

Intro.

- A. What motivates you to give a gift to someone?
 1. Relationship, love, occasion, obligation, ... *It just depends on what you are talking about!*
 2. We want to think this hour about giving us giving a giftto God!
- B. What moved Paul to challenge us to deeply contemplate giving God as great a gift as we can imagine?
 1. ...by the *mercies of God* =
 - a. First, God has not given to us what we really deserve (c. – the wages of sin **Rm.3:23 & 6:23** is death)
 - b. Now think of what He has given us, *the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 2. If & when we really get to thinking of how rich God is in His mercies (**Eph. 2:1-7**) towards us, then we will want to get very serious about the gifts we offer to God--- they have to be more than a token gift!

Discuss.**I. THE PRESENTATION – vs. 1**

- A. An offering → *a sacrifice*.
 1. Concept of sacrifice has always been part of following God (e.g., Able, Noah, Elijah)
 2. The nature of the thing sacrificed is very significant.
 - a. pure, without blemish or spot (**Lev. 1:3; Num. 19:2; Ezra 43:22—1 Pet. 1:19; Eph. 5:27; 2 Pt.3:14**)
 - b. valuable
- B. This presentation → *a living sacrifice*.
 1. Sacrifice = that which is brought to God, & offered up to him, thus placed at His control or disposal.
 - a. This = a complete sacrifice, presenting *all* of self
 - b. **1 Cor. 3:17** (c. **6:19-20**) – our bodies are described at the temple of God’s Spirit
 - c. → **Ac. 5:1-9** reminds us of the danger of trying to offer God a partial sacrifice while withholding for self, but giving the appearance of giving more than we have (c. **Mal. 3:8**)
 2. *living* – **Rom. 6:11, 13, 18**
 3. *holy* -- see **Eph. 4:24-32**
 4. *acceptable* – to God, that is our aim & purpose, **1 Thes. 4:1**
 5. *reasonable/spiritual service*—dedicating your entire life, body & spirit to God without holding anything back selfishly (c. **Lk. 14:33 & Phil. 3:7**)

II. THE TRANSFORMATION – vs. 2

- A. A through & complete change in form to God, as by a potter)
 1. Remember, man was *formed* by God *in His own image*, **c. Gn. 1:26, 2:7** (fashioned with a resemblance)
 2. In the developmental process, we loose our innocence & purity, & man eventually sins.
 - a. Sin typically comes about initially thru naivety or ignorance (c. **Ac. 3:18; 1 Cor. 2:8**)
 - b. As we become comfortable in the pleasures of sin, we willfully embrace sin (c. **Heb. 10:26**)
- B. Paul encourages Christians who have broken free from sin’s bondage to be *very mindful* of their form!
 1. Don’t *conform* = (Thayer - to pattern your life after another who is *in the world*); world passes away ! (c. **Eph. 2:12** separated f/ Christ in the world; **1 Jn. 2:16** all in the world is not of the Father; **1 Jn. 4:4**...than he that is in the world)
 2. Rather, be *transformed* = (Strong’s – to change, transfigure—*metamorfoo* c. **Mk. 9:2**)
 - a. This is a demand of radical change in thinking, see **Phil. 2:5**
 - b. This *change* comes about by means of *the renewing* (lit, renovation) *of your mind*, **c. 2 Cor. 4:16**
 - c. → there’s no room here for complacency, stagnation that sometimes characterizes many in Christ.
 3. As the mind changes, our character is transformed, & our conduct becomes noticeably different.
 - a. A *living sacrifice* will not let the world decide what they are supposed to be like!
 - b. **1 Jn. 2:15**, *not love world*; **Jas. 4:4** – *friendship with God puts us at odds with the world.*
 - c. The world travels the *broad way towards destruction* (**Mt. 7:13**), & Christians are different, and separate (c. **2 Cor. 6:17**)
- C. If all our calculations, plans, ambitions are determined by what fall within life here, then we still have a lot of changing that needs to be done.

III. THE APPLICATION: (Who would dare offer God something that has little value, or does not involve sacrifice?)

- A. Once the transformation is well under way, the transforming person is able to *prove what is the good...acceptable...perfect will of God.*
1. This **proving** is not to put to the test so as to determine good or bad; it is not an examination.
 2. This is to **approve** (c. **Rom. 2:18**, know God's will & approve the things that are excellent; **Phil.1:10**)
- B. The meaning: *We come to discover every day how approved the will of God is!*
1. God's will (Word) is the transcript of God's perfection, as seen in His holiness, justice & goodness.
 2. The process of Christ's followers becoming perfect (c. **Mt. 5:48**) is a continuing process.
 - a. **Col. 1:28-29** Paul worked & labored teaching with the aim of *presenting every man perfect in Christ.*
 - b. **Col. 4:12** - he labored, as should we, that we *may stand perfect & complete in all the will of God.*

Concl.

- C. This is the essence and application of the 1st & greatest commandment,
*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, **Mt. 22:37***

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross... (Isaac Watts)
*Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a present far to small;
Love so amazing, so Divine
Demands my soul, my life, my ALL!!!*