

8/17/11

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, so that we may boldly confess Him and build our lives and Your Church on Him; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 11:33---12:8 page

*(We cannot repay God, but we can use His gifts.)*

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 16:13-20 page

*(Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ. Jesus talks about building HIS Church.)*

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

THE SERMON "Sacrificing for the One who Sacrificed for us! Romans 11 and 12

INTRO – Mother Theresa is famous, not just for her faith and belief, but for her life that put her faith into action. She lived in an over populated country with extreme poverty helping and

serving the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, India. That was a real act of service on her part. It made her faith speak loudly to others.

- I. Christian people are called to live a life of service.
  - A. We are called to serve others as part of our faith, because Jesus served us with His life.
    1. Mother Theresa is just one example.
    2. Today's Bible reading from Romans gives another way that Christians serve.
      - a. Each of us have a gift and we use the gifts we have to serve God and others.
      - b. Some serve with gifts of prophesying, or speaking God's word. Other serve with exceptional service. Still others serve by teaching, or by contributing, or encouraging, or leading, or showing mercy.
    3. The life style of a Christian is to be one of service.
  - B. But, if you read all of this Bible reading, or listen to the story of Mother Theresa, you hear about something that accompanies service, sacrifice.
    1. Romans 12 says, **1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.**
    2. Serving God and others can mean bodily sacrifice. This could mean anything from working for someone to martyrdom.
    3. Serving God and others can mean the sacrifice of worship, where we praise God, instead of ourselves.
    4. But a Christian life of worship means serving and sacrificing.
- II. You and I both know that the idea of service, or the idea of sacrifice, is contrary to the way people naturally think.
  - A. People want to get, rather than to give.
    1. People want to be served, rather than to serve.
    2. Years ago the way of the world was not so obvious. In 1960 in his inauguration address JFK said, "Ask NOT what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." I wonder if anyone would be elected today saying that.
  - B. However, this desire to get, rather than to give is what causes all sorts of trouble in the world.
    1. Our country is fighting over financial troubles, who should pay and who should get and how this should happen.
    2. Even Christians are susceptible to this kind of thinking.
    3. This is what leads to treasuring things instead of God, and can get in the way of trusting in God and get in the way of living for Him.
- III. In Jacksonville we held a Servant Event for a number of years. This was a youth event where people from all over the country came to work for Elderly folks to help them stay in their homes. The youth were not paid, they paid to come. They did not

plan to take, they planned to give. But in giving they gained more in faith and love and character than if they just gave money. One year we had a young man from North Carolina named Gene. Gene could talk, and liked to sneak away when work came. All week long we were calling him to the purpose of the week. But, imagine, the next year Gene returned. He must have learned something the year before about God's love and love for others because Gene was often the first to Bible Class, the first to work, the first to volunteer. I about collapsed when I heard Gene say, "*What's wrong with these kids? Why aren't they working? Don't they know we're serving God and helping others?*" Having learned about God and the privilege of serving, Gene's heart had been changed that first year and it showed in his actions.

- A. Did you notice that this reading started first with understanding God?
  1. **33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!**
  2. Understanding even part way the wisdom, the judgments, the mind, the glory of God changes people.
  3. When we understand that the wisdom of God is the cross, the sacrifice of His own Son, that changes our hearts
- B. God has shown us His wisdom, His power, His love in the sacrifice of Jesus, and tonight he calls us to use our gifts in service, to sacrifice even in serving God and others.

CONCLUSION – If you are a parent you call your children to chores and responsibility time and again. We do this because we want what is best for our children. We do this out of love. But, children seem time and again to do anything possible to escape work and responsibility. Yet, if parents think about it, they often acted as their children did. What changed them? In addition to maturity, hopefully, parents act in love, love fed by faith. We pray tonight that as we grow in knowledge of God, in faith in His love for us, that we are led by His working in our hearts to lives of service and sacrifice. Amen.

PRAYERS –

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