Authentic Worship
Scripture Rom. 11:25-12:2

# Thesis: In view of God’s mercy, consecration of all of ourselves to God is our most authentic response.

# Introduction

## Common questions

One of the little children’s letters to God in a little book lent to me once read like this: "Dear God, It is true that my Daddy won't go to heaven if he uses his bowling words around the house?" It is a child's way of asking about the meaning of consecration to God; of beginning to question what actions are truly consistent with a profession of being a Christian.

The questions don’t stop as we grow older. Have you ever heard an adult pointing out some atrocious behavior by someone who claims to be a Christian; and then they say, “If that’s what it means to be a Christian, I don’t want to be one!” It’s a slightly more adult way of hiding the real question, “What is a true Christian anyway?”

## In Romans 12, Paul gives us lots of info to help us work on that question.

Our assignment for the messages this month is to answer the question, “What are the marks of real Christian? I plan that together we will dig into this chapter and discover together what Paul describes as some of the marks of authentic Christianity.

## The first characteristic that Paul describes in this chapter is “Genuine Worship.”

**The key phrase -- spiritual worship**

1. Translations give us a clue this is a difficult phrase (Gk logiken latreian)
(latreia means ministry to God, see Barclay in loc.) (logiken has to do with what is reasonable)
KJV reasonable service
NRSV, spiritual worship

NIV (84) spiritual act of worship

NIV (2011) true and proper worship

NEB paraphrase “I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him, a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart." or *in* the NEB notes "for such is the worship which you as rational creatures should offer.n”

2. My own paraphrases - logical and genuine gift, most authentic act of worship,
most valid or real service to God. To use an English idiom, the worship that makes the most sense.

So a true Christian is a true worshipper of God. Jesus pointed this out himself as he spoke to the woman at the well. John 4:23, 24 ESV

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

Paul here in Romans 12 is urging us to become exactly that. The question is how does he tell us to do it? What is involved in being a genuine worshipper of God?

# The authentic Christian responds to the mercy of God with worship

## Our first motivation to worship God is simply that we are responding properly to who God is.

1. The reason for the “Therefore” at the beginning of chapter 12 goes back to the closing section of Chapter 11 – verses 33-36
v. 33,34 the mystery of God's unsearchable wisdom, judgment, knowledge puts us in awe
v. 35 though He needs nothing, yet he desires our service – we are humbled to be noted. .
v. 36 God is creator, and owner of all.

As the Psalm writer put it, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Psalm 19:1
Also in Psalm 8 “When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon…

## In addition, we worship God because of God’s mercies, of how he has treated us.

So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. Ro 12:1 NCV

### II Cor 1:3 He is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort…

Ps 103:10-11 ESV ”He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.”

Luke 6:36 Jesus tells us the Father is merciful. Lk 6:36 NIV “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Since we have been disobedient, but God has shown us mercy, we should gratefully respond in consecration. 12:1

(1) ill. In a pre-civil war slave market a young man who had just been purchased by an Englishman began to taunt the one who had just purchased him - "Ha , you buy :
a slave when slavery has been abolished in England." The purchaser replied, "I have bought you to set you free!" Overcome with emotion, the young man replied, "I will be your willing slave forever." (LI-SE) He responded to life transforming mercy with an offer of complete self-sacrifice.

God has shown us mercy by setting us free from the penalties of sin. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Because of our sin and rebellion against God we deserved spiritual death. But Jesus has granted us forgivenes and eternal life instead. What mercy! No wonder we worship Him.

### The hymn writers tell this story well.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now I’m found
Was blind, but now I see! -- John Newton

Praise the Savior, ye who know Him,
Who can tell how much we owe Him
Gladly let us render to him
all we are and have. – Thomas Kelly

### New mercies every morning

Lam 3:22-23 “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.” RSV

How has God shown his mercy to you? Have you given him the worship he deserves for the mercy he has shown?

So we have established that for the true Christian, God deserves our worship both because of who he is and because of what he has done for us. Now, how does the authentic Christian show worship?

# The authentic Christian worships through complete consecration

The next part of Paul’s argument is that authentic worship means complete consecration of ourselves to God.

## He makes this point by alluding to the Old Testament practice of Temple sacrifices.

The animals given to God sacrifices were dedicated completely to God. Some were completely burned as whole burnt offerings. In the case of some other sacrifices, only part of the animal was used in the temple rituals and the rest was given to the priests for their sustenance. But in both cases the worshiper had completely dedicated the animal to God’s service.

Paul uses this background that his hearers understood well to suggest that they dedicate their lives completely to God, holding nothing back.

 ill. - Knights p. 105 An African was mauled by a lioness. Rev. Clark, a Scotch
missionary nursed him back to health. The African came back and said to Rev. Clark, "You know the law of the African forest. The redeemed belongs to the redeemer.

Paul is suggesting considering all that God has done for us, our most logical response is to give him our whole selves in daily service.

## Paul adds two adjectives that describe the kind of sacrifice that he wants us to make.

### The first is the word “living.”

This simply draws the contrast between what Paul is teaching and what happened in the Old Testament. Under the law of Leviticus, the sacrifices died. But Paul does not want that; he suggests that God wants us committed to him while we are alive.

### The second adjective that Paul uses is the word “holy.”

This word talks about the character of our lives. In the Old Testament sacrifices were to be unblemished. Our lives today are to be lies that reflect the loving character and ethical standards of God.

So daily consecration of our lives is our highest worship.

# The authentic Christian expresses complete consecration daily through service to God and others

The next question that we have to ask is this. How do we show complete consecration to God?

Here is where the phrase “living sacrifice” really helps us. To be completely dedicated to God while we are alive means that we live life every day for God.

 “Real worship is the offering of everyday life to Him.” William Barclay, (Romans p. 157)

This direction that Paul is taking us is not the one we necessarily expect. We associate worship with church buildings, liturgies, songs, prayers, bended knees, raised hands, hymns, choirs, and mostly on Sunday morning. But Paul is saying that the most authentic worship is not something that is expressed only in special ways and in a special place on one day a week. Not at all. The most genuine worship, the kind that really passes the test of true devotion to God, is a heart response of consecration that evidences itself daily in words and actions that are pleasing to God.

Check out another verse that puts its own stamp of approval on this idea.

Gal 5:6 NIV “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”

One scholar put it this way

"The service which Christians are to offer consists *in* the fashioning of their *inner* lives and their outward conduct *in* a way which plainly distinguishes them from the world and which corresponds to the will of God." TDNT Vo. IV p. 65

This does not at all mean that we should not gather together to worship God in church on Sunday, that is not it at all. Paul’s point is that our dedication to God should make our entire life and expression of worship to God not just what we do for one hour on Sunday morning.

Actually, Paul’s teaching is reflecting the OT concept that love for God resulted in keeping his commands. Dt 10:12-13 “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?”

# Conclusion:

DeVerne’s Story on p. 168 in God With Us by JoAnne DeSerio Jones