**July 7, 2019**

**Session 13: Identifying the Mercies**

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God**, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

I want to step aside here and address a question that comes up about the “mercies of God.” It would be an easy thing to think of these mercies as though they are simply describing God’s compassion toward us as sinners but, as you will see, that is not the case.

First of all, if you were to define the word mercy, how would you define it?

OED

Mercy = forbearance and compassion shown by one to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.

That is the OED #1 definition for “mercy.” And that is exactly what we understand about mercy as we got to the end of Romans 11.

Romans 11:30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained **mercy** through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your **mercy** they also may obtain **mercy**. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have **mercy** upon all.

And while that’s a perfect definition of mercy in the sense of Romans 11:30-32, Romans 12:1 does not say “mercy,” it says “mercies.”

Not only that, if you think Paul is beseeching you to present your body a living sacrifice simply because God was merciful and offered you salvation instead of justice, then you will be severely lacking in the measure of understanding you supposed to be putting on display at this sonship checkpoint.

The kind of “mercies” we are talking about is found in definition #6 in the OED.

OED: mercy

(6) An act by God to His creatures, an event or circumstance; a gift of God, a blessing. **One’s mercies**, the good things which one has received from God.

These mercies would include, but are not limited to, all the elements of our new identity in Christ. As we progress through the education, Paul will mention doctrinal “mercies” which we will be given later on. These are not what were given to us in Christ, but rather what will be produced by Christ in us.

First of all, Paul says “by the mercies of God,” not because of “God’s mercy.” If we understand what is being asked of us, it seems entirely out of place that Paul would beseech us on the basis that God has withheld His wrath and offered us mercy. In other words, when we understand what is meant by “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God,” we realize that this is about much more than just the fact that we are grateful for God’s mercy. These three issues are actually the measure of our understanding about three doctrinal issues which signal that we are ready to begin our education. And when I say “ready,” I mean they signal that all the required groundwork is in place.

Think about it. We are supposed to present ourselves to our Father (in light of a particular understanding we’re supposed to have, i.e. the mercies of God) to what purpose? This presentation is so that our education can now get underway; so we can begin receiving instruction that will produce all three aspects of godliness in us. Simply knowing that God has been merciful is NOT sufficient to signal our readiness to begin our education as sons. Simply knowing or being grateful that God extended mercy is not the foundation upon which our education edifice will be built. No, it will require much more than that.

The bases upon which our education is built are the doctrines of our Sanctification (the elements of our new identity in connection with it), Sonship Orientation (VTP #1: the cry of Abba, Father) and Sonship Establishment (VTP #2: our implicit trust in God and His word to succeed in making us functionally into the sons He has made us to be in Christ and called us to be in our conduct.)

Knowing about or even being grateful that God showed us mercy is not an indicator or initiator of our desire, enthusiasm or heart to be educated as an adult, adopted son or daughter, but these three issues are all of those things.

So that we get a better understanding of the word “mercies,” let us look over to Acts 13 and notice the use of the word “mercies” in a different context from Romans 12, but in a parallel manner to it.

In Acts 13, Paul is preaching at Antioch, Pisidia and he is preaching to Jews.

Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye* men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Acts 13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, **I will give you the sure mercies of David.** 35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

Did you notice what was said in vs. 33? Concerning that God raised up Jesus from dead (which means the redemption was completed and in the past), God says He will give “the sure mercies of David.”

Acts 13:34 is a quote from Isaiah 55.

Isaiah 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make **an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.**

Paul ties the Davidic Covenant; sure mercies of David, to the reality that Jesus of Nazareth accomplished redemption and will never see corruption as David did. Not only could death and the pit not hold Jesus, but even when Christ’s body was in the tomb, it did not see corruption. And therefore, there is the promise of a whole package of benefits to Israel which are called “the sure mercies of David.”

In connection with that, Paul says to those Jews, that in light of all that Jesus of Nazareth did as their Redeemer, they were to receive “the sure mercies of David.”

When that phrase (the sure mercies of David) is used in Israel’s program, that is a description of the package of benefits that God provided for Israel based upon the Davidic Covenant. We know that covenant outlined five mandates that must/would be fulfilled by Israel’s Messiah.

Paul is saying that once the Redemption has successfully taken place, the remainder of the package of benefits are now sure and certain; hence, the sure mercies of David. That is to say, upon their Messiah’s successful function their Redeemer, the rest of what Israel must have in order to be what God has ordained them to be will be performed. He will also be their Deliverer, their Avenger, their King and their Blesser. And those are the “sure mercies” that God has made an everlasting covenant to perform.

Those sure mercies of David are not talking about the sure withholding of God’s wrath upon David! (Just as the “mercies” of Romans 12 are not talking about God not having wrath upon us!)

The “sure mercies of David” are talking about a package of benefits which Israel is sure to one day obtain, now that the redemption has been accomplished. That is the very context in which Paul quotes it in Acts 13. Because of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, (the Redemption mandate fulfilled), that’s why the mercies of David are sure. In other words, the final four mandates were all dependent upon the fulfillment of the Redeemer mandate.

So you’ve got one Mandate (Redeemer) securing all the other mandates. The other mandates are viewed as a package of benefits that accrue because of the 1st Mandate being successfully accomplished. Therefore, those other mandates are packaged together and spoken of as “the sure mercies of David.”

The term “mercies” is in the plural because they indicate a package of benefits that one obtains.

Going back to Romans 12:1, Paul beseeches us on the basis of the “mercies of God” to present our bodies and therefore Paul is directing our attention to the basis upon or reason he asks us to do this. It is not due to God’s mercy in withholding His wrath from us.

We intelligently understand the mercies of God are a package of benefits that our Father has given to us in Christ, based also upon the successful function as our Redeemer. These include the components of our Justification and Sanctification. These have a special application to the capstone of our sanctification; our adoption as sons and our establishment as sons. In other words, on the basis of the first two Volitional Testing Points!

If we are going to make an intelligent decision to make the presentation Romans 12:1 is asking us to make, then it demands that we know why we are doing do. We know what is in the package of benefits given to Israel under the title, the sure mercies of David, but what is the package of benefits to us as adopted sons and members of the body of Christ?

* The benefit of having a new identity in Christ in connection with our justification unto eternal life.
* The benefit of having been given the Spirit.
* The benefit of having a new identity in Christ in connection with our sanctification unto functional life.
* The benefit of no longer being under the law, but now being under grace.
* The benefit of unlimited and unrestricted access to God.

And especially:

* The benefit of being adopted as your Father’s adult son (or daughter) and all that means as opposed to childhood.
* The benefit of liberty in Christ as opposed to limited decision making
* The benefit of being an heir of God and the very real possibility of being a joint-heir with Christ.

The privilege to operate in your Father’s business in the heavenly places

* liberating the creature from its bondage of corruption
* to make the creature functionally alive so that it is fit for the Father’s use and no longer subject to vanity
* to labor with your Father in connection with reconciling the heavenly places back to Himself
* The added benefit that we have another salvation; saved from being victimized by the sufferings of this present time, which are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
* The benefit of the curriculum’s power to make it so that whatever comes our way, it will work together for our good as sons and actually benefit us in our sonship lives. (Rom. 8:28)
* The benefit of being more than conquerors in the face of Satan and his policy of evil against us.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

**Session 14 – The Presentation**

How would you define present here? In other words, why doesn’t this say ‘That ye give your bodies? What makes “present” different from “give”?

OED: present – 1a) to bring or place before, into the presence of, or under the notice of another; to introduce, especially formally or ceremoniously; before a sovereign or other superior. 1b) to bring before or into the presence of God; to dedicate by so bringing: 1c) a candidate is said to be presented (or to present himself) for examination; one who has passed a university examination…

When you present either something or someone (yourself, in this case), this isn’t just a simple ‘giving’ of yourself to your Father so He can begin to instruct you. The expectation is that you will go to your Father and in a private ceremony (so to speak), just between you and Him, where you will formerly present yourself for approval and acceptance (by enumerating to Him your measure of understanding and function in each item of the Sonship Checkpoint.

The word “present” makes this not ordinary or common (that would be simply ‘giving’) but this implies a formal giving over of yourself with a specific view or anticipation of something to now take place.

Let me see if I can make an analogy to what to is taking place here. My oldest grandson, Sterling, is in the Army. As a part of the army, he has the opportunity to apply for various “schools” which would train in additional ways and present opportunities he would otherwise not have as just a member of the army at large.

One of these schools is Ranger school. But you cannot be an Army Ranger just because you want to be. There is a process of qualifying. First, you enroll in pre-Ranger school. They test you in three particular ways to ensure you actually are qualified to enter Ranger School. While those three ways) are unimportant to this illustration, if you fail at any one of them, you are not allowed to enroll in Ranger school. You can try again later, but you must pass pre-school before you can move on.

Once you graduate successfully from Ranger school, you are then an Army Ranger.

This is very similar to what we are doing here in Romans 12. We are in the “army” of the saints. Being a saint (JUEL) makes you an adopted son.

Any saint (son) is offered the opportunity to be more; to be a joint-heir with Christ, or, to be a Simple Son. But before you can engage in the education that makes you into a simple son, you must first go through “pre-school” to make sure you are qualified for “Simple Son School.”

We also have three areas which we must pass before we are admitted into the school to make us a Simple Son. Those three are “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.” Those saints who demonstrate their “mastery” of the required skills are then admitted to Simple Son School and their education begins. There is a formality to presenting ourselves in the three ways Romans 12:1 refers to; a formality of presenting ourselves as equipped and capable to now be educated. We are presenting ourselves with a view toward being accepted in Simple Son School.

The presentation has 3 components to it:

1) a living sacrifice 2) holy 3) acceptable

Those three components are the issues which we must have an understanding of and which must be at work in us before we signal to our Father our readiness to begin our education by the presentation of our bodies.

So let’s look at that first one, the presenting of our body a living sacrifice.

First let’s define that phrase: a living sacrifice.

OED: sacrifice

Primarily the slaughter of an animal as an offering to God or a deity.

This, however, cannot be the correct meaning for two reasons:

1. Paul is not talking about the sacrifice of animals, but of our bodies
2. Paul is not talking about slaughter, as we are still alive

In any sacrifice, something is being surrendered for the sake of something else. And that fits perfectly with definition #4.

OED: sacrifice

4a) The …surrender of something valued or desired for the sake of something having a higher or a more pressing claim…

The more pressing claim is to be educated by our Father as His adopted son or daughter. What we are surrendering to that end is our bodies.

But what does that mean? Here in Romans 12, Paul does not go to the trouble to explain or define any of the terms in vs. 1. Knowing the progressive nature of the doctrine as it is presented in a biblical theology, the lack of definition tells us we have already encountered these three issues previously.

Here is something else to consider; the first time we encounter the word “sacrifice” in Paul’s writings is here in chapter 12. That also tells us something. Again, observing the pattern already established, we know that the issue of “a living sacrifice” has been presented to us even though it was not referred to by this descriptive phrase.

So, the first issue in presenting our bodies to God involves presenting them a living sacrifice. This means we are going to surrender these bodies to our heavenly Father as part of a private but formal presentation whereby we demonstrate our understanding of the three issues required of us before our education can begin. By presenting our bodies in accordance with these three issues, we are demonstrating that we are ready to begin our education; we have the necessary preliminary doctrines working in us.

Where in Romans, prior to chapter 12, has Paul talked about our bodies? The first time Paul talks about the “bodies” of the saints is in Romans 8:11.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also **quicken your mortal bodies** by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

There are two important words to look at here. Firstly, the word dwell.

OED: dwell – 8) to occupy as a place of residence;

So, what does it mean to “occupy” a place?

OED: occupy – 1) to take possession of, to take for one’s own use1)

So, to apply the definitions to the verse results in: If the Spirit of God take possession of you as a place of residence for His own use, then He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies.

And that brings us to the second word; quicken.

OED: quicken - 1a) to give or restore life 1b) in renderings of Biblical passages, with reference to spiritual life 2) to rouse (to fullness of function)

Now, to get the meaning, look at the context beginning in verse 10.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, **the body *is* dead** because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

What kind of “dead” is Paul talking about? Obviously, he is not talking about physical death. The body is “dead” spiritually, in that there is nothing of spiritual life by anything the body can do. It is not alive “unto God” and it cannot produce spiritual life.

The last part of the verse holds the key.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; **but the Spirit *is* life** because of righteousness.

The Spirit can bring life to our spiritually dead bodies. The Spirit can make it so that these bodies can function in life; in righteousness. And how can this happen?

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

If the Spirit dwells in us, then the Father (who raised up Christ from the dead) will quicken (will give spiritual life) to our mortal, unredeemed bodies so that our bodies can produce a righteousness that God is well-pleased with because it will be God’s righteousness in us!

Now, to put it all together with the definitions: But if the Spirit of God takes possession of us as a place of residence for His own use, then the Father will give spiritual life to our unredeemed, mortal bodies by producing His righteousness in our bodies by His Spirit which is using our bodies for His purposes.

But if we are not yielding our bodies to the use of the Spirit, then what is done by our bodies is not spiritual life, but death.

So how does this take place? How does the Spirit take possession of us for His use?

As we live out of that new identity we were given as part of our sanctification, that is how the Spirit dwells in us and that is how our mortal body is quickened. Before Romans 8:11, we have already been told some things with regard to our sanctification back in Romans 6; that we have been made “dead to sin” and “alive unto God.”