PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • WHEN THE FIRE DIES OUT, PART THREE

A Living Sacrifice

Not conformed, but transformed — an exploration of Romans 12:1–2

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When the Fire Dies Out, Part Three — Romans 12:1–2

Preached Sunday, November 8, 2026 by Pastor Jeremy Arnold

Romans 12:1–2 • Psalm 51:16–17 • Philippians 2:5–8 • Ephesians 2:8–10 • Romans 11:6 • Romans 5:8 • Hebrews 10:10–14 • 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Paul doesn’t tell us to bring another sacrifice, but to bring ourselves. We are not surrendering to convince God to love us; we are surrendering because He has already demonstrated His love and mercy toward us through Jesus Christ.

RECAP

In the past several weeks we have been talking about what happens when the excitement of serving God dies out. We have talked about the condition of our hearts, and the kind of sacrifices God truly desires — truth in our inward parts.

Last week we touched on different kinds of sacrifices and their purpose. This week we want to focus on the sacrifices of our lives.

Picking up where we left off last week in Psalm 51:16–17, David reveals to us that God is not interested in or impressed with our outward appearance, performance or religious activity. God wants our hearts!

> **Psalm 51:16–17 (ESV) · Hebrew 51:18–19 · Septuagint 50:18–19**
> "For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

THE SERMON TEXT

> **Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)**
> “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Before Paul tells us what to do, he reminds us of what God has done.

The word “therefore” connects our surrender to the mercies of God that Paul has been explaining throughout the first eleven chapters of Romans.

Point

We are not surrendering to convince God to love us. We are surrendering because He has already demonstrated His love and mercy toward us through Jesus Christ.

A QUESTION

> *So what is Paul talking about when he says not to be conformed, but to be transformed?*

Conformity means to assimilate; transform means to be changed!

Paul exhorts us to be living sacrifices!

Paul doesn't tell us to bring another sacrifice, but to bring ourselves!

To have a renewing of the mind — by putting on the mind of Christ.

> **Philippians 2:5–8 (ESV)**
> "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Here we see Jesus humbling Himself, taking the form of a servant, and willingly submitting to the Father's will, even to the point of death on the cross. He gives us the supreme example of humility and obedience, while accomplishing the work of atonement that only He could accomplish.

Point

The question is no longer whether there is fire under the altar. The question becomes whether we have surrendered our lives as Christ humbly surrendered His.

OUR MOTIVATION

> *So what should be our motivation for wanting to serve and walk with Christ?*

The mercies of God and the grace of God.

> **Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)**
> "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

- We don't surrender ourselves to earn God's mercy; we surrender ourselves because we have received God's mercy.
- We don't surrender ourselves to earn God's grace; we surrender ourselves because we have received God's grace.

> **Romans 11:6 (ESV)**
> "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."

Point

We surrender because Christ first surrendered Himself!

Let me be clear: we do not become living sacrifices to add anything to the finished work of Christ. His sacrifice is what redeemed us!

Our surrender comes from grateful hearts of love and adoration for the love Jesus has shown toward us — even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

> **Romans 5:8 (ESV)**
> "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

> **Hebrews 10:10–14 (ESV)**
> "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."

Christ's sacrifice is sufficient. Our lives are surrendered in response.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE!

> **1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (ESV)**
> "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Here Paul is addressing the Corinthian church about their sexual immorality; however, one can see the broader point. We are not our own — we have been bought!

> *What does that mean?*

- The life we live is not ours.
- The body we are clothed with is not ours.
- The mind we think with is not ours.
- The resources we lay claim to are not ours.
- The time we spend, including the future if permitted, belongs to Him.

We are simply stewards of the life, time and resources Christ has given us!

Point

The question here becomes, "Lord, what do You want to do with the life You have purchased in me?"

THE PROBLEM

People want God's blessings, His presence and His promises, but without boundaries, His authority or surrender!

Christ wants ALL of us! Not just our eyes, ears, mouths, hands and feet, but our minds and hearts!

MAJOR INFLUENCERS

The question is not whether we are being influenced. We are all being influenced by something. The question is whether those influences are shaping our minds according to the world or according to the Word of God.

Several examples that steer and influence the culture are:

- Music · social media · governments · family · religious traditions

These influences can shape our understanding of:

- Truth · identity · morality · priorities · what we consider valuable

In Romans 12 Paul is not just telling Christians to avoid bad influences; he is describing a fundamental transformation of their way of thinking and living.

1. Conformity:
The world's patterns, values and assumptions must not determine the believer's life.

2. Transformation:
Christian change is deeper than external behavior modification.

3. Discernment:
A renewed mind learns to recognize and approve what pleases God.

RESISTING THE TREND, AND RENEWING THE MIND

1. Resistance requires honest self-examination.
2. Following Christ faithfully sometimes means choosing to be different.
3. One should exercise vigilance against subtle compromises.
4. We should intentionally apply biblical principles across every facet of our daily lives.

A PICTURE OF A LIVING SACRIFICE

1. A living sacrifice gives God our relationships.
2. A living sacrifice gives God our decisions.
3. A living sacrifice gives God our ambitions.
4. A living sacrifice gives God our resources.
5. A living sacrifice allows God's Word to challenge our thinking.

> *A living sacrifice is a life that has been presented to God — not just on Sunday, but every day. — Pastor Jeremy Arnold*

GROW FURTHER

WHEN THE FIRE DIES OUT, PART TWO

What Are We Laying on the Altar?

Last week — pride, bitterness, secret sins and divided loyalties, laid down because we belong to Him.

DEEP RESEARCH

Philippians 2:5–11

The mind of Christ: from the form of God to the cross to the name above every name, in the Greek and the ESV.

DEEP RESEARCH

Ephesians 2:1–10

Dead in trespasses, made alive by grace through faith, and created in Christ for good works.

DEEP RESEARCH

Romans 5:1–11

Peace with God: justified by faith and reconciled while we were still enemies.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)