

Bodies and the Body

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God, highlighting our unity in the body of Christ and the role of spiritual gifts in serving Him.

Duration: 1:00:58

Scripture: Romans 8:1, Romans 12:1-9, Romans 12:11

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Body Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon on Romans Chapter 12, the speaker emphasizes the importance of presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God. He encourages believers to not conform to the ways of the world but to be transformed by renewing their minds. The speaker also highlights the concept of being in Christ and living according to the Spirit, rather than living according to the flesh. Additionally, the sermon discusses the significance of using our spiritual gifts and exercising them diligently for the building up of the body of Christ.

Transcript

Romans chapter twelve. Romans chapter twelve. We'll read the first eleven verses.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace which has been given to me, to everyone that is among you, not to have high thoughts about what he should think, but to think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith.

For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office. Thus we being many are one body in Christ, and each one members one of the other. But having different gifts according to the grace which has been given to us, whether it be prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith, or service, let us occupy ourselves in service.

Or he that teaches in teaching, or he that exhorts in exhortation, he that gives in simplicity, he that leads with diligence, he that shows mercy with cheerfulness, let love be unfeigned. Abhorring evil, cleaving to good, as to brotherly love, kindly affection towards one another, as to honor, each taking the lead in paying it to the other, as to diligent zealousness, not slothful, in spirit fervent serving the Lord. Recently we

have been on a portion of the book of Romans.

We have been on chapters five through eight for a number of weeks. And indeed that portion is a very essential part in the word of God, because it tells us how we can live a normal Christian life. It shows us how to overcome the power of sin, as we have been delivered from the penalty of sin.

In Romans chapter five, it shows us that we were once in Adam, but in Romans chapter six, we are told we are now in Christ. In Romans chapter seven, we are told that once we live according to the flesh. And then in Romans chapter eight, we are told now that we live according to the spirit.

Our position formerly was in Adam, but now our position is in Christ. Our condition was formerly in the flesh, but our condition today is in the spirit. When we were in Adam, the old man, the law of sin and death operated.

But now we are in Christ, the new man. And a new law is operating in us. It is the law of the spirit of life.

This is the glorious gospel, that we preach and we believe. Now this morning, I would like to go to Romans chapter twelve. We know that Romans from first chapter to chapter eight is doctrinal.

And by doctrinal, it doesn't mean that it gives us dead doctrine. It means that it tells us what Christ has done for us. That is the gospel.

That is the doctrine. And Romans chapter nine through eleven is dispensational. And by that it means that it shows us the way that God arranges for his gospel to reach the whole of mankind.

And then of course, chapter twelve to chapter sixteen is practical. Which means, the doctrine that we have received is now being put into practice in our daily life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now brothers and sisters, we must remember that doctrine is not something for our mind to speculate.

Doctrine is something for our body to practice. And that is the reason why we find, after doctrine is given, the practice follows. Paul in Romans chapter twelve said, I beseech you therefore brethren, by the compassions of God.

Or by the mercies of God. What are the mercies of God? The compassions of God? That which we find in Romans chapter one through chapter eight. We were once dead in sins and transgressions.

We all have sinned, but Christ died for us. His blood washes us from all our sins. We were once sinners.

We could not help but sinning. But Christ died for us. He took us with him to the cross and have us crucified.

Knowing our old man was crucified with him. He not only save us from the penalty of sin, that we die not. But he also deliver us from the power of sin.

There is therefore no condemnation, no disability in Christ Jesus. He has given us his life, resurrection life. He has given us his spirit.

And the law of the spirit of life is today operating in us who are in Christ Jesus. We are more than conquerors. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Now having received such mercies of God, what should we do? Is there anything that we must do? After we have received such mercies of God? Surely there is one thing that we must do. And we cannot help but do it. When we are constrained by the love of Christ.

And that one thing is to present our bodies a living sacrifice. In the Old Testament time you will find when a person was constrained by the love of God, he took out of his flock a sheep. Or out of his herd a bullock.

And he offered that animal on the altar by killing it, shedding his blood and then by consuming it with fire as a sweet savour unto God. But in the new covenant, today, God does not require of us when we are constrained by his love to take something out of our possessions, whether it is a lamb or an ox. But instead you find that today when we are constrained by the love of God, God wants us to do one thing.

And that is to present not a sheep, not a bullock, not anything outside of us, but to present our bodies a living sacrifice. In other words, he wants us to offer ourselves as the sacrifice. Not what belong to us, but all of us.

That is holy. That is something that is set apart from God. That is acceptable to God.

It pleases God. And that is our reasonable service. Or our spiritual worship.

When we present our bodies a living sacrifice. Now why the bodies? Because when you come to this area of practice, of practical living, you find that it is the body that really practices the living. Therefore, in presenting our body, it means that we are to put into practice that which God has already done in us.

This is a body that is redeemed. And this redeemed body is to practice the will of God. In Romans chapter 6 verse 6, we are told that knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him.

Formerly, sin that dwells in us was the master. And the old man was the steward. And the body was the servant.

Sin gave order. The old man carried the order. And the body committed sin.

So this body was called the body of sin and of death. Because in this body we did what we should not do, and we did not do what we should do. This body was called the body of sin and of death.

But now our old man was crucified with Christ. God took our old man out. And because of that, this body of sin became unemployed.

Once this body was employed by sin. But now this body was unemployed. Then a new master came in.

Even the righteousness of Christ. And a new man come in. And this new master give orders to the new man.

And the new man conveys the order to the body. And the body is under new management. And begins to be instrument of righteousness and to holiness.

So brothers and sisters, let us see this thing. That this body of ours is no longer under obligation to sin. Instead this body is now under new management.

And we must offer this body to God as instrument of righteousness. That is to do the will of God. In the Old Testament time, all the sacrifices were dead sacrifices.

Why? Because they killed the sacrifice. But here you'll find it is living sacrifice. And by that it means, it is a sacrifice.

And yet this sacrifice is a living sacrifice. A sacrifice is something that is given up. Something that is given up to God.

A sacrifice is something that is for God to enjoy. To be used by God exclusively. That is a sacrifice.

So in the Old Testament you'll find all the sacrifices had to be consumed. Burned into ashes. To be wholly consumed for the pleasure of God.

In like manner, we who present our bodies a living sacrifice. We give up ourselves to God. We give up our rights.

Why do we give up our rights? Because we have no right. He has bought us, purchased us with a precious blood. We do not belong to ourselves.

We belong to Him. And for this reason, we give up our rights. We give up ourselves to Him.

Let Him have us. We will live for Him. We will allow Him to live in and through us.

We will let Him do anything He wants with us. We have no more control over ourselves. Our control is in Him.

We acknowledge Him as our Lord, as our Master. And this body is to do His will, not our will. To live for Him, not for ourselves.

Now this is presenting our bodies a living sacrifice. I wonder, brothers and sisters, having received such mercies of God, have we presented our bodies a living sacrifice? Are we still holding on to our own bodies? Do we still live for ourselves? Do we still do our own will? Or have we surrendered ourselves to Him and let Him rule and direct and use this body of ours? Unless we present our bodies a living sacrifice, all the mercies of God that we have received will be imprisoned within us. God give us His grace, His mercies.

We enjoy them. But all of these will be just imprisoned within us. There is no chance for Christ to be expressed through us.

There is no way of serving Him. And there is no way of worshipping Him. To live for Him, to serve Him, to worship Him, we must present our bodies a living sacrifice.

So that Christ may be released from us into worship and into service and into living. Now do we want this? If we really want Christ to be lived, not I but Christ, if we really want Christ to be served, if we really want Him to be worshipped, one thing is must. We must present our bodies a living sacrifice.

It is something we have to do. It is something we have to do spontaneously, willingly, voluntarily, even though He has every right to demand of it. And yet He leaves us with us to decide whether we will present our bodies or not.

Now have we done it? Present your bodies a living sacrifice. That is the basis for Christian living. For Christ to live in and through us.

But after you present your bodies a living sacrifice, you know what happens. You make a great discovery. And the discovery is, you present your bodies a living sacrifice and you discover that there is one body of which you are members.

In verse one say present your bodies a living sacrifice. That bodies is in plural number. Why? Because each one of us has a body.

You have a body, I have a body and you have to present your body and I have to present my body. Everyone has a body, a redeemed body and we need to present our bodies to the Lord. No one can do it for you.

You have to do it yourself. Husband has to present your body to Christ and wife has to present her body to Christ. All these bodies have to be presented to Christ as instrument of righteousness.

But in verse five, the body there is singular number. Thus we being many are one body in Christ and each one members one of the other. After you present your bodies, then you discover that you belong to the one body of Christ.

Many people have never discovered this one body of Christ. Why is it you never discover this one body of Christ? Because you have never presented your bodies a living sacrifice. In other words, if you live for yourselves, in spite of the fact that you are saved, in spite of the fact that you have received much mercy from God and yet you still are so selfish as to live for yourselves and let this body be your own instrument, you will never discover the body of Christ.

Because you live for yourselves. But even if you present your bodies a living sacrifice, still you may not discover the body of Christ. Why? Because we are so individualistic in our concept.

Present your bodies a living sacrifice. Do you know this? Present your bodies for a number. A living sacrifice, singular.

We were saying present your bodies living sacrifices. Unfortunately, some version does put it that way. Because that's logical.

If there are three bodies presented, then there are three living sacrifices. If there are ten thousand lambs offered on the altar, there are ten thousand dead sacrifices. But strangely you find it is said, present your bodies, no matter how many bodies there are, a living sacrifice.

The sacrifice is only one. Why? Because as you present your bodies, you become one body. And that one body is one sacrifice.

As Christ the head is one, so the body, the church, is one. As Christ the head offered himself by the eternal spirit spotless to God, so the body by the power of the same spirit present to God as a living sacrifice. Brothers and sisters, the way that we live our Christian life, the way that we serve, the way that we worship, is not on the basis of individualism.

It is corporate. It is true that we are individuals. And when we present our bodies, we present as individuals.

Each one has to present his or her body. It is never the will of God to take away our individuality. You are you, and I am I. And that will continue on to eternity.

Do not think that eternity you become somebody else. Even in eternity you are still you, so be happy with yourself. Don't try to copy anybody else, because you won't be anybody else.

Peter will forever be Peter, and James will forever be James, and John will forever be John. Even in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, you find the twelve foundations of twelve different precious stones. Each with its luster and glory.

And with the name of the twelve apostles. Our individuality remains forever. God creates you as an individual.

You do not lose your identity. You do not get lost in the crowd. No, that is not God's will.

But individualism must be broken. God's purpose is corporate. He wants a body.

A body in which Christ can live, and Christ can express himself, and Christ can do his work, and Christ can be glorified. That is only possible with a body, not with an individual. We are members one of the other.

Members, you still can identify the members. You can identify my hand. You can identify my foot.

I am not a lump of meat. I am a body. You still can identify every member.

And yet, no member is independent. All on its own. You find that all the members are members of the one body.

And it is in the one body that we are a living sacrifice. In the Old Testament time, God did not allow the children of Israel to offer sacrifices anywhere they wanted to. Suppose I live in the tribe of Dan, way up north.

And I was constrained by the love of God to offer a bull to God. Now, could I just kill a bull in the city of Dan, where I live, and sacrifice to God? No. Because it would be an abomination in the sight of God.

Even though I wanted to offer to God, I could not do it. God did not want it that way. If I was constrained by the love of God to sacrifice to God, I had to take that bull all the way to Jerusalem.

And to offer that bull in the temple, where God put His name there. And then, that sacrifice would be accepted. Applying it spiritually.

Where will the sacrifice be offered? In the temple. Nothing else. Where? But the temple.

What is the temple today? The temple today, the house of God today, is the church. The body of Christ. That is the temple.

In other words, how do we live and serve and worship? We live and serve and worship in the house of God. This is where we are a living sacrifice. You cannot sacrifice outside of the house of God.

How we need to see this? That we may not be just individualistic. That we do not even serve God independently. That we do not worship God alone.

But we must see that when we present our bodies a living sacrifice, it means that we are now members of the one body. And we are to live together, to serve together, and to worship together. And this is the way that God has ordained it to be.

How do we live together? In the body. How do we express Christ together? And that is what you will find in the following verses. Paul says, Now what does it mean? After we have received the mercies of God, and we have received much, then we decide we must give ourselves to Him, to live for Him, to serve Him, and to worship Him, and to express Him.

Good. But how? We can have such high thought that we think we can make it alone. That is high thought.

I present my body a living sacrifice. I am going to live for Christ. I am going to express Christ.

I am going to serve Him and to worship Him alone. I don't need other brothers and sisters. Paul says, No.

Don't think so highly of yourself. You cannot do it. But think wisely.

Wisely means soberly and sensibly. Be sensible. Do not be so proud and arrogant, as if you can do it all by yourself.

You cannot. If you want to live a normal Christian life, you have to live it in the body. Think wisely, soberly, soundly, sensibly, according to the measure of faith that is given to you.

In other words, God has given you so great faith that you are the body. You are but a member. Better know ourselves, brothers and sisters.

And immediately He began to show us that we, being many, are one body. The one body of Christ. And we are members, one of another.

How do we live as a living sacrifice? As members, one of another, in the body? How do we serve? How do we worship? How do we live? You find in Romans 12, there are two things. One is gift, and the other is grace. The body cannot be built without gift or without grace.

For the building of the body, for the expression of Christ corporately, we need gifts and we need grace. So in Romans 12, from verse 6 to verse 8, we have gifts. And then from verse 9 through verse 21, we have grace.

And the gifts are according to grace. Now, what is gift? The gift here is not our natural talent. You know, everyone is born with a natural ability.

Some have larger capacity, some have smaller capacity, but everyone is born with some natural endowment. The gift here is not something that we acquired through education or experience. No.

The gift here is something that is given by God according to grace. The gift is not something you earn, something you deserve to have. The gift is given according to grace.

In other words, according to the grace of God, He gives each gift. Gift is something added, extra, something supernatural, spiritual. Gift is given according to grace and according to the place that God puts you in the body of Christ.

If God puts you in the body of Christ as a mouth, then He will give you the gift of speaking. If God makes you, puts you in the body as a hand, then He gives you the gift of giving. Gift is given according to the part of the body you are.

And gifts are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. You know, gifts are not for manifest ourselves. Unfortunately, sometimes we take these gifts to manifest ourselves, to display ourselves, to show people how gifted we are.

Now that's wrong, because gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself through these gifts. We shall see the Holy Spirit when these gifts are exercised.

When God gives gifts, He gives gifts differently. We do not all receive the same gift. If all are speaking, where will be the hearing? We do not receive the same gift.

God does not give the same gift to all the members of the body of Christ. We receive gifts severally, according to the members of the body that we are. There is no member that does not have at least a gift.

You cannot imagine God puts you in the body of Christ as a member and He does not give you a gift, that you may function and fulfill your function. No. Every member of the body of Christ has at least a gift, or gifts.

Some may be given five talents, very gifted. Other may be given two talents. And other may be given one talent.

But at least there is one talent. And it is the will of God that after we have received the gift, we shall exercise it, we should do business with it, we should use it, and we should increase it. If we bury our gift, then we really misunderstand why God gives gifts.

A gift is not for our own good. Gift is for the building of the body of Christ. My eyes see, not just for the pleasure of the eye.

It is for the pleasure of the whole body. So far as gifts are concerned, there are two different types of gifts. In Romans, chapter twelve, you'll find these two types.

One we will call gifts concerning the Word, such as prophesying, teaching, exhorting. All these are related to the ministry of the Word of God. But there is another type of gifts concerning the work or service.

It is not speaking, but it is doing, such as, he that gives in simplicity, he that leads with diligence, he that shows mercy with cheerfulness. God does not give only one type of gift, that is, all-speaking gift. God gives some to prophesy, to teach, and to exhort.

But God gives another type of gift, which is service, working, doing something. He that gives in simplicity. God gives you the gift of giving.

And when you give, give it in simplicity. In other words, do not give it with arterial motives or what. Listen to the Lord.

He that leads with diligence. God gives you the gift of leading, then do it diligently. Or He gives you the gift of showing mercy.

Give you such a sympathetic heart, then do it with cheerfulness. So we are not gifted all the same way. And as a matter of fact, you'll find it is just illustrated.

This is not exhaustive list of gifts. It is illustrated. Just like 1 Corinthians 12.

All the 9 gifts, supernatural gifts, are illustrated, not exhaustive. You cannot imagine a body having only 3 gifts, or only have 9 gifts. You have all kinds of gifts in the body.

And whatever the Holy Spirit has given to you, function. Exercise it. Use it.

The more you use it, the more it will be increased. And not only your gift will be increased, so that you can serve much more. And the body of Christ will be built up.

And that means Christ will be formed. That's gift. Why is it that gifts are not manifested? I believe one reason why gifts are not manifested is because you have not presented your bodies a living sacrifice.

If you hold on to your own body for your own use, then the gift that the Holy Spirit gives to you will be buried. But once you present your body as a living sacrifice, and you begin to live in the body of Christ, these gifts will all be released, and into good use. Now that's gifts.

But gifts alone do not build a body. On the contrary, gifts sometimes are the reasons for trouble. You give a knife to a child.

Knife is very useful. But if you give a knife to a child, he may cut himself, and he may cut other people. That is gift.

Give is very useful. But you need grace to handle gift. And grace is life.

You need life to handle power. If there is not sufficient grace, you will find that gift without grace will cause disturbance, will cause conflicts, will cause chaos. Just like in the church in Corinth.

They were very gifted, and yet they were very much lacking in grace. And the result was they divided, they fought against each other, they displayed themselves, despised other people. There wasn't love there.

Gifts are necessary. But gifts alone is not enough. And that's the reason why following it you find more verses are given on grace.

Why? Because these gifts are gifts according to grace. You have to have grace in order to use these gifts properly and within its measure. What is grace? Grace is different from gift.

Now they all come from God. But grace is given equally. While gifts are given differently.

God does not give the same gift to everybody. But God gave the same grace to all. Whatever member of the body you may be, you have the same grace.

Not that my hand has more grace than my foot. In other words, my hand has more life than my foot. No.

It is the same life, same grace. Grace is equal. There is no distinction, no discrimination.

Whether you are male or female, whether you are hand or foot, there is no discrimination. Grace is given equally to all. It is life.

The life of Christ. There is no reason why you should receive less grace than your brothers and sisters. If you do, it is not because grace is not available to you, it is because you do not open yourselves to grace.

But gift is different. If God does not give you that great gift, then you don't have it. If God gives it to you, then use it for His glory.

Now what is grace? Grace not only gives you the substance, but grace also creates the atmosphere. Grace creates the atmosphere in which the body lives. You need the right atmosphere for the body to grow.

The right atmosphere for the gift to exercise. And grace gives the atmosphere. Not only the whatever gift it may be, what is imparted through any gift is grace.

You exercise gift, but you do not impart gift. What you impart through the gift is grace. If you prophesy, what is imparted through prophesying to the body is Christ.

Not prophecy, is Christ. That's grace. The substance is grace.

And that's the reason why if we are lacking grace, and we are abandoning gift, you find we are like clanging cymbals. No substance. Noises, but no substance.

And that does not build up. So brothers and sisters, you will find that for the building up of the body of Christ, for us to live, and to worship, and to serve, how much we need grace. The measure of the life of Christ in us.

That's grace. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, and we are complete in Him. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

It's all ours. Grace upon grace. What we need to do is just to open ourselves, and let grace fill our hearts.

Respond to grace. Do not set aside grace, but respond to grace. And then you will find we will have the life to handle whatever power God may give to us.

And if you read from verse 9 through verse 21, you'll find that even though it is put in a different way, and actually you know, you can find everything that is mentioned in Galatians chapter 5, verse 22, the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control, against such things there is no law. And you will find that everything that you'll find as the fruit of the Spirit, you'll find in Romans chapter 12.

Love. Let love be unending. Let brotherly love prevail, and be kindly affection one towards another.

Love. Joy. As regards hope, rejoicing.

Peace. As far as depends on you living in peace with all men. And you'll find every item that you'll find in Galatians chapter 5, verse 22, you will find in Romans 12.

I hope you will compare it and find all these things in 12. In other words, it is the fruit of the Spirit. The life of Christ.

Being matured in you into fruit. And the fruit of the Spirit is nothing but the character of Christ. So dear brothers and sisters, this is the way that we live as a living sacrifice.

If we present our bodies, then we find we are one living sacrifice. We live as one body. And through the gifts and the grace that God has given to each, we learn to serve God, to worship God, and we learn to

express Christ.

Now this is the way to answer to the mercies of God. Shall we pray? O Heavenly Father, our hearts are deeply touched by Thy mercies. Thou has indeed done so much for us in Christ Jesus.

There is nothing that we deserve. It's all pure grace, pure mercy. O our Father, how can we, having received such mercy, to live for ourselves, and not to let Christ be expressed for us? O forbid that this be the case with any of us here.

But we pray that we will be constrained by the love of Christ, to offer ourselves a living sacrifice. Lord, we want You to live in this body, and live through this body. Lord, we praise and thank Thee that we are not alone.

But as we offer ourselves to Thee as living sacrifice, Thou has joined us to our brothers and sisters as one body. We praise and thank Thee that we are members one of another. We thank Thee for giving us gifts that we may function.

We thank Thee for giving us grace that we may live in the right atmosphere, and we may be able to build up one another with Christ. O how we praise and thank Thee for making us a living sacrifice. Lord, we are here.

Together for Thee. Together to express Thee. Together to please Thee.

Together to worship Thee. We pray that this may grow upon us increasingly, that Thou may be satisfied. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

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