

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Grace: God is For Us

8. We are for God

October 29, 2023

Romans 12:1-8 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform 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 faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For 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, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1. We give our whole selves for God.

To offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? *Romans 8:31–39 (NIV)*

2. We are transformed for God.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. *Romans 8:28–29 (NIV)*

3. We share our gifts together for God.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. *1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)*

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. *Ephesians 4:4–7 (NIV)*

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. *2 Corinthians 8:3–5 (NIV)*

When we use the term steward...we mean one who is being transformed by God in response to the understanding that everything we have and everything we are has been redeemed and given back to us as a gift to be treasured and invested generously in the work of the Kingdom. "Stewardship" then is the daily practice of the steward who places into God's service the entirety of his or her life and resources with great joy. –R. Scott Rodin, *Revolution in Generosity*, page 98

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SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

October 29, 2023

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Select the below practice or choose a practice from the previous week)

- **Practice of Gratitude (3-5 minutes):** Select and Play a song on the SBPC playlist.

<https://solanabeach.church/grace-music-playlist>

- **As the song plays:**

- Listen. Breathe. Attend to the presence of God in your life at this moment.
- You may journal, draw, doodle, or simply close your eyes and breathe deeply. Let gratitude define the next few minutes.

- **Listening to God (5-7 minutes)**

Alone: In a posture of stillness and openness, come to God with the intention to listen.

Pray: "Lord, I am here. Quiet the noises and voices around me. Teach me to listen for You."

Journal/Draw: While you pray: listen and wait. Then, jot down any themes or images that come to your mind. Listening well also means listening with others and so you are encouraged to find a partner to share your experience.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Read** Romans 12:1-8 alone and together.
- **Quiet Reflection (10 minutes):** Reflect on the questions below in writing, drawing, or quiet contemplation.
 - What words, phrases, or images stand out to you in Romans 12:1-8?
 - How has God's grace changed you over time and in community?
- **Reflect together (in pairs):** Spend 5-7 minutes sharing your journal responses, reflections, or questions.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE (Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.) **Read** Romans 12:1-8 and any additional scripture passages from the message outline.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- What has grabbed your attention from the message this week? Why?
- Why do you think Paul uses the word "therefore" and "in view of God's mercy" in verse 1?
- What does Paul say is "true and proper worship" (v.1)?
- What does it mean to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" in verse 2?
- Why does Paul call the church a "body"? How does this reflect our diversity and unity?
- What are the gifts that Paul describes in verses 6-8? Which of these gifts have you seen in your life? In each other?

CONNECT WITH STEWARDSHIP AND GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD (select one question for discussion)

- Read and reflect on the below quote, alongside 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, Romans 12:4-8

"God's gift prompts reciprocal giving to others...Christoformity is a God orientation where the grace of God-in-Christ given to a person prompts Body-of-Christ orientation in generosity, especially to the poor." (Scot Mcknight, *Reading Romans Backwards*)

PRAYER

As we enter into stewardship season, consider how God is calling you to live generously according to the grace of God and according to our different gifts. How can you pray for one another— in giving, in serving, and in showing mercy (to name a few gifts)?

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