The Book of Romans

Part Five: God’s righteousness is revealed in His Loving Demands Upon His People. (Romans 12-15:13)

***The Body Life of Christ -- Or, God’s People at Worship Romans 12:1-8***

How shall God’s people respond to His grace and mercy? Paul has written eleven chapters on God’s plan to save and sanctify His people through the Cross. Now he works out the implications. What kind of people should we be, given God’s covenant grace? He begins with worship. Why? Remember that the judgment of God has come (Romans 1): mankind has not honored God nor thanked Him (v. 21), refused the truth of God (v. 25), and exchanged His glory for the worship of things (animals) He created (vv. 23, 25). But now we are free to worship Him!

But what is worship? Paul explains that it is a lifestyle (not a music or liturgical style), in fact, a life of sacrifice (imitating Christ’s example of laying down one’s life for others 1 John 3:16). That life, the logical and fitting expression of our being in Christ) begins with holiness and ends with service to God by incorporating our gifts into the Body of Christ where EVERY part has a place, meaning, and purpose.

***My worship is a life of sacrifice to God, through my body, mind, thoughts, and actions.*** v. 1

Paul’s words are those which describe the sacrificial system of the Temple, where a living animal is killed, placed upon an altar, and burned. We are to consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to righteousness (Romans 6:5-11), and slaves of God rather than self (Romans 6:15-19). To serve myself is to have a fool as my master. 1 Peter 2:16

***My worship mindset is delighting in His will, wholly following Him, not the spirit of the age.*** v. 2

A lifestyle of worship begins in the renewed mind. There is a full scale attack today on thinking, evidence our ever increasing escape from reason, an ever decreasing attention span, the clear inability to dialogue without ranting, and our passion for diversion/entertainment.

A renewed mind is one that thinks clearly using Scripture as a grid and the Spirit as a guide in a courageous quest to know and practice truth. This must be purposeful, and takes time, energy, and focus. To follow the world is to be an enemy of God. James 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:15-17

***My worship context is serving Christ’s body.*** vv. 3-8

All worship is outwardly focused. Any “worship” that seeks its own comfort/satisfaction is unworthy of the name. The worshiping saint is humbled before others because he realizes that everything is gift. He seeks unity with others because Christ is One. He loves diversity in others because he does not fear losing his position. He stays at his post (doesn’t overstep) because he trusts others and does not seek to manipulate them or fulfill his own agenda. ***We serve worshipfully by. . .***

* ***Exercising humility.*** I have a place, based upon God’s gifting.
* ***Preserving unity.*** I am part of something bigger than myself.
* ***Enjoying diversity.*** It all works BECAUSE we are different.
* ***Practicing intensity.*** It all works IF we each do our part.

**How does Body-Life Worship translate into Real-Time Church?**

***1. Work on yourself.***

Be holy. Don’t try to make rules for others. Micah 6:8

***2. Let the church be church.*** (Not a business, not a museum.)

Each church is uniquely God’s family. It shouldn’t try to act like the world or another church.

2 Corinthians 10:12

***3. Empower, work for, and think the best of others.***

You will be surprised how glorious even the lowest saint will look in Heaven, and how here, even the

smallest things mattered. Matthew 10:40-42; 25:37-40