

Thursday, March 6

Read Romans 12:1-2. Paul asked that we “present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” How do you understand the phrase “living sacrifice?” What do you believe Paul is calling us to sacrifice? If you read the entire passage from our Sunday scripture from Romans (12:9-21) it seems that we are called to be patient, not be prideful and consider others before ourselves. We are called to not seek vengeance when we are offended and to primarily love and speak well of those who persecute us.

As was mentioned during the message, these words are easy to read and difficult to live. And that’s the point! We are to be a living sacrifice as we navigate this world; in doing so we just might lessen the amount of acrimony and hatred in our day to day living. What are your thoughts? Are you willing to make the sacrifices mentioned? Pray for strength and ability to live as Paul directs us and write your thoughts here.

Friday, March 7

Read Matthew 1:18-25 and Galatians 2:20. Think about the sacrifices that Paul asks us to make, that we contemplated in yesterday’s devotion. Paul’s directive is a tall order for us to live up to. It is important to remember that we are not alone in living the life that Paul and Jesus want to live. It is no longer us who live but Jesus who lives in us; and when we put Jesus at the center of our lives, we can love our enemies, bless those who persecute us and live a life of sacrificial living. It’s not possible by ourselves. But we are not alone. As we contemplate loving others who are difficult to love, may we truly ask Christ to be the center of our lives and know that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a life worth of God’s call upon our lives. Write your thoughts here and praise God for the gift of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit!

Message Notes – March 2, 2025

*Can You Love When It’s Difficult?**

- I. How many of you know someone right now that’s a little bit difficult to _____?
 - A. We have always known that the two things we don’t discuss in polite conversations are what? _____ and _____.
 - B. Ever since Covid-19 we can add _____ to the mix.
 - C. So we are a nation and world divided and we are so easily _____ as well.
- II. Being offended is inevitable, but _____ offended is a _____.
 - A. A choice to _____ offended makes our scripture from Paul’s letter to the Romans particularly _____.
 - B. Paul wrote, "_____ those who persecute you."
 1. The word bless comes from the _____ word, *eulogeo*.
 2. E-U means _____. Logeos or logos means _____.
 3. Eulogeo, means a good word or very literally it means to speak _____ of someone.
- III. Paul gives us a very specific, very direct _____. In the Greek language, his command is what’s called a present _____.
 - A. That means to do what you’re told to do and _____ on doing it.
 - B. Paul is saying. "Be a continual _____."
 - C. So how do we bless those who _____ us or are _____ to us?

*Romans 12:9-21

1. We need to go to the beginning of this chapter in his letter to the Romans: "Present your bodies as a _____."
 2. How do we love others? We lay down our own _____ responses. We lay down our own selfish _____.
- D. Paul said it this way in Galatians 2:20: "It is no longer I who live, but it is _____ who lives in me.
- IV. Jesus also said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have _____ for one another."
- A. Not by being _____ will people know we are Jesus' disciples.
 - B. Not by our _____ remarks about others will people know that we are Jesus' disciples.
 - C. Not by putting others _____ will people know that we are Jesus' disciples.
 - D. Remember that being offended is _____ but _____ offended is a choice and we are to return our offense with love.
 - E. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "I have decided to stick with _____. _____ is too great a burden to bear.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, March 3

The message began with the idea that we live in a very divisive world with religion, politics and science being issues over which we disagree, fight and argue over. Certainly this past election campaign season was very divisive, cruel and demeaning. What are your thoughts? Do we live in a divisive society? What do you believe contributes to this divisiveness? Meditate on these

questions and the thoughts presented in the message. Write your reflections here.

Tuesday, March 4

Another idea that was presented in the message that contributes to the challenge of loving and experiencing peace is being easily offended. What do you think? Are people too easily offended in our society? What do you think contributes to this idea of people being too thin-skinned for their own good? Being offended is inevitable but living offended is a choice. People make mistakes, they misspeak and say things that are thoughtless – literally they speak without thought or thinking! How can we meet the challenge to not live offended? This is a very complex question that is layered with issues of self-esteem and other mental health concerns. What are your thoughts? What is the difference between being occasionally offended and living offended? Pray for God's wisdom and write your reflection here.

Wednesday, March 5

Read Romans 12:9-21. Focus on verses 14-18. The words of this passage may seem too severe for what we experience in our day to day living. We may not feel persecuted or hated. But consider what you do feel when your experience a difficult interaction with another person, even those with whom you are a friend or loved one. How do you experience hurt and disappointment in your relationships? How do you experience hurt and disappointment in your relationships with acquaintances or people you encounter with whom you have no history? Are you looking to be hurt and offended? Remember, you generally find that for which you are searching. Meditate on these ideas and write your thoughts here.