

Ready For the Journey and the Battle

by Ron Bailey

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared and ready for the journey and battle in life. It delves into the significance of God's presence and blessings, highlighting the transformation of the mind and the priestly service believers are called to offer. The message draws parallels between Old Testament blessings and New Testament teachings, urging listeners to present themselves as living sacrifices to God.

Scripture: Numbers 6:22, Romans 12:1, John 16:2, Hebrews 9:1, Romans 9:4

Topics: "Preparation for Life's Journey", "Living Sacrifices to God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being prepared and ready for the journey and battle in life. It delves into the significance of God's presence and blessings, highlighting the transformation of the mind and the priestly service believers are called to offer. The message draws parallels between Old Testament blessings and New Testament teachings, urging listeners to present themselves as living sacrifices to God.

Transcript

I felt I would try to gather them together and pass them on to you and I've given it a title. I tried to do that for people who asked me later on for titles. I'm going to call this one Ready for the Journey and the Battle.

Ready. I was a Boy Scout in my youth and the motto of the Boy Scouts, of course, is be prepared. And this is all about being prepared in a particular way.

And I was thinking about this amazing statement that we read twice from the pen of John the Apostle when he wrote in his gospel and he said, no one has seen God at any time. The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father. He has declared him.

And then he starts off in the same way in his first epistle. He says, no one has seen God. This is chapter four, verse 12.

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love has been perfected in us. If you put those two verses together, I'll put them together and read them together now, you'll see a connection I think.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the father. He has declared him.

And then the one from John, one John chapter four, verse 12. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love has been perfected in us.

So you have two amazing statements from John. He begins in the gospel by saying no one has seen God at any time. Full stop.

The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father. He has declared him. But then 30 years later, I guess something like that.

Longer. He says no one has seen God at any time. That is still absolutely true.

But I've put the but and it isn't there. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love has been perfected in us. You remember the great prayer of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 17.

The love with which the father had loved him would be in us and he in us. That prayer takes your breath away, doesn't it? That Jesus prayed that in us, you and me, there would be a revelation of the character of God. The people who had never seen God at any time would see him in you as they saw him in Christ.

Not in the same measure, obviously, but they might see aspects of God's character in you. The gospel according to you may well be the only Bible your neighbor will ever read. But if you live the life that God has given us to live, if I live the life that God has given us to give, then there will be a revelation in us, through us, of Christ in me, in you, the hope of glory.

Well, that's where we all start off. That's where I started off. I want to join together two passages of Scripture, one from the Old Covenant Scriptures and one from the New Covenant Scriptures, which to me kind of connect in a very sweet way.

And I'm going to go back to the book of Numbers. It's not an easy book to read. It's not a cheerful book to read, particularly if you get towards the end.

There was a famous Chinese evangelist back in the 50s and 60s named John Song. And he had a large family and he decided he would call his children, sons they were, all by a name from the book, from the Bible. So the first one was called Genesis and then Exodus and then Leviticus.

But he skipped numbers because he wouldn't call any of his children after numbers, because he thought it was just a disaster. Well, it is a disaster. And yet at the same time, there are jewels in the book of Numbers.

And I want us to go to one of those jewels. This is Numbers. Please have a look at this in your Bible so you can follow it and then you'll find it when you want to.

I'm one of those people who whenever the preacher says, you needn't look this up, I always look it up. Not because I doubt his integrity, but simply because if I look it up, it'll add to the process of fixing it where it is on the page. And I should be able to find it more easily the next time.

So we'll go to Numbers chapter six, verse 22. And Numbers is a thrilling book in its early chapters. It's called Numbers, of course, because there are lots of numbers in it at the beginning and at the end.

In the middle, there are all kinds of disasters that befall the people of Israel because they have not gone the way that God had prepared for them. So often they turn to their own devices and their own

imaginations. But in chapter six, it's referring to people who, and it's a bit of a mysterious thing, there's no real explanation in it from the scriptures, of people who became Nazarenes, not Nazarite.

A Nazarite is someone who comes from Nazareth, but a Nazarite, sorry, the other way around. A Nazarite is someone who has made a vow to God, and they can be male or female, to give a part of their life, to give maybe days, weeks, months of their life to God in a unique way. They were consciously setting themselves apart.

They were choosing to be full time, if you like, wholly available to God for a period of time. This is what it says in Numbers. And then after that little passage about the Nazarites, it goes on to say this.

Numbers six, verse 22, you will know this passage well, I think. And I'm going to use the word Jehovah, and I've explained before why I do that, but I'll do it again, because to me, it is such a blessing. The translators have almost always not translated the Hebrew word for the proper name of God.

What they've done is they have given it, either they use the word Lord in uppercase letters, or they use the word, the name, and the Jews to this day do that. They never pronounce the name that was given to them uniquely. And I'm going to use the word Jehovah.

The specialists among you will say, but shouldn't you pronounce it your way? Well, no one knows how this word was pronounced. No one, not even the people who wrote the book who told you that the right way of pronouncing it is Yahweh. They don't know either.

They stopped using the Jewish people, the proper name for God, about 200 years before Christ, so far as we know. So it's an amazing thing that God gave them this unique name, and yet because they were afraid that they might use it irreverently, that they might not give the true dignity to it, that they might use it in vain, that they would incur the curses that were associated with this name if they did use it in vain, so they decided they wouldn't use it at all. It's amazing that Jesus in that great prayer that I referred to before, he said, I have revealed to them thy name.

He wasn't afraid to display the character of God as God had given it to him to reveal. So it begins with the name Jehovah, and I think this is a tragedy that we don't have this in our Bibles, and so for my studies in the Old Testament, I always use the good old American Standard Version of 1900, not anything that came after, but just for the American Standard Version of 1900. Actually, the revised version, the English revised version, not yet.

Let me explain. In the 1880s, two committees got together to provide a revision of the old King James Bible. There was one in England, and there was one in the United States, one in the UK, one in the United States, and the one in the United Kingdom was the kind of senior committee that was working on this, and they translated the Bible into English, and they did very, very well.

It's an excellent translation for the Old Testament. There are problems with the New Testament because they turn to other ancient documents which, in my view, do not have the same authenticity or credibility as the text behind the King James Version and behind the Old Testament of the English Standard, the English version, which was done in 1881, and then the American committee were even more pedantic than the English committee. God bless them.

I like pedantry, and particularly when it comes to looking at things precisely. I don't want a brain surgeon to tell me that it's going to work approximately, or this is a colloquial way of expressing what... I don't want a

pilot to do that. I want them to use their technical words, and then I can spend some time and find out what they mean, rather than you giving me a word that's been diluted down so much that it's lost all taste to it.

That's a ramble. I used to do a series on the summer conferences at Rora that they call Ron's Rambles, but that's best. Okay, let me read number six, and I'm going to emphasize the name Jehovah, because although this word is no longer used in modern translations, generally speaking, in the King James Version of 1611, it's used, I think, four times.

In the American Standard Version, it's used almost 7,000 times. That's how often the name of God was upon the lips of his people, and that's how often God addressed himself to his people, by introducing himself by the name that he had given to them. This is a precious name.

This is as precious as the name of Jesus to the old covenant people, and they no longer use it. This is what it says, Numbers chapter 6, verse 22. And Jehovah spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel.

You shall say to them, Jehovah, bless thee, and keep thee. Jehovah, make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. Jehovah, lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

And then God adds this, So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them. Now I've emphasized the word I, because it's emphasized in the Hebrew. Both the Hebrew and the Greek languages have a way of using a verb.

If I say, I did two years at Spanish, and I've remembered one single phrase in Spanish, so any Spanish speakers here, you'll be impressed with this. Tengo un lapiz, which means, for you more ignorant ones, I have a pencil. But I can emphasize that and put the personal pronoun for I at the beginning of it.

And instead of saying, I have a pencil, I can say, I have a pencil. It's what they call the emphatic pronoun. And Hebrew has emphatic pronouns, and so does Latin, and so does Spanish, and I think Portuguese, I don't know about Italian.

And it's the same for the New Testament. New Testament Greek has emphatic pronouns. So it almost tells you how to read the Bible.

So that's why I read that 27th verse like this, So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them. So this begins by God speaking, saying, giving Moses a message. And he says, speak to Aaron and to his sons.

Now let's kind of do this, let's be a bit pedantic and look at this and say now, who is speaking and to whom is he speaking? Well, it's Jehovah. And Jehovah was the name by which he uniquely revealed himself to the people of Israel. In that, he expounded, he opened out the significance of the name Jehovah by his acts of mercy and grace and power, and by his greatest of all his gifts, according to Paul, he trusted to them the oracles of God.

He gave them the scriptures, God spoke. And it was not just a God, it was the God who had joined himself to them in covenant, who spoke. Their, if you like, their personal God.

They were his, and he was them. And this name Jehovah is such an intimate and powerful name. I'll read it again.

And Jehovah spoke unto Moses saying, speak unto Aaron and unto his sons. So who is he speaking to? Well, he's speaking to the priesthood. He is not just speaking to the tribe of Levi.

He's speaking to a subset of the tribe of Levi that he refers to here as Aaron and his sons. Now I looked at a video, watched a video a little time ago about, well, it was in a Jewish context and it was a Jewish preacher who was preaching and he was saying, he said, well, I'm from the tribe of Levi, he said, so I have the right to pronounce this blessing upon you. And he went ahead and blessed him, although he didn't use the word Jehovah.

So I don't know that this blessing really counts if you change the wording for it. But this was given expressly to Aaron and his sons. It was given to the anointed priesthood.

It was given to these men, Aaron and his sons. Aaron was anointed, a full proper anointing from the head downwards, as it's told us in the Psalms. If you read the institution of this thing carefully, I think you'll find that his sons weren't actually anointed by having it poured over them.

They had it sprinkled upon them. So there was a high priest known in the scriptures frequently as the anointed priest. And then there are the priests.

These are the descendants of Aaron, but it's not sufficient that they had descended to Aaron. If you could follow your pedigree back right the way through and prove categorically that Aaron was in your family tree, you would still not be authorized to pray this blessing because you haven't had the anointing. And without the anointing, the priesthood can't function.

That's part of the reason why there is no priesthood and can never be a priesthood in Judaism. Let me press on. It's given to Aaron saying on this wise or thus or in this way, this is the way you, the Bible is actually very precise and we lose all kinds of things because of modern translations.

I'm not just kind of hopping on about this. It's important. We lose lots.

For example, I wonder who I'm speaking to tonight. And I wonder if you've got this in front of you. This is something like this in this way.

You shall bless the children of Israel. And you don't know. You know who he's speaking to, but you don't know the purpose of this because this is given not just to Aaron.

You have to speak to Aaron and his son saying on this wise, you plural shall bless the children of Israel. They were all empowered, enabled, anointed to pray this blessing. You, not even Moses in this context, you, ye, it is, that's the plural, ye shall say to them.

So this is the priesthood speaking to the children of Israel. It doesn't call them Abraham's followers. It says they're the children of Israel.

And then it has this Trinitarian blessing. I think I've told you this before that someone was once asked if there was any proof, definite proof in the Old Testament of the Trinity. And this wise person who'd been asked the question said, the Old Testament, he said, is like a room lavishly furnished, but poorly lit.

Lit. Lavishly furnished, but poorly lit. And we need, we need the revelation of the light that shines from the new covenant to really understand the old covenant.

That's what Tyndale said in his introduction to his letter to the Romans translation that he did. He said that it was the key, not only to the gospel, but to the whole Bible. He was a fan of Romans.

And I'm a fan of, I'm a fan of him and a fan of Romans too. So he's the Trinitarian blessing. Because here, this is a room that is lavishly furnished, but poorly lit.

And you won't understand the significance of this Trinitarian blessing without the Trinitarian revelation. All right. Verse 25, verse 24, sorry.

Jehovah bless thee and keep thee. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. Notice you switch back to the these.

This is because this is a blessing actually given for the whole of the children of Israel. In other words, in their corporate nature. It's when they were gathered together at their different ceremonies, that this would be pronounced to them.

This is not a personal blessing. I think a pressing can receive it as a personal blessing, but it was to the people of Israel. It was to the church of Jehovah.

I haven't got time to go off on that tangent just yet, but the Bible refers to the old covenant people in its Hebrew as the church of Jehovah. You've got it probably as the congregation of the Lord. See how much we may miss by becoming modern.

Okay, I'll go back. Jehovah bless thee, children of Israel, people bound to God by the covenant. Jehovah bless thee and keep thee.

Jehovah make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. So shall they, that's the Aaron and his sons, put my name upon the children of Israel, that's the people bound to God by covenant, and I will bless them.

Aaron and his sons pronounce the word, they are the channels of the blessing, but it's God who blesses them. If they do it on this wise, if they do it in this manner, if they do it in the way that God has ordained, there is a guarantee here, if it comes from the right source, under the anointing that God has given to his people, then this blessing will be mediated to them through the mediation of the priests, and it will be God who is blessing them. Doesn't it take your breath away? There's no wonder, you know, that Paul called the old covenant glorious.

We sometimes forget that. He said the new covenant is more glorious, but he said that the old covenant was glorious. We need that light of revelation to shine light into that room which is lavishly furnished but poorly lit.

I want to open out this to us if we can. Jehovah bless thee and keep thee. The word keep is the word God, it's the word that was given to Adam way back when God speaking to Adam as the one who would effectively be his vice regent upon the earth.

He told them that he was to tend the garden and to keep it and to guard it. It's the same word. So the prayer here, this blessing, is that Jehovah would bless them and guard them.

Now this is significant because it's easy to forget the context of Numbers. Numbers was given at the point when the people of Israel were about to encounter and to receive their inheritance. They had entered into

covenant with God in Exodus.

Now in Numbers they're ready for the journey and they're ready for the invasion of the promised land that God has already given to them. That's what it was said on one occasion. I won't go into that now and I'll go off on another tangent.

So this is Jehovah. He's blessing them. The first few chapters of Numbers are thrilling because the people are ready.

I don't know that they were scarce but they were ready. They were ready because God had come and joined them. He'd come and inhabited the tabernacle that he'd given to them, given the instructions and they had built it and they had dedicated it and sanctified it and God had come and he'd made his home among them.

That's another revelation, glorious revelation. He was not a God who was a far off or a God who was forever under your feet. He wasn't a way off or beneath them.

He was the God who was in both places at the same time. He was the omnipresent God and he was the omnipresent God who had chosen to come and live among them and that's why their camp had to be kept clean and that's why the people who lived in the camp had to be kept clean so that God could live among them and that's why we are sanctified, so that God can continue to live among us and that's why you are continually cleansed as you walk in the light, so that God can continue to abide with you, within you. Let's press on.

Jehovah bless thee and keep thee. So the people were about to start off on their march, a march that according to Deuteronomy was reckoned to take 11 days and which actually took 40 years because of what happened later on in the book of Numbers. But we won't go there either, you've got a lot of homework to read this week.

So they were ready to go and then when they're ready to go they make this final dedication and the leaders of Israel, the 12 leaders of the 12 tribes make a really substantial gift offering. They offer 12 wagons, without the 12 wagons the Tabernacle is going nowhere, but with this now they'll be able to carry it wherever they move because they're about to start their journey. And at the end of their journey of course they will meet hostile forces, they're going into battle, they're going into great danger, they're taking their life in their hands.

And here comes this blessing, Jehovah bless thee and guard thee. I wonder if those soldiers with their arms or their swords or whatever it was they had when they heard that thought, Amen Lord, guard me. You know the Roman army they had a rule that only people who were right-handed could fight in the army and in fact little Roman boys had their left arm strapped to their body to force them to learn to use their right hand so that they could fight in the battle and the reason for that was because of the shield wall.

You've ever seen or ever read Asterix even, if you've ever seen anything that kind of shows the Roman army going into battle you'll know that they had this shield wall that moved forward and they had a large shield and they had a short stabbing dagger in their hand, it wasn't for fencing like in the time of the Three Musketeers it was for stabbing. And they had this kind of pattern that they held with their left arm the shield and with their right arm and they held the dagger. Are you doing this? I am, look I'm doing this, I've got it, here's my shield in my left arm, here's my dagger in my right.

And the thing is the shield because it's slightly curved is going to guard perfectly half of me and half of the man on my left and my dagger is going to be my weapon of warfare and I'm going to be able to use it to stab but I've got no defense for this half of my body. My shield will defend me and my brother on my left but I've got no defense for my right side except for my brother who stands on my right hand. It's an amazing picture when it speaks of taking the great shield of faith in the scriptures it actually uses the Roman word for the great shield of faith, the curved one that was used in a shield wall.

When we stand in prayer we stand in the shield wall with our brethren to stand against and having done all to stand. Let's press on. Jehovah bless thee and keep thee safe.

Jehovah bless thee and guard thee wherever you go today, whatever your steps take you, whatever battles you're in Jehovah bless thee and keep thee. And then the second reference Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee. You see Graham Kendrick wasn't the first person to talk about God shining upon us and give thee peace.

Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee and give this face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. Now there's an interesting thing about the word face in Hebrew. We're digging deep a bit tonight.

It's the Hebrew word panim and panim means the face but it also means the presence and it also means it functions as a preposition. It also means in front of. So you've got this picture of the preposition which means prepositions give physical relationships so that you know where you are in relationship with somebody else.

So this word face is a word that's used to give an idea of your position. So here you are if Jehovah makes his face to shine upon you it means God is facing you and you are in his presence. Actually this prayer this blessing is all about the conscious presence of God for the people of God and God its purpose is that you should know the conscious presence of God every day in every circumstance.

Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee to be. Let me keep if I let me kind of expand it for you. Jehovah be present with thee.

Jehovah cause his face to be towards thee. Jehovah be in relationship face to face with thee. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee.

And be gracious unto thee. And then the third of the petitions. Jehovah lift up his and I don't know why they've done this because they've done this in every version I know has done this.

They all now switch to the word countenance and it's exactly the same word that was translated face in the verse in front of it. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. Jehovah lift up his face upon thee and give thee peace.

If you want to get a sense of how important this picture language is, there is a wonderful picture in the Bible. It's the story of Jacob's reconciliation with his brother Esau. And you'll see that as it goes, it tells you what he is thinking, what his plan is.

And his plan is as he seeks this reconciliation with his brother, he says that I may seek his face. I'll do this and this and this. I'll make this atoning offering for him and then I'll see his face.

In other words, I'll be face to face with him. There will be nothing between, nothing between. And here in this triune blessing Jehovah lift up his face upon thee.

In other words, God approve thee, God accept thee, God be joined to thee. This is an astonishing prayer. And give thee peace.

I don't think the writers in the New Testament ever forgot this prayer. Look at the first, the second two blessings. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

If you like, give grace to thee. Let's take the third one. Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

Put the two together, grace and peace. That is the way that nearly all the New Testament letter writers address the people that they write to you. Grace be unto you and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father.

And here it is in its beginnings, in its seed form. Here it is in the room which is lavishly furnished but poorly lit. And we see it.

This is a prayer for the triune God to be constantly face to face with his people. Nothing between safe in their fellowship with him. He's a quirky thing for you.

You know that the scripture says that God will hold you by your right hand. You know that, don't you, it comes in Isaiah. And you know, don't you, I apologize to people who are left handed now, but you know, don't you, that in the picture language, God is right handed.

Yes, he is. In fact, the Hebrew for the left handed means to be without a right hand. I'm very sorry for your left handed folks.

But God blesses you often with other things, gives you great artistic abilities and all the rest of it. But in the picture language of the Bible, God is right handed. Now I want you to imagine this.

I want you to imagine a right handed person holding the hand of a right handed person. And they're not walking side by side, like that modern images of two sets of footprints along that they're actually face to face. If someone who's right handed, takes you by your right hand, you're face to face.

And this is what this is. This prayer is all about. Let me read it again.

It is thrilling. Number six, verse 22 to verse 27. And Jehovah spake unto Moses saying, speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, on this wise, ye shall bless the children of Israel.

Ye shall say to them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee. Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

And then this stunning statement. So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them. My spine tingle, and I'm only speaking the words, what must it have been like to be there when it happened? To be there in the presence, the conscious presence of God, with his blessing resting upon them.

This was the people of God. This was their inheritance. This was their birthright.

This was their enabling them. Their enabling to enable them to go out to their day's work, to their day's battle, whatever it was going to mean. And wonderfully, this blessing was something that the priests would use twice daily.

First thing in the morning, and again, just as the evening was beginning. So that the day was broken into two parts, and each part had this blessing prayed on it. Before this, there was that part when the people brought their burnt offering of a lamb, their ascending offering, their continual burnt offering, their picture of giving themselves to God and holding nothing back, burning all their bridges behind them and giving themselves to God absolutely.

And at the end of that service, and at the end of the other service, this prayer of blessing. The context, well, they were being separated to God's service. They were ready for the march and for the battle.

And in the next chapter, you'll find the readiness of the leaders for the journey and for the battles. It's a thrilling thing. Now, is there anything like this in the New Testament? Yes, there is.

And I'm absolutely convinced that Paul had this passage of Scripture in his mind when he said these words. So turn with me now please to Romans chapter 12, and verses one and two. I'll give you a moment.

Romans chapter 12, verses one and two. You're all muted, I know. So I don't hear that sound that all preachers love to hear, which is the rough look pages as people are turning to their Bible.

Romans chapter 12, verses one and two. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, we're in the New King James version now, so you're back to modern or more modern English. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies.

Do you remember how they had to present the sacrifice of the lamb as a burnt offering to be given entirely to God, keeping nothing back? To be an ascending offering, not a sin offering, but to be an ascending offering that was a sweet savor offering. Here it is, that you present your bodies. Not a dead sacrifice, like the old covenant people did, but a living sacrifice.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. Holy, that means set apart for my service. Holy, acceptable to God.

How? By the blood that we shed in the sin offering. Because by his blood he is opened up a way so that we enter grace by faith, this grace in which we stand and have acceptance with God. Which is, says Paul, passing this on to them, your reasonable service.

Let me take the two words reasonable. I think this is really important. I'm getting increasingly involved with education in schools and trying to kind of, well, I won't explain what I'm doing.

I'm not quite sure what I'm doing myself, quite honestly, but I prayed for God to open doors, he opened them and I've gone through them. We shall find out what my job is when I get on the other side of the doors. But there's a lot of talk about worldviews and every child is to have its own worldview and etc, etc.

Well, we'll talk about the worldview in the next verse we're coming to in the moment. But the people who champion the idea of people living without God in their worldview are the humanists and they are very active in education in the UK, very active. And they have some very high profile people who advocate

humanism and one of them, a woman who does a lot of work in archaeology, very clever, very personal woman, very easy to listen to.

And she has written a book for young people, a humanist book for young people so that children of humanists growing up can have their own little book of humanism. And in the book of humanism, she explains why there's no need to have God as part of the way you understand life. And when it comes to what we call the creation, what they call the world, the universe, she makes this point and she says that really science, and I'm kind of paraphrasing it now, science deals with the questions of how.

And because it's dealt with the questions of how things happen so perfectly in theories at least, I always remember the cosmologist who said cosmologists are the people who are never in doubt, sorry, often in error, but never in doubt, because they keep changing their conclusions as to how it all happened. So she reckons, as do the humanists, that we have now sufficient understanding of the processes of particle physics and all the rest of it, oscillating strings, it's really, it's fantastic. And I'm using the word carefully, it is fantastic.

And there's no proof for any of it. It's the most reasonable answer if you eliminate God from the answers. But she goes on to say that really, there's no point in asking the question why? I think that is a denial of our humanity.

If you've had children, you know when they get to about two or three, they get to a stage where they drive you mad with the question why? Why? Why? Why? Because as a species, we are designed to want to know the reason for things, not just the explanation of how to do things. We've become really expert at how to do things, we can put a man on the moon, we know how to do this. I'm not sure we know why we're doing it, but we know how to do it.

But the great thing is that if you're going to be reasonable, you've got to start asking the question why? And your service of God is reasonable. When the young men who gave their lives in Bolivia, I think it was, died, one of them left behind his diary, Jim Elliott, and he had written, he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep and gains what he cannot lose. The press of the day thought this was a terrible waste of the life of these young men.

Young men with wives and families, with their lives before them, and it seemed as though they'd thrown it away, trying to reach the Auckland Indians with the gospel. But Jim Elliott asked the question why? And he got an answer for it. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep and gains what he cannot lose.

We need to have a reason. Peter says you need to have a reason for the hope that's within you, to those who ask you. That's interesting as an aspect of evangelism.

I do believe there's a place for preaching the gospel on the street corner. Absolutely. Paul did it at Mullers Hill, etc.

There's absolutely a place for that. But I think sometimes maybe an equally important aspect of the gospel is when you're ready to give an answer to those who ask you. In other words, you live a life which is so different that people ask you questions.

Oh, you're such a nice person, they might say, or I wish I could be like that. Tell them why you're like that. Tell them why you can forgive.

Tell them why. Reasonable. We have a reasonable faith.

And because we have a reasonable faith, a humanist will say we don't. But I'm hoping to get into these schools and say something different. Given the proposition that there is a God and that he is knowable, then this is your reasonable service.

To present. Not just to say, well, here it is, Lord, it's in my hands. Present it, offer it to him, give it to him.

Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And then this is such a word for our young people. Do pray, brothers and sisters, I've asked you this before, pray for our young people, for our children at school, for those who are on the verge of going away to the university for two years, away from many of the influences that have been such a blessing to them.

Pray for these young people. And then Paul says this, I'll read it all together because it's really all one thing. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, wholly, because you don't belong to yourself anymore, acceptable to God, because of what Jesus did, which is your reasonable service.

Did you notice that Paul began this sentence by saying, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that's what the word therefore is there for. It's there to take you back in your memory to the previous 11 chapters. And we'll want to do it in just a moment or two, not to the whole 11, but the part of it.

Do not be conformed to this world. Don't be fashioned, don't let the world shape you, don't let the world view that is now becoming the norm to such an extent that people are passing laws so that you can't think otherwise than the current world view. World views change, they're constantly changed, but they always have the same root.

There is an agent, there is someone who works to distort any image of God, any notion of God, who only comes to slay and kill and to destroy. And he'll have different strategies in different ages, but it's the same principle of the world's view. Do not be shaped by the world.

This is the picture of someone, this is the picture of a potter. Don't let the influences of the world shape you. What was their children's chorus? Be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little ears what you hear.

I won't go on. Be conformed to this world and be transformed. This is the word that's used to speak of Jesus' transfiguration.

This is the word that's used when it says we are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of God. You're to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Your mind, because of the constant invasion of the influences of the world, your mind, your thinking processes need to be constantly transformed by the renewing of your mind.

I don't know whether the screens still have what they call refresh rates. This was a term I'm not really, I don't understand a lot about computers, but it was a way of measuring how quickly the screen responded to the signals it was getting. And if the signals arrived kind of slowly or started to slowly, you'd get jerky things on the screen and you'd get kind of blurring of things.

But if you had what they call a faster refresh rate, the faster the refresh rate, the better the image. Hallelujah. Brothers and sisters, the faster your refresh rate, the better the image of Christ in you.

Keep allowing God, keep allowing him to refresh your thinking process. Don't stop thinking, don't stop thinking, but always subject it to the revelation of the word of God. And then he says this, do not be conformed, shaped by this will, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may, and then this is part of the purpose, certain things will happen.

If you don't let the will shape you, and if you do let God shape your mind in its constant refreshing, you will approve. The Greek word for prove has more of the sense of proving something. We talk about this proof.

In England, we have a system where if an item is made out of gold, it has to have a stamp put on it. It has to be approved and it'll tell you what quantity of gold that is to other base metals that are in it. So whenever you come across the word prove in the Bible, it often has this sense of prove with the purpose of approving.

So that you may approve, this is interesting, that you may add your amen to what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. In other words, as God's will works out in your life and your experience, as you allow your mind to be constantly refreshed, you will approve what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Yes, you will.

Yes, you will. I'll read it again. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies.

If he gets the envelope, he gets everything that's in it. Present your bodies. Present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Holy. This is what it's all about. You're his.

You're his. This is why he made a covenant with Israel to make a people who were uniquely, exclusively his. This is why he made a covenant with you and the church in the new covenant, that you might be exclusively his.

Holy. Acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. That word service, nearly finished now, that word service is used just a few times in the New Testament.

The Greek word for it is Latria. And it's used nearly always, in fact, I would say it's used always in the New Testament, of what you might call priestly service. In fact, some Bible translations will translate this word priestly service.

Way back, I said I would refer to what Paul had said earlier. Way back, Paul begins to speak of the characteristics of the blessings of the inheritance of the stewardship of the responsibility that God had given to his people. And he goes through a whole list of things and he says to them belong the covenants and all the rest of it.

And he adds and the service. And the service, of course, is they were uniquely set apart to be a kingdom of priests. And this word Latria always means priestly service.

I'll read the five times in the scriptures of the New Testament, it's used quite often in the Old Testament Greek version. This is John 16, verse two. This is a strange place, but listen to this.

He's speaking about those who persecute you. They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he offers God's service.

The word God's service is a single word Latria. They will think that they are offering priestly service to God. And then you've got these positive statements.

This is Hebrews nine, verse one. He's referring to the first covenant and he says then indeed even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service. Divine service is one word, it's Latria.

It's priestly service and the earthly sanctuary. Then in chapter nine and verse six. Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle performing the services, as to say the priestly services.

And then in Romans nine and verse four where he's speaking of the inheritance of the people of Israel, the children of God, he says who are Israelites to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God that it is Latria, the promise. So every time this word is used, it's used in the sense of offering God priestly service. So he's a verse from Romans 12.

It's all about being priests. I present you, I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present that's the priestly action, you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, there you are, you're acting as a priest, giving yourself to God, not as any atonement for sin, but as a burnt offering, a sweet smelling savor to God, which says Lord I'm yours. I'm wholly available, wholly acceptable to God, which is your reasonable priestly service.

And don't be shaped by this worldview, by this mindset, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may approve, that you may add your amen to the perfect will of God that's been working out in your life. For Paul says we know this, that God is working all things together for good to them that love him, to them who are the call according to his purpose. Amen.

Amen. Bob, would you lead us in that song please? Oh good, Ron, thank you. Speak Lord in thy stillness while I wait on thee Hush my heart to listen in expectancy Speak oh blessed master in this quiet hour Let me see thy face, Lord, feel thy touch of power For the words you speak, Lord, they are life indeed Leading bread from heaven, now my spirit feed, Lord, to thee is yielded I am not my own Leth, oh glad surrender, I am thine alone Speak, thy servant heareth, be not silent, Lord Raise my soul upon thee, for the quickening word Fill me with the knowledge of thy glorious will All thy known good pleasure in thy childful fear Like a watered garden full of fragrance rare Lingering in thy presence, let my life appear Like a watered garden full of fragrance rare Lingering in thy presence, let my life appear Ron, would you pray? Was that me you asked you to pray Peter? Yes brother, sorry.

Okay, okay, all right. Amen, Lord. I just want to pray these words again.

Speak Lord in thy stillness while I wait on thee Hushed my heart to listen in expectancy. Speak, oh blessed master, in this quiet hour Let me see thy panin, thy face, Lord, feel thy touch of power For the words you speak, Lord, they are life indeed, living bread from heaven, now my spirit feed All to thee is yielded, I am not my own, blissful, glad surrender, I am thine alone Speak, thy servant heareth, be not silent, Lord, waits my soul upon thee, for the quickening word Fill me with the knowledge of thy glorious will, of thine own good pleasure, in thy child fulfilled Like a watered garden full of fragrance rare

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/CaXwqYXZMMc.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/ready-for-the-journey-and-the-battle/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net