

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

"Full Surrender"

Romans 12:1

Introduction

1. Chapter divisions there are in the Word. However, they do not always denote content breaks. This is true here in Romans. Across the chapter bar is the continuance of the truth being presented.

2. There is an obvious connection with the previous eleven chapters and the succeeding five chapters. This is accented by the logical sequence of the Book of Romans. Consider:

- a. Sin 1-3
- b. Salvation 4-5
- c. Separation 6-8
- d. Sovereignty 9-11
- e. Service 12-16

3. This chapter includes two major divisions: a. Official or special duties (vv. 1-8). b. Personal or general duties (vv. 9-21). The basic premise incorporated here is this: surrender to God precedes service for God. With this, what are some essentials of surrender?--

1. IT'S BASIS

a. To Whom?

Note that the ground is prefaced by "therefore" (οὖν οὖν). This is the third time this word is used to denote a major sequence (cf. 5:1, 8:1; here). Clearly the term assumes that morality is associated with doctrinal revelation (chaps. 1-11). They are not separate entities. Moreover, "brethren" (ἀδελφοί adelphoi) is an appropriate and necessary address. Surrender concerns those who are in the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1:9).

b. By What?

The approach to the concept of surrender is one of warm entreaty -- "Beseech" (cf. Eph. 4:1, 1 Thess. 4:1). Moses (O.T.) commands, but Paul (N.T.) appeals. The O.T. commanded to "get;" the N.T. appeals because the believer "has." The basis of the appeal is the mercies (compassions) of God (οικτιρῶν oiktirmon). While the immediate context is clear (11:32-36), the wider context is really the issue (chaps. 1-11). To put it sharply, it is because we have God's mercies (pl.) that we serve. Service to (or with) God springs from salvation, not for salvation.

2. IT'S FEATURES

This notes the very essential character of the surrender concept. Give attention:-

a. It is Voluntary

This notion is indicated by the verb "present" (παρῆσθαι parastesai). This is a technical term for presenting a sacrifice (cf. Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22). It conveys the thought of "placing beside" for any given purpose (cf. Luke 2:22; Ro. 6:13; Col. 1:28). The aorist active

infinitival verb commends a once-for-all voluntary surrender. It really is a call to live in accord with one's new relationship to Christ (cf. Col. 2:6). How can anyone do less since He has done SO much!

b. It is Complete

Now the noun "bodies" (σωματα somata) is a comprehensive term for the whole person body, soul, spirit (cf. Mt. 22:37). The reference is to present "themselves." Thus, not only emotions or energies, but every vestige of us is to be His. That is indeed a large order. That this is the issue is indicated by the use of "your" (υμων umon). Not someone else, but "your body," lock, stock, and barrel. To God, the body is important for through it we receive our impressions and express all our powers. Hence, the Lord wants "all of ourselves," not just a part.

c. It is Sacrificial

Here is a great wonder. The believer is 1. Alive from the dead in Christ. 2. Holy in Christ. 3. Utterly acceptable to God in Christ. All of this is not in addition to our justification (possessing a right and complete standing before the holy God), but what came with it and belongs to it. Therefore, the thought of the text is: surrender yourself as you already are in Christ.

Obviously the O.T. sacrifices are the background for this passage. Those sacrifices were offered on the alter and died. The N.T. idea of sacrifice is to be on the alter ALIVE (ζωσαν zosan). What an incredible idea -- dead to self, but alive to God (Ro. 6:11-13).

Note: The O.T. Levitical sacrifices (Lev. 1-7) were of two categories: 1. Those associated with reconciliation (sin, trespass). 2. Those associated with surrender based on reconciliation (burnt, meal, peace). The former dealt with expiation (atoned for and made satisfaction for sin) while the latter allowed the believer to offer with dedication.

d. It is Practical

The noun "service" (λατρειαν latreian) always has reference to service unto God. It is the normal outcome of surrender. That believers are saved to serve is more than a slogan. When John the Baptist was born, Zacharias his father, pointedly said that the coming Messiah Jesus would "deliver" us that we might "serve Him without fear" (Luke 1:74, 75). Ponder that this word may well mean "worship" as our service is as priests.

e. It is Rational

The only other use of this term (λογικην logikan) in the N.T. is by Peter (1 Pet. 2:2). There the term is rendered "word," although some translate it as "spiritual milk which is without guile." Thus, there it could mean "spiritual" service. Contextually with the argument of Paul, it appears the rendering "logical" is to be preferred. As an act of the mind or reason, surrender is just that. Something rational corresponds to the moral premises contained in the faith which we process. Bluntly it is appropriate for a believer to surrender.

Conclusion We stand at the threshold of a new year. All sorts of new opportunities are before us. Not least of which is to respond with honesty and vitality to the call of God to surrender all to Him. What will you personally do about this? God help us to say yes -- here am I, Lord!