actually saying this, especially at Liverpool. If we had 20 Christians devoted to Christ, like these people are devoted to Liverpool, my, we would shake the place. That's right.

Then I'm thinking of my next door neighbour in the old house. Every night, he's out bowling. Every night.

He travels all over the world, bowling. Spends thousands of pounds on it. But you see, he's caught up with it.

Beloved, would the Liverpool City footballers die for the spectators? That old publican that takes all the money from the drunkards, did he die for them? Can you see the point? We've taken the bread. We've taken the wine. We've seen the agony.

Isn't it spiritually natural for us now to lay ourselves on the altar? So that we're out and out for the Lord. Then I want you to note the effects. And with this I close.

Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed. The idea of the word world needs an explanation. It speaks of an aggregate of people who are alienated from the Lord.

Secondly, it speaks of an aggregate of people who are unknowingly controlled by Satan. Thirdly, it speaks of a group of people who are totally entertained by Satan. Therefore, he says, don't be conformed.

Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould. We're finished with it. And hallelujah for that.

Beloved, when I look at the world, I constantly praise God. I'm not a part of it. I'm separated from it.

I belong to the Lord Jesus and to the Church of God. Then he uses a word being transformed. Now what does this mean? It comes from our word metamorphosis.

And it's the idea really of the caterpillar and the butterfly. Now if you're a gardener, you do not like caterpillars. When I go home, I shall have some spring greens, three rows of them.

Now when I go back, I may see that the caterpillars have done their work. And all I may see is a stalk, if my neighbour hasn't sprayed them. No gardener likes caterpillars.

But you can't help loving a butterfly. It comes from the same stalk as we all know. But look at the beauty of it.

It moves from the cabbages and the spring greens. It moves from the earth and it moves in flight in a new realm. Beloved, don't be a caterpillar Christian.

Crawling over the things of the world. Be transformed. And this is how Paul puts it.

If ye are then arisen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.

And therefore we have this transformation. Now, can you see the wonder of this? Imagine these young converts all getting baptised. It would be a wonderful day.

Then they come into fellowship and some of them are being persecuted by their families. And they sit here and they watch you and they see that you are transformed. The beauty of the Lord is seen in you.

What a testimony that will be. And that's how converts grow. In an atmosphere where the beauty of the Lord is seen.

But consecration is not an emotional act. It's an intelligent act. Wouldn't this be a wonderful Sunday? I don't know how to put this over to you.

If we all went home, every one of us, and we all got alone, and we all yielded ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice. What a Sunday! I know how you're feeling. I know the problems.

I know what's going through your mind. I had the same difficulty. But what a Sunday it would be if we all afresh, young and old, laid ourselves on the altar for God.

We would see tonight a mighty transformation in that meeting. The Lord grant it. For his name's sake.

Amen.

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