

HOME GROUP & DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

“Finding my place in God’s story” – Trevor Hudson – 31.10.2021

Sermon link:



AUDIO SERMON

Scripture

Romans 12:1-2

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God’s word to you.

Observation

The book of Romans, written by Paul to the early believers in Rome, has influenced great men of God in the past. Augustine committed his life to Christ when reading chapter 13; Martin Luther’s life was changed when he read Romans 1:17; John Wesley was converted when listening to a commentary on the book at Aldersgate, London in 1738.



The Book of Romans has been described as *‘the chief part of the New Testament and the perfect gospel’* (Martin Luther); *‘a passage opened ... to the understanding of the whole Scripture’* (John Calvin); and Peter, in his second letter wrote: *‘Also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles ... in which are some things hard to understand.’* (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Spend some time in worship.

It is in the light of such a letter that Paul wrote the verses in today’s passage.

The book of Romans is life-changing for anyone who responds positively to Paul’s invitation to come to Christ. He presents a choice for his readers. He knows that what he is asking people to do is hard to understand. It needs intentional action. But it is a choice that is open to anyone who cares to make the decision to follow Christ.

Paul appeals to his readers to make their decision on the facts he has already presented about the good news of Jesus Christ. God offers every one mercy; and it is as a result of this that people are able to open themselves up to His work within them and so begin to understand His word and live in accordance with His will.

When Paul speaks of people presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, he is speaking of a person's whole being, body mind and spirit. His readers would know that a living sacrifice was taken to the altar and burned. God will accept this offering of their bodies and cleanse away any impurities, making the sacrifice acceptable to Him.

To those who are making this choice to be transformed by having their minds renewed by God, Paul gives a warning not to be distracted or waylaid by the world's call. A person who has accepted this call must set aside their feelings and their efforts to work for God for these are not sufficient as the foundation of faith. Rather than living according to their feelings or their service, the believer needs to ask firstly what is true and what God's word says on any given matter. By changing thought patterns in this way, the door is open for God to move and to renew their minds, thus transforming them to live in line with Jesus' way. The Greek word used here (*metamorphoo*) is the same word used to describe Jesus' transfiguration. Paul also uses the same word in 2 Corinthians 3:18 when he speaks of the believer 'being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' This glorious transformation becomes evident to others as believers change and witness to God's mercy and will.

Icebreaker:

What was your favourite story as a teenager? Why did you enjoy it so much?

Application

- What is the defining story that shapes your everyday life?
- Do you know your place in God's story? How do you feel about your response?
- Have you ever surrendered to God? If you have, briefly share what happened as a result. If you have not, what has been holding you back?
- How would surrendering to God moment by moment change the way you live?
- Are you prepared to follow Dallas Willard's advice to 'guard your mind?' What does giving every thought to God mean to you? What challenges does this present?
- How do you feel, hearing that God has a personal will for your life? How do you, personally, discover what God's will is for you?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

As you spend time in prayer, give people the opportunity to respond to God's prompting at this time in regard to surrender, guidance, guarding their minds, and His call on their lives. Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

During this week intentionally surrender to God; listen for His prompting; follow His lead. This may lead to service opportunities or it may not. Report back to the group next week what happens as a result of doing this.

Bibliography

<https://biblehub.com/bsb/romans/12.htm>