

Paul's Letter to the Romans:



THE PINNACLE OF
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

How Do You Become a Living Sacrifice...

Romans 12:2

Our subject this morning is, “**How on earth does a person become a living sacrifice?**” I invite you to open your Bibles to Romans 12:1-2 and follow along as I read.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1**...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.

Now the last time we met, we began to unfold the second section of Paul's Letter to the Romans and we learned straightway that it is the ethical section of the book. What I mean by that is that Paul began at last to tell the Romans, and us by extension, what it is that he wanted them to do to live rightly as followers of Christ in a wicked, fallen and perverse world.

And what we saw last week was that Paul didn't just jump right into barking commands. He had the authority to do that, of course. But he didn't do that. No, he took the time to connect the dots for the Romans so that they might be able to understand not only what they were to do but also why they were to do it. He connected those dots by basing his commands on his “**imperatives**” on what

Christ had accomplished for His people. In other words, he got out his yellow pad and made a ledger sheet and on the left side of that sheet he totaled up all the things that Christ had accomplished for the Romans. The left side of that ledger sheet, the side that contains the **“indicatives”** or things Christ has done for His people, is contained in Romans 1-11.

Then on the right side of that ledger sheets, Paul put two words and those words were **“living sacrifice”**.

You see Paul’s intention was to stack up all of God’s tender mercies in Christ on one side of the ledger and then point to the other side and say, **“Shouldn’t all of these spiritual blessings in Christ result in our living a certain way?”** And of course, they should. It’s only reasonable...only logical...only intelligent and rational to say that they should.¹ The things that Paul wanted the Romans to do, in light of what Christ had accomplished on their behalf, are contained in Romans 12-16. And verses one and two of chapter twelve form the transition between the two sections. Because of all of the things mentioned in chapters one through eleven, we ought **“therefore”** to set about to do what is contained in chapters twelve through sixteen.

But here’s the thing and I need to say this because my ledger sheet analogy might give you a wrong impression. It’s not just a tit for tat trade. It’s not just an even swap. It’s not just, **“He gave us this and so we give Him that.”**

No, the scales are not evenly balanced. We are not trading mechanical obedience for heaven. What obedience do we have that would be a suitable trade? Besides, we already have heaven. What we are doing is living in light of what He has

done for us. And we do that by constantly reminding ourselves of His extraordinary, undeserved mercy and just responding from the heart out of unfeigned gratitude. Let me say that even plainer.

We are not paying God back.

No, we are not paying God back at all. Our hearts have been stirred by love and affection and gratitude for all He done for us. When we consider with our minds what He has done...when we reflect on His tender mercies with whatever ability we have to ponder deep things we are just dumbstruck by the enormity of His love and the result is we naturally tune not only our minds to worship Him but our bodies as well. And it is right and fitting that we ought.

That is why Paul started off this second section the way he did.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:1**...Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy...

You see Paul urges the Romans not so God will be merciful but rather because God has already been merciful and what He urges them to do is to respond with both their minds and their bodies from an abiding sense of gratitude.

Now the kind of gratitude I am talking about is the basis for all genuinely reformed ethics.

If you look, for example, at the Heidelberg Catechism you will see that it is divided up into three separate parts. The first section deals with man's fall and sinfulness. That is, it deals with man's guilt (Questions 3-11). The second section

deals with Christ's atoning work, how He redeemed His people. That is, it deals with God's grace in Christ (Questions 12-85). And then the third section deals with how Christians ought to live in light of what Christ has done. That is, it deals with Christian gratitude (Questions 86-129). The three sections then concern guilt, grace and gratitude.² Or if you want to put it another way: sin, salvation and service.³ One thing flows to the next.

In fact, Question 2 from the Heidelberg Catechism (questions 1 and 2 make up the introduction to the catechism) spells that out very clearly. Here's what it says:

Question 2. How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?

Answer. Three; the first, how great my sins and miseries are; the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance.

But this notion of ethics flowing out of gratitude is not just found in the Heidelberg Catechism. No, it permeates almost all reformed literature. Listen to how the Westminster Confession of Faith puts it in Chapter 16, the first two paragraphs

I. Good works are only such as God has commanded in His holy Word, and not such as are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness...

Do you see what I mean? Doing good works, living lives of distinction, presenting our bodies as living sacrifices all mean the same thing and are the

natural result of having grateful hearts. That is why we can talk so freely about being out from under the law. It is not that we have no moral standard, it's just that our behavior is not driven solely or even principally by a written code. No, it is driven by love and gratitude for what Christ has done for us.

But in case all that is not clear let me read to you how Calvin puts it in his commentary on Romans 12:1.

But all this teaches us, that until men really comprehend how much they owe to the mercy of God, they will never worship him with the right sort of feeling, or be properly stimulated to obey him. But Paul, that he might bind us to God, not by the kind of fear slaves possess, but by the voluntary and cheerful love of righteousness, beckons us in the light of God's mercy...having found a Father so kind and generous, to strive to dedicate ourselves wholly to him.

And what Paul says, in urging us this way, ought to have a powerful influence on us, especially since he goes far beyond everyone else in proclaiming the grace of God. A man would have to have a cast-iron heart not to be kindled by such a doctrine, a doctrine that has been expressed to fill our hearts with love towards God. Where then are all these yahoos who think that all exhortations to a holy life are nullified, if the salvation of men depends on the grace of God alone.

*Can anything tune a pious mind to render obedience to God as much as serious reflection on God's goodness towards it?*⁴

Can anything tune a pious mind to render obedience to God as much as serious reflection on God's goodness towards it?

Isn't that just about the best sentence ever?

That is what we mean around here whenever we talk about “**experimental Calvinism**”. You see we are done here with “**academic Calvinism**”. Now that

does not mean that we are done the scholarly pursuit of understanding what our Savior has accomplished on our behalf. We are going to study those things and reflect on those things and ponder those things from now till the end of eternity. We want to know everything we can know about what He has done for us but we don't just want to know it so we can be smarter or a little bit more smug about our level of theological sophistication. No, we want to know all we can so that our love for Christ will continue to grow and expand and fill our hearts and minds with gratitude for all He has accomplished and extend outward through our bodies to other Christians and even to unbelievers in acts of kindness and mercy.

Now, this morning we come to verse 2 of chapter 12 and it is going to answer a very specific question. The question it is going to answer is this, **"How on earth does a person become a living sacrifice?"**⁵

Isn't that a great question, a question worthy of being answered with care and serious reflection? I think it is.

I mean it seems to me that I have heard countless sermons on **"Becoming A Living Sacrifice"**. I have even heard a few sermons on **"Why We Ought to Become a Living Sacrifice?"** What I have not heard as far as I can remember is a sermon on **"How A Person Might Go About Becoming a Living Sacrifice."** In fact, I can honestly say, and I don't think I am speaking in any sense of exaggeration at all, that most of the sermons I heard from the Paul's Letter to the Romans, growing up as a fundamentalist, were from chapters twelve to sixteen. And you can see why that might happen. Many fundamentalist pastors are good men grieved by the wickedness of the world and their thought is self-evident, **"If**

I can just get a man to act a certain way, he will honor Christ.” But the truth is a man does not have the resources to live that way unless he has been born again and then begins, through the ministry of the word and spirit, to comprehend the depths of what Christ has done for him.

But I digress.

I was making the point that verse 2 of chapter 12 answer this question, **“How on earth does a person become a living sacrifice?”**⁶

Now, I say that because I think verse two is an explanation of what verse one means. It’s not a series of steps, **“Do this and oh yeah, do this too.”**

No, it’s **“Do this and when I say do this, here’s what I mean by that.”**

That is, verse two is not another separate command, but rather an exposition or clarification of what verse one commands. Or to say it another way, verse two tells us in a practical way how to bring about the very visual command to present our bodies a living sacrifice.

Now let me stress that point for a moment.

Verse one paints a wonderfully visual idea, very visual. It is intended to evoke images of sheep and cattle being drawn toward the altar in some religious center of worship. And every first century reader knew what happened when such animals reached their destination. They were slaughtered and the bodies thrown on flaming altars as holocaust or burnt offerings to appease or turn away the

wrath of whatever god was being worshipped. But verse one takes that basic image and Christianizes it. You see rather than become a burnt offering Paul is urging the Romans to become **“living sacrifices”** and then he goes on to list some of the attributes of a **“living sacrifice”**.

Now the first attribute is an obvious one. It is a sacrifice that is **“alive.”** But because it is a **“sacrifice”** it is an act of worship and it costs something. But it is also a sacrifice that is **“holy”** or set apart for God. It is something that is consecrated wholly and completely to God. Finally, it is a sacrifice that is **“pleasing”** to God.

Now I want you to hold those thoughts in mind and speculate with me for a minute or two how different that visual image is from the visual image most first century worshippers had burned into their minds. When most first century worshippers went up to their temple they were used to a good deal of carnage and death. Now, I am not just talking about Jewish worshippers. I am talking about all first century worshippers. All of them, whether Jewish or pagan, were used to the smell of blood and death. They were used to flies and smoke. They were used to the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep.

Now imagine a man bringing a calf or a sheep up to the temple and watching some priestly official slit its throat and then begin butchering it only to see another pen of animals penned up in the shade, enjoying the best feed and the best water.

“Hey, what are those animals over there. I don’t think I’ve ever seen any animals penned up in the temple before.”

“Ah yes, them animals, and this is kind of a new thing, are living sacrifices.”

“Living sacrifices...never heard that before. When you gonna kill em?”

“We’re not. That’s why they call em ‘livin’ sacrifices, don’t you know.”

“Well, I wish you’d told me that before I killed my animal. I would have much preferred to use one of them as opposed to one of mine.”

“No... couldn’t have done that. Them animals are set apart...quite special, you see, for their god.”

“And their god likes em like that? I mean he likes em alive?”

“Yeah...he’s pleased to have em like that. And here’s the thing...they’re the most compliant, most obedient sacrifices I’ve ever seen. They do whatever he says and they actually seem quite glad to do so. Not sure why that is. I know this though, he paid a lot to get em.”

You see that’s the visual image that verse one evokes. It is an image of living sacrifices, holy, separate and pleasing to God. Of course, what it doesn’t do is spell out exactly what being such a sacrifice might look like. Still, it is a powerful image, an image intended to evoke emotion, deep abiding emotion.

And the point I made last week was this. A Christian is a person willing to be that kind of sacrifice, not out of fear or even hope of reward but out of an abiding sense of gratitude for what God has accomplished on their behalf in Christ. And I concluded my point by observing that the text say, **“Christians don’t think that is too much to ask.”** In fact, Christians think it is the rational, logical and the spiritually intelligent thing to do.

Now the question, **“How does a Christian go about doing that? How on earth does a Christian present his body to be a living sacrifice?”**

Paul explains what he means by that in verse two.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:2**...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.

Now I want you to notice the structure of the verse. There's negative. Then there's a positive and then finally, there is a stated result.

"Don't do this. Instead do this and when you do this, this is what will happen."

Do you see that?

Now let's look at the component parts of that and see whether or not it answers the question, **"How on earth does a Christian present his body to be a living sacrifice?"**

The first part is, **"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world..."**

Now the word for **"world"** here is not the word we normally expect. It is not the word **"κόσμος"** (kos-mos) but the word **"αἰών"** (aye-own) and the sense is not concerned so much with geography or even the idea of creation, as it is with the **"way of the world"**. The word usually has the sense of **"age"** like when talk about the **"age of reason"** or the **"age of industrialization"**. And when you understand that you understand why the NIV translates the one word **"αἰών"** into the four English words...**"pattern of this world."** And the point really is

this, the Christian is not to adapt or conform to this current **“way of the world”** both because it is wrong and wrong-headed but also because it is passing away or temporal.

Now there are a lot of commentators that argue that the Greek word translated **“conform”** stresses the **“external”** and **“superficial”** while the word **“transform”** stresses the **“internal”** and **“genuine.”** But I think it is entirely possible to make too much of that. I think Paul’s point is really quite simple, **“We ought to quit allowing ourselves to be constantly shaped by this present evil age and ought instead to have our minds being continually made new instead.”** You see both words are present tense passives and the point is that whatever we ought to prevent from happening or allow to happen ought to be continual.

I think that is what J.B. Phillips had in mind in his very famous paraphrase when he rendered the first part of verse two this way, **“Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold.”**

Now I thought I might take a minute or two this morning and open it up to you to help us reflect on some of the ways the world tries to conform us to itself. My question then, is really is a simple one, **“How can a Christian become conformed to this present, evil age?”**

I think a Christian can become conformed to this present, evil age when they begin to view as essential those things in life that are not essential at all. I think a Christian becomes conformed to this present evil age when their thoughts and their motivations become characterized by the very things that typify the world’s thoughts and motivations. When a Christian looks at things the way the world

looks at things, when their opinions and motivations and dreams and hopes are exactly the same as the world's doesn't that mean they have been shaped by what 1 John calls the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life?

^{NAS} **1 John 2:16**...For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Now you know what I am talking about.

It seems to me, that there is in our age a pernicious and pervasive attitude that we are the most intelligent, most gifted, most insightful and most worthwhile generation that has ever lived. And while I doubt seriously whether that is true, I do know this, we are certainly drifting in a vast sea of self-indulgence...a self-indulgence that keeps parents from spending time with their kids... a self-indulgence that keeps kids from spending time with their aging parents...a self-indulgence that snuffs out any altruistic desire to live life for the benefit of others...that snuffs out any compulsion to live to comfort the poor or the sick or the infirm, the helpless or the hopeless.

And the strange thing about that spirit of self-indulgence is that it suppresses whatever pangs of conscience are calling us to reign in our lusts or to voluntarily scale back our pursuit of wealth or the enjoyment of our wealth or even our comfort for the greater good of Kingdom of Christ.

No, we view ourselves as the most wonderful, gifted and majestic people who have ever lived and we have every intention of rewarding ourselves by

conforming to the world and we do that because we think we can handle it and because we think we're worth it. And here's the sad thing about all that. When we live that way we anesthetize ourselves by ridding ourselves of any possibility of sacrifice or pain. And when we do that we wind up removing, along with the possibility of sacrifice or pain, whatever possibility we might have had for genuine greatness and instead find ourselves plugging into worlds of imagination and fantasy to supply what our hearts long for and here's the saddest thing of all. I am not talking about the culture; I am talking the church.

You see we are so conformed to the world that we no longer have very much to say to it. We have nothing to offer it that we did not first borrow from it. I mean think about it, where is the church that is saying, **"Come, take up your cross and follow Jesus!"** No, instead we are appealing to the world in all the same categories that this present evil age does, **"We'll make your pain go away. We'll make you feel better about yourself. We'll make your senses dull with pleasure."**

But that is not what Paul is saying. No he is saying, **"Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this present evil age...instead, be transformed by the renewing of your minds."**

Now his command raises two questions. Here they are. **"How do we let our minds to be renewed?"** and, secondly **"Why do we need to have our minds renewed in the first place?"**

Well, I want to start with the second question. It's the easier question to answer. We need to have our minds renewed because our minds were tainted in the fall.

Do you remember that devastating series of pronouncements back in Romans chapter 1?

^{NIV} **Romans 1:18**...The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

^{NIV} **Romans 1:21**...For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:22**... Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:25**...They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:28**...Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:29**...They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:32**...Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

You see that is the reason we need to have our minds renewed. They are tainted by sin and they are conformed to the present, evil age so that we are not able really to even think rationally, without the abiding encumbrance of sin and worldliness. We are like the Apostle Paul after his encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus, we know something wonderful has happened. We know we

have encountered the risen Christ and believe in Him and what He has accomplished for us, still we long more and more to have the scales fall from our eyes so we can see and see rightly and it is this renewal of the mind that brings that about.

Now how does the renewal of our minds occur? It occurs as the Holy Spirit takes the truth of God's Word and applies it our hearts and minds. When that happens our regenerated mind comes to understand, to believe and to embrace a godward view of things.

Isn't that what the second half of Romans 12:2 means when it says:

^{NIV} **Romans 12:2b...** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Now you may be thinking to yourself, **"O.K. Tom, I believe what you are saying but you're not giving us anything specific."**

That's true, of course. I have not done that, at least, not yet.

But that will happen in the rest of the letter. Paul will expand the idea of mind renewal by posing several concrete applications. In other words, he will take the principle of **"not being conformed to this present evil age but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"** and apply it to how we look at ourselves, how we look at the Body of Christ, how we look at the exercise of spiritual gifts, how we look at other believers, how we look at unbelievers, how we look at the civil government, how we look at weaker brothers. And in each case he is either going

to say or to imply that we ought not to be conformed to how the world looks at things but rather that we ought to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

Now how do I know that is so? I know it from the repeated use of the word “**think**” or one of its derivatives. It is used some nine times between verse 2 and the end of the letter.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:3**...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.

^{NIV} **Romans 12:16**...Live in harmony with one another (think the same things). Do not be proud (don't be high thinkers), but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:14**...Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

^{NIV} **Romans 14:6**...He who regards (thinking) one day as special, does so (thinks so) to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

^{NIV} **Romans 15:5**...May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity (think the same things) among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus...

Now because of that I am concluding that Paul in thinking through his closing applications wanted to speak more specifically about what it meant to renew our minds. The implication of how he does that is that we renew our minds by letting the Word of God be driven home to our hearts and minds and live in light of what it says rather than what the world says. When we do that show ourselves to be living sacrifices, holy, acceptable and pleasing to God.

Now I'll talk more how this principle is to be applied in upcoming weeks but I thought I might give you just one example to help you to begin to contemplate some of Paul's applications.

For example, verse 3 starts off like this:

^{NIV} **Romans 12:3**...For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought...

Now I think what Paul is saying here is that we ought avoid being conformed to this present, evil age and constantly thinking we are more important than we really are and instead of thinking that way we ought rather to be transformed by having the renewal of our minds and think about ourselves rightly. It is only then that we can actually become living sacrifices and be pleasing to God.

Around the time of Christopher Columbus there was a pope in Rome name Julius 6th. He wanted to build a monument to himself and he did. It is called St. Peter's Basilica. Now I am not arguing that it is not a wonderful building. It is one the great wonders of the modern world. It has stood almost without any modification for some 400 years and it is enormous. To understand something of the cost of the thing, you need to understand this. When St. Peter's was built it cost just about the same as what it cost the United States government to put a man on the moon. It cost Julius all the money he possessed and all the money the Roman Catholic Church possessed in the world. In a very real sense, it bankrupted the church and most of Europe. It was one of the reasons that Leo X had to promote the selling of indulgences. He was trying to refill the coffers of the church and he was trying to finish what Julius started. And it was the selling of those indulgences that led to the Reformation and I know all that, and you

know all that. But here's my point. Julius built St. Peter's to be remembered and he did it at an awful cost. Europe was still reeling from the plague and human suffering and misery was at an all time high and could have been reduced had he applied the resources he to that. But he did not. He did what the world thought great men do.

But fifty years later or so, John Calvin of Geneva took a different approach. He offered his life as a **"living sacrifice."** He lived plainly. He suffered with his flock and when he died, he left no monument. In fact, Calvin insisted that he be buried in a common unmarked grave. So when you visit Geneva today, there is no grave to visit to honor Calvin. Still his legacy is so much greater than that of Julius. He is remembered as a **"living sacrifice"** and he is remembered that way because he refused to be conformed to what the world thought greatness was. Instead, he had his mind renewed and was transformed to the glory of the Lord Jesus.

We need to do the same. Let's pray.

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans Volume 4: The New Humanity, Romans 12-16* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), 1515. Boice has a wonderful chapter called "Service That Makes Sense". In it he outlines his own reason for thinking that the word **"logikos"** ought to be translated **"reasonable"** instead of **"spiritual"**. Listen to how he puts it: "One meaning is preserved in the King James Version: **"your reasonable service."** The newer translation is **"your spiritual worship,"** which appears in the New International Version. So, which is it? Is it **"reasonable service"** or **"spiritual act of worship"**? One answer is that the Greek words may actually embrace both ideas at the same time, spiritual worship being thought of also as rational service. But if I am forced to make a choice, I find myself siding with John Murray, who notes that **"reasonable or rational is a more literal rendering."** *Logikos* has given us the English word *logical*, which means reasonable or according to reason, and this should also be the preferred meaning, if for no other reason than because in the next verse Paul talks about Christians being transformed by **"the renewing of [their] mind[s]."** So Paul really is talking about something reasonable, saying that the living sacrifice that he is urging upon us here is logical."

² Michael Scott Horton, "A Defense of Reformed Liturgy" from *Modern Reformation Magazine: Pardon and Praise, Worship Calmly Considered* (January/February 1996) Horton writes: "According to *The Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, **'Reformed worship glorifies God, the holy God, whose gracious salvation is a free, undeserved gift. Therefore, Reformed worship can be described as 'objective'; with awe it glorifies the sovereign God, yet it is essentially thankful.'** It is important for those of us who call ourselves **'Reformed'** to realize that Reformed theology is not simply a new way of thinking or believing, but a new way of worship and service. First, Reformed worship is dialogical. That is, God speaks to us (guilt, followed by grace), and we respond (gratitude). This, by the way, is the division of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563): Guilt, Grace and Gratitude. As David G. Buttrick points out, **'If medieval worship had become an 'office,' a propitiatory work offered to God securing mercy, Reformation worship was responsive-like the biblical leper who, healed, turned back to praise God.'** In the Reformed tradition, he notes, **'worship is neither a transactional sacrifice nor an awareness of religious experience. God acts empty-handed and we respond to God's goodness in a 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.'**"

³ Robert Godfrey, "Christ in the Heidelberg Catechism" from *Modern Reformation Magazine: Preaching Christ* (March/April 1993). He writes, "The second question of the catechism presents the basic structure of the whole work. It asks, **"What must you know to live and die in the comfort?"** It answers, **"Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; and third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance."** The catechism from this point is divided into three sections. Questions 3-11 deal with man's sin and misery. Questions 12-85 cover man's deliverance from sin. Questions 86-129 discuss the life of gratitude to be lived for such a deliverance. These three sections have been called sin, salvation, and service, or guilt, grace, and gratitude."

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 12:1. Paraphrased and simplified by me.

⁵ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* in the New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 754-5. "By using the vague conjunction *kai* (usually translated "and"; cf. KJV and NASB), Paul leaves open the exact relationship between vv. 1 and 2. The two verses could be coordinate, issuing two parallel but separate exhortations. But v.2 is probably subordinate to v. 1, giving the means by which we can carry out the sweeping exhortation of v.1. We can present our bodies to the Lord as genuinely holy and acceptable sacrifices only if we "do not conform to this world" but "are transformed by the renewing of the mind."

⁶ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* in the New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 754-5. "By using the vague conjunction *kai* (usually translated "and"; cf. KJV and NASB), Paul leaves open the exact relationship between vv. 1 and 2. The two verses could be coordinate, issuing two parallel but separate exhortations. But v.2 is probably subordinate to v. 1, giving the means by which we can carry out the sweeping exhortation of v.1. We can present our bodies to the Lord as genuinely holy and acceptable sacrifices only if we "do not conform to this world" but "are transformed by the renewing of the mind."

⁷ C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans: Volume 2, Commentary on Romans 9-16 and Essays* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979; reprint, 1981), 606. Cranfield's discussion is very good. To see the opposite view cf. William Hendriksen, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 405. See the footnotes.