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As we close out our conference, we're continuing through the Bible with the theme that worship is – **a timeless calling**. With God, there is no beginning or end. He IS the beginning and end. Our calling (as worshipers) – is timeless. There is no end to our purpose of worship.

We've journeyed through worship in the Law of Moses, the time of the Kings and Kingdom of Israel, the Psalms, and the Prophets of Israel...

Last night, we looked at worship in the Gospels, and today we'll looking at worship – according to the New Testament letters – followed by our final session of worship in the book of Revelation.

We'll be *CAMPING OUT* in Romans 12 today, but we'll be *BRANCHING OUT* into other New Testament letters to see what they say about *WORSHIP*.

As you study the "course" of worship in the Bible, you'll begin to find this paradigm shift take place with our approach to worship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the book of Leviticus, God set forth five types of offerings and ways to worship Him. Some were voluntary offerings and some were mandatory offerings.

And the REASON those sacrifices were MANDATORY – was because they were NECESSARY – for the atonement of our SIN.

A **sacrifice** was required – in order to make us right with God again.

But then Jesus came.

And (I trust we know), Jesus became **the Ultimate Sacrifice** – the Ultimate Atonement for our sin. His body was nailed to the cross and it was HIS perfect blood – from HIS perfect and unblemished body – that was poured out as an offering for our sin.

A sacrifice that required our life – yet paid in full by His own.

And that's the **foundation of our worship**. It's the glorious work that Jesus did on the cross.

In fact, I think the writer of Hebrews 10 says it well in verses 4-10: “⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. ⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me — To do Your will, O God.’ ” ⁸ Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law),

⁹ then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

NOW... our sacrifice is not one of blood. Why? Because the blood of Jesus was shed once and for all. The sacrifice that REQUIRED blood has been made.

NOW – as *Hebrews 13:15* tells us – *our sacrifice is now a “sacrifice of PRAISE to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”*

PRAISE – is now our sacrifice. And the New Testament letters begin to shape this new way of thinking (and living) for every Believer.

There is a shift from sacrifice, to singing, to instrumentation, and to what we know worship as today – a time of corporate singing and instrumentation.

But – oh, it’s so much more than that!

I want to present to you today – **FOUR THOUGHTS** – from **Romans 12** that I think will help us shape our idea and view on worship from the New Testament letters.

In Romans 12:1-2, we see these four things:

- The **MOTIVATION** of Our Worship

- The **MEANS** of Our Worship

- The **MESSAGE** of Our Worship

- The **MINDSET** of Our Worship

The **MOTIVATION**.
The **MEANS**.
The **MESSAGE**.
And the **MINDSET**.

In his letter to the **Romans**, Paul's words read as follows in verses 1-2 of chapter 12.

He says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Here in verse 1 – we find the **MOTIVATION** for our worship – which is "*the mercies of God.*"

I love a definition I heard years ago for mercy. We could define mercy as, "NOT getting what you DO deserve."

It's like the kid who challenges his dad to a death match on the living room floor. We called it "rough-housing" as a kid. I remember growing up and telling my dad, "Come on, Dad! Let's rough-house!"

You may have called it wrestling... I grew up in the woods of South Carolina – the language is a little different there.

But it never failed. I believed I was taking the old man down for several minutes when suddenly --- I was face on the floor screaming for what? MERCY!

Mercy is the code word, right? When you yell "Mercy!", the person who has control in the situation would then relinquish the punishment.

And Paul says, "By the MERCIES of God..." "By the great COMPASSION of our Lord..." "By the PITY that God has shown you..."

I BEG you! That you present your bodies before the Lord as a living sacrifice.

The mercies of GOD... become our **motivation** for our WORSHIP of Him.

Which means... we should account for God's mercies in our life.

First of all – do you recognize the ways in which God has shown you mercy?

If God has spared you of some great punishment, then what punishment might that have been?

Hmm.

Well – let's start back at the very beginning! In Genesis 3, our great-grandparents disobeyed God and gave us all a disease we've been struggling with all our lives!

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Nevertheless – we all have a problem. Throughout the book of Romans, Paul laid out the Romans Road, did he not?

He told us in chapter 3, verse 23, "for ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

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Then Paul tells us in chapter 6, verse 23, "For the WAGES of sin is DEATH." Uh oh, because we're all sinners, now we must die!

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But this verse goes ON to say, "... but the GIFT of God... is eternal life – in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What gift has God given us? The gift of His **MERCY** – in the form of Jesus Christ, His only Son.

Who has sinned? [*ALL have sinned*]

What is our punishment? [*DEATH*]

But the GIFT of GOD – is that we may have eternal LIFE. And the only way we can experience that eternal life – is by believing and accepting that God sent His SON to take that punishment FOR us.

Jesus – who never experienced sin – stepped into our place on the cross and experienced all the weight of sin at once – ALL of our sin... therefore, clearing us of our debt once and for all.

It's as if we were lying face down on the floor screaming, "MERCY!" God heard those cries and answered them in a way only **HE** could.

Paul pleads – by the MERCIES of God... present yourselves to Him.

Again – it's the mercies of GOD... that become our **motivation** for our WORSHIP of Him.

I love how Paul puts it in **Romans 2:4**: ***"... do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, NOT knowing that the goodness of God... leads you to repentance?"***

Think about the very definition of mercy, apply it to your life and your sins, and then tell me – are you not then motivated to worship God because of His great mercies in your life? Or do you **despise** His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering?

So much of worship is spent thanking God for what He has done. Let us thank the Lord not only for what He HAS done... but also for what He HASN'T done! It is by God's MERCY that we are spared a great punishment that WE so rightly deserved.

Say this to yourself (just to make it real): ***"God has not dealt with me according to my sins. Wow. And for THAT – I am so thankful! Thank you, God – for your great mercies!"***

And when I wonder WHY I was spared a terrible punishment, it's then that I remember it's because God placed my punishment on His Son instead.

"For He made HIM – who knew no sin – to BE sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Once, a man who was near death was asked what he wanted on his tombstone. He was too broke for a fancy burial and an expensive carving, so after thinking briefly he simply replied, ***"FORGIVEN." He told them, "God has forgiven me of all my sins, and He'll never hear the end of it." Now THAT is a man who had much to be thankful for. And he was going to let God hear all about it 😊.***

May we be motivated by the same mercies in our own life.

You know – there are many different ways of motivating people.

You can threaten people. You can beat them up. Take their lunch money. Become a bully. Or maybe you take a lighter approach. You can offer incentives. You can offer something in return. You can just try to motivate them with kindness.

Again – take your pick. But here’s what Paul does: **He BEGS them.**

PAUL – a great tyrant of history – dictator and terrorist – says, “Guys? PLEASE!” “I beseech you!” “I BEG YOU!”

Now – I’ve gotta tell you... NO GOOD LEADER – ever begs people to do ANYTHING.

No leader begs people to hop on board with their vision. In fact, if you ARE begging people to serve on your worship team, to help in your children’s ministry, to help greet people at the door – then you must be desperate, am I right??

But Paul PLEADS here – he BEGS these Christians – in light of everything he just said (and he just said a lot). He just spoke for chapter after chapter about living godly, Christian lives.

And now – not because he’s a poor leader – not because he’s a terrible salesman – he PLEADS with everyone who reads his letter (us included) – that we would present ourselves as living sacrifices unto God.

The only reason for this kind of plea is because Paul was so serious and fervent about his love for Jesus. And he knows the sincerity of this action in every Christian’s life.

Again – he says:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice...”

And now here – we see:

THE MEANS OF OUR WORSHIP: presenting our bodies, a living sacrifice.

We have MOTIVATION to worship God – which is His great MERCIES.

And now Paul tells us we DO that – by presenting ourselves to God – alive and willing – humble and obedient.

Remember what a sacrifice looked like. It was a living, breathing walking and bleating animal offered to God in atonement for sin.

Well, if WE are to be a sacrifice unto God – then that doesn’t really sound very fun, now does it?

Thankfully – that’s not what God requires of us! He isn’t looking for us to be sacrificed on some altar in order to please Him! Why? Because He already sacrificed His SON – on the altar.

See – for us to become a living sacrifice is for us to offer ourselves completely and wholly to God. Unreserved. Unfiled. Unhindered. And unwavering in our commitment to this call.

*Have you ever wanted to add a **unique instrument** to your worship team, but you just couldn’t figure out what might be a good fit?*

Paul lists here in the book of Romans another instrument that we are very familiar with in our human state. ***In Romans chapter 6, Paul warns us to “... not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as INSTRUMENTS of UNRIGHTEOUSNESS to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of RIGHTEOUSNESS to God.” (v12-13)***

Did you catch that? How many of you are going to now go home and add RIGHTEOUSNESS as an instrument on your worship team?

You should! This should probably be the first requirement at any audition.

We are to be instruments of **righteousness**. Not using our bodies as instruments of UN-righteousness in any way.

Same instrument – but notice how different the outcome, depending on how it’s used. A trumpet could sound GOOD – or it could sound pretty bad. Depends on who’s playing it – and the manner in which they play it.

May WE – as Believers in the work of Jesus on the cross – take up this daily call to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. As an instrument of righteousness. As one being alive from the dead.

This seems pretty reasonable, does it not?

In what **MEANS** should we worship God?

We can argue over the proper number of songs, the preferred allotment of time for these songs, the magical key for these songs, the right equipment needed to pull these songs off, when again – what is needed most... is that when **we** worship, we bring our whole heart to God. Anything less would be cheating God out of the worship that is due His name.

There is no formula for worship. Trust me – God doesn't sit there checking off boxes each Sunday afternoon as if He is evaluating your services from that morning. No. God is pleased with our most genuine worship – from the heart of His most precious creation.

I have a sincere question. It's going to seem facetious, but I assure you it's not.

Let me ask you:

Can we worship without music? Yes, obviously we can. So, music doesn't matter as much.

Can we worship God in the key of G? What about Bb? Yes. So, again – music doesn't matter as much.

What about the person who sings off-key... is God still pleased with their worship? Hopefully so! Or some of us would be DOOMED in eternity, let me tell you!

So... if God is pleased even with the worship of someone who sings off-key, then singing in key doesn't matter to God as much.

What about someone who can't speak? Can they still worship God? Yes, they can.

Someone who is deaf – who can't hear the music? Yes, obviously.

Which brings me to my question (and again – I don't mean to sound facetious) --- does God even care about music at all?? Or maybe I should ask – does God even require music as a **MEANS** for us to worship Him?

Or (and again – I'm just posing a question for you to ponder today) --- did God (perhaps) create music for **OUR** benefit? And if music was created for US – as a means to help US worship GOD... then perhaps we should worry LESS about whether true A is 440hz or 450hz, or the proper arrangement of a song, or that a new song just sounds so amazing by that really popular guy – and therefore we just "HAVE" to do it... and *maybe we worry more about worshipping God and serving Him "acceptably – with reverence and godly fear." (as we're told in Hebrews 12:28).* Presenting ourselves unto God in a way that pleases Him.

Music matters... *but that's not **ALL** that matters.*

In **Matthew 15:8-9**, Jesus quotes Isaiah and says, *"These people draw near to Me with their MOUTH, and honor Me with their LIPS, but their HEART... is far from Me. And in VAIN they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* *May that never be said of us.*

It's so important that we are checking ourselves and making sure that we are drawing near to God – not just with our lips – but it's important that we keep our heart from ever straying from Him.

What MATTERS (when it comes to the MEANS of our worship) is the way in which we approach Him in our worship.

Our worship needs to be based on what GOD had done for us and based on the truth of His Word He has given to us.

This is true worship. ***A constant response to who God is in any situation or circumstance, based on who He reveals Himself to be in His Word.***

And the ***expression*** of that praise (or the ***MEANS*** by which we express ourselves) – is then left to our discretion – whether it be song, spoken praise, prayer, giving of our tithes and offerings, or simply living every moment for the glory of God.

If you want to know the best MEANS for our worship...

I believe Paul hit the nail on the head when he said in his letters to Corinth and Colossae:

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or WHATEVER you do, do ALL to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

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And again, in ***Colossians 3:17, “And WHATEVER you do in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”***

There are many ***MEANS*** to our worship... but as *“Not all roads lead to Rome...”*, ***“Not all MEANS – lead to the THRONE.”***

The “ends” --- don't always justify the “means!”

You've heard this saying before...

In other words – the end result is so good and satisfying that it becomes okay to achieve that “end” by any ***means*** necessary – whether unfair, impure, or just downright dirty!

Guys – listen closely – **NOT SO WITH OUR WORSHIP!**

May the ends NEVER justify just **ANY** means necessary to get there. Not so with our WORSHIP, not so with our worship MINISTRY, and not so with our LIVES.

If we're not careful – we can blaze a trail right through people's emotions just to get them to follow our leading as ministry leaders. We can cut corners and cheat our time and preparation for a Sunday morning because we're just good enough to "wing it" and still pull off something good. We can flock to the latest song that never even mentions the name of God, and yet – because it sounds so cool or because it's a new song, oh, we've just GOTTA do it – am I right?

Be careful... the END... doesn't justify **compromisable** means of getting there. Be very careful with your **means** and **method** of your worship. May I remind you – Paul says our **means** should be that of a "living sacrifice."

He says we should be presenting our bodies as such... holy – and acceptable to God – which is our reasonable service.

A series and habits of compromise in your walk with the Lord will not produce holiness, acceptance, and righteousness.

And it's important to remember that we cannot produce any of that of ourselves!

Holiness – and righteousness – are produced by the **SPIRIT** of God – when we allow God's Spirit to **WORK** in our lives.

When we get saved, it can become so natural to build ourselves up towards thinking we are doing so much work for God, and then we produce (within ourselves) this great feeling that we call self-righteousness.

When the ONLY righteousness that we can truly have – is the righteousness that Jesus placed upon us as He took our sin upon Himself.

Left to our OWN devices, there is no righteousness in us. **Paul tells us this, too, in Romans 3. He quotes: "There is none righteous, no, not one." (v10)**

It is GOD who brings the change. And He will do it -- when we respond to his tender mercies, and his great love, which he has shown towards us – by presenting our lives to Him.

Think about what Paul means here when he tells us to present our bodies...

What do you take in with your eyes? What do you take in with your ears? What are you allowing into your heart? These are all parts of your body.

What is coming into your mind? We should know that whatever we allow into our eyes and ears will eventually travel to your mind, which then eventually trickles down to our heart.

Our heart will steer the body. But the problem with that is as long as we allow **WORLDLY** things in, those worldly things will begin to control our body. That makes it pretty difficult then to present ourselves as living sacrifices – who are **holy, righteous, and acceptable... pleasing** – in the sight of the Lord.

So, who is in control of the ship? Is it you? Is it God? Your worship team? The world and others around you? Whoever you present your body to as who will control it. We know that the body is the temple of God that houses the spirit of God. **Paul tells us that fact in his letter to the Corinthians. He says our bodies come, "from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price [remember – the price of Jesus's life for our own – the mercy of God shown to us]; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19).**

Well, if that doesn't sum it up, I'm not sure what will!

It's **GOD** who gave you life, and it's **God** who deserves you living your life for Him! As long as this is on the forefront of our minds, we will be able to glorify God with our very lives. **THIS** – is how we can present ourselves to Him, living and willing.

And notice Paul tells us to present our bodies a *LIVING* sacrifice. Not a dead sacrifice. What good is a dead body?

All throughout the Old Testament, the sacrifices of worship would end up **DEAD!** But we are to jump on that altar as **LIVING** and **ALIVE** and **READY** for what God would want to use us for.

Get up and let God use you!

We've seen the **MOTIVATION** for our worship – *God's mercies*.
The **MEANS** for our worship – **presenting ourselves**.

And now we see...

THE MESSAGE OF OUR WORSHIP:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

To break down these two words here, "reasonable," and "service," we find the following:

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“Reasonable,” meaning – “logical.” How cool is that? Our service and worship to the Lord – should include some logic!

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But it also translates to mean, *“spiritual.” Paul is saying... present yourself unto God – a living sacrifice – which is your reasonable, logical, spiritual service unto Him.*

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And then we find the word here, “service,” which literally means, “worship.”

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So, our **spiritual service** – refers to our **spiritual worship** – built logically on the truth of God’s Word – and then reflecting a true understanding of the Gospel of Christ. That’s the foundation for our worship! **This is our message.**

Spiritual worship also alludes to a deep, rooted spiritual connection of our SOUL – to God.

In other words – our worship – pertains to the soul. Which is no surprise – because our SOUL is the only **eternal** thing about our lives here on earth – which is fitting since our worship of God is an **eternal** part of our future, as well.

So, what is our reasonable service? It’s being a living sacrifice for God. 24/7. From the moment we rise, to the moment we fall asleep, in our dreams, in our highest of highs, in our lowest of lows... GOD is worthy to be praised and WE owe Him as much.

It’s important that we know that our WORSHIP of God – carries a MESSAGE:

Think back on Luke’s letter in Acts chapter 17 – when Paul is standing in the middle of the Areopagus and says to some of the most intelligent and religious group of people in the whole **world (verses 22-23), “I perceive that in ALL things you are VERY religious; for as I was passing through and considering the OBJECTS of your worship... I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, HIM I proclaim to you.”**

Again – ***there is a message in our worship. And it’s to proclaim CHRIST.***

Paul then proceeds to tell these religious men all about the God they don’t know. Which brings up an important reminder:

You cannot worship... Who you do not know. You want to worship God? Get to know Him!

These men of Athens thought it best to cover all their bases. So, what do they do? They set up altars all over the place!

"Here a god; there a god; everywhere a god, god; ole men of Athens worshiped gods; even One they did not know."

But that's where Paul steps in. Paul then proceeded to tell these men all about the God they did not know. And where does he start? At the very beginning. ***In Acts 17, verses 24-25, he says, "God, who made the world and everything in it... [He] does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things."***

Here, we see Paul (again – with some of the most well-educated men in the WORLD) – *using his logic!* – **teaching** them about something they knew **NOTHING** about: **WORSHIP**.

From the beginning of time, Paul says, God was there. God created all things. He created man and He gave him life – and breath – and meaning.

Man did not create God! Despite the temptation that we have to do so sometimes – even unintentionally.

He says: All of these other gods you worship, those are gods that YOU created. But the One true God – the God of the Bible – the "unknown" God whom you worship... guess what? He created you! 😊.

He continues in ***verses 27-28 of Acts chapter 17 saying "that they should seek the Lord, in hope that they might grope for Him --- and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live --- and move --- and have our being."***

Paul's cry in his letter to the Philippians (3:10) should resonate with us today. ***"... that I may know Him – and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."*** To know God – and to be known BY Him. This is a cry within, is it not?

"And THIS is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3). This is the heart of Jesus, the One who was sent for the atonement of our sin – to bring us back to God. That we may know Him – as the only true God.

This is the **MESSAGE** – of our worship. To proclaim Him and to make God known.

See - there is a **message** in our worship – not just to GOD – but a message that helps *others* have true knowledge of who God is. I challenge you to think through that each week as you're choosing songs.

Don't just work on a good flow, or that guitar riff, or that harmony. **Think:** What **message** am I proclaiming through this song today? Make it true – make it personal – and then make it LOUD.

Here's one tip for you that I'll share before moving on:

If someone were to approach me after service on a Sunday and say, "Hey, I don't think I understood that line in verse 3. Can you explain that to me?" I make sure I have an answer that will explain that lyric Biblically. And I make sure I have that answer BEFORE I ever introduce the song... And I make sure it's not an answer that fits my DESIRE to just sing the song because it has a "really cool" melody.

Hey guys – if you have to convince **yourself**... to convince **others** of how great a song is... it's probably not as great as you think.

If you have to REALLY explain the song in depth before introducing it, it's probably not worth it – in a congregational setting, at least. In your own personal and private worship time? Go for it! But not every song you can worship to **privately** – is a song that should be sung **publicly**. Rant over 😊.

I'll share a quick story with you before we move on to our last point.

Last week, I was driving my kids to school and (for some reason) a song popped into my head that I haven't heard for many years. You might be familiar with it – it's "The Song that Never Ends."

And it's called that because it truly is the song – that NEVER ENDS!

I won't sing it for you because we need to wrap up – but I was having fun torturing them with this song as I just kept singing it – OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER.

I was having fun until I realized what I did. I taught my KIDS – the song that never ends. So, you know what happened, right?

That started singing it. Forever. Just because it was the song that never ends.

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Suddenly – in that moment, a verse started running through my mind. ***It was Galatians 6:7-9, which says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the SPIRIT – will OF the Spirit – reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."***

Wow. That just got heavy, didn't it?

But it really made me think. I thought: "Yes, I know we reap what we sow when it comes to **spiritual** things in our lives..." but suddenly I was applying that same thought to the songs I teach.

And I think that's what makes songs so great. Songs may not be as beneficial to GOD as we think... Perhaps – God created music more for OUR benefit. To help us learn Scripture – to help us desire to sing – to help us express a MESSAGE of truth to our Savior.

We get a chance every week to sow **spiritual** seeds in our worship. Don't waste them. Teach God's people – and teach them well. Be a good steward over your ministry.

Our worship carries a great **MESSAGE**.

Finally, we see:

THE MINDSET OF OUR WORSHIP:

"And do not be CONFORMED to this world, but be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

We have a responsibility – to carry out our proclamation as Believers – by not going back to our old life BEFORE we became Believers.

Paul urges us – Let us not conform to the ways of this world, but may we seek to show the world – who Jesus is.

So many churches and worship leaders allow a secular approach in their ministries – to reach secular people. May that not be so!

As God told Moses at the burning bush in **Exodus 3**, "[Moses!]... **Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.**"

God didn't try to make Moses feel more comfortable... He didn't knock on the door of some seeker-sensitive church Moses created and ask if He could come in!

No! God made sure that **MOSES** knew – that HE was the one who was approaching a **holy** God. And, rather than bringing the secular into the sacred, and therefore conforming to this world, may need to make sure that we (by the renewing of our minds) be TRANSFORMED, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

May we bring the message of the **sacred** into the **secular** – and watch God change lives. This is a proper mindset when it comes to our worship.

Remember this: It is GOD – who decides what is HOLY. Not us!

Jesus makes it very clear in John 15 that we are to stand out from this world. **He says, "If you were of the WORLD, the world would love its own. Yet BECAUSE you are not of the world, but I chose you OUT of the world, THEREFORE the world hates you." (John 15:19).** In other words, you were not made to fit the mold of this world! And – trust me! The world has a mold! And it will do its best to fit you into it. There's almost this "universal code of conduct" that no one has ever really agreed to, but – trust me – it has its agenda – and the world would love nothing more than to suck you right into its plans!

The world says, *"Look at me! Imitate ME, as I imitate flesh!"*

The world says, *"Dress this way, and act that way, and do whatever you want to do – whatever makes you feel good!" "You be you!"*

The world even goes as far as to try and convince Christians that the ways of the CHURCH... are wrong. I'm sorry, guys, but don't buy into this way of thinking.

Yes, it's true that SOMETIMES – people get hurt by other people in the church. People are people – flawed and human... we already established who in this room was a sinner – and to no surprise – it's all of us!

But we should never try to transform the mindset of the **Church** – but rather – WE need to make sure it's **US** – who are being transformed – by the Word of God and the work of His Spirit.

As Paul reiterates the words of Jesus here in Romans chapter 12, he says we are not to be CONFORMED to this world and its way of thinking. Why? Because Jesus says you DON'T BELONG to the world! You belong to HIM. And if you belong to Jesus, then you'll imitate HIM – and HIS ways – and you'll become a living, breathing sacrifice – for His purposes.

THIS... is the **MINDSET** of our worship. That we will not be conformed to worldly ways... but that we WILL allow ourselves to be **TRANSFORMED** – by the renewing of our minds – IN Christ Jesus.

Here's the secret that the world doesn't want you to know! You can only be TRANSFORMED – by the work – that you **ALLOW** God to do in your heart.

If your heart is **hardened** towards things of the church, or the Bible, or the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, you will never be changed. With no change, comes no transformation. With no

transformation, comes only CON-formation to your environment. ***You're like the caterpillar who builds a cozy cocoon and decides to stay there.***

May we open ourselves – to the work that God has done on the Cross – and the change that He brings in our lives because of it.

Because when you allow yourself to be transformed by Jesus – you will want to worship Him with every ounce of your being. You will become that living sacrifice. Holy. Acceptable. Proving and living out the good – and acceptable – and perfect will of God in your life.

Peter writes this in his first epistle: "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." (1 Peter 1:13-15).

The **MINDSET** of a transformed Believer in Christ says this:

"Because of what JESUS did for ME on the Cross, I owe Him my life – and I'm going to live it out as a living sacrifice. My mind is on CHRIST – and not the things of this world. If I allow myself to think on the things of this world, I will fail to its lusts. But because GOD – who is holy – has called me to commune with Him, I will also be holy. THIS is my sacrifice. THIS is my offering. THIS is my worship."

Not based on anything of my own – or anything **I** can do. All based on the work of Christ – through me.

In Romans 12, Paul gave us four things that we can see – regarding our worship – that are reiterated all throughout the New Testament letters to Christians everywhere.

We see:

- **The MOTIVATION that we have to worship – that is, the mercies of God.**
- **The MEANS of how we worship.**
- **The MESSAGE of our worship (to God and before others).**
- **The MINDSET of our worship, which is based on everything God has done for us personally.**

Today, I hope we can take up the ***timeless call*** – to allow ourselves to reflect a life that has been saved from sin, delivered from destruction, and one that walks in newness of life. All because of what Christ has done for us.

Let us worship Him – now and forever – with this as our mindset.