

The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript
Episode 42
Romans, Part 19 (Rom 12:1-8)
November 21, 2023

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Episode Summary:

In this episode, Matt dives into Romans 12:1-8, where Paul encourages the church to be a living sacrifice. What does this mean? What is the significance of that word "sacrifice," and how does Paul use this concept to shape his readers' ecclesiology? And what does it have to do with spiritual gifts? Listen to find out!

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Transcript:

0:00 Hey friends. Welcome back to another episode of the Bible Unmuted. I'm excited to be with you once again as we continue our journey through the Book of Romans. Today we find ourselves in Romans chapter 12 and is a lot here to consider to pray through to think about, to meditate upon. And so I'm excited to dive into this wonderful text. I hope you've been enjoying the Book of Romans. I have. It's always fun to dive deep into what they call Paul's most famous letter. And so here we are once again today. Before we dive into the text I have to say first, I'm exhausted. I'm absolutely exhausted. In fact, I should say I feel fine now, but I know if I sit still for any period of time, I'm going to crash. So this episode is going to be a lot of fun. It's going to be an experiment to see how long I can last. So as you may know, this is the week that the Society of Biblical Literature meets, and the annual meeting this year is in San Antonio. And so that's where I am. I'm on the

road. So I'm thankful for technology because I can take my podcast stuff and do the podcast here off site, on location, as it were. And so but yeah, so I'm done here at SBL and it's been extremely fun time. It's always fun to chat with scholars, catch up with old friends and then make new friends. So that that's what happens at these things. It's super cool and I'm thankful to have been able to come down to SBL. All to say, though, it's been early mornings and late nights because inevitably you go to sessions during the day and you mingle and chat, and then at night you go out and eat and continue the fellowship. So it's a lot of fun. So anyway, I'll just say I'm extremely tired and exhausted and I'm probably going to regret combining that with a recording. And so we'll see how it goes. If I say anything weird or crazy or outlandish, show me some grace because my brain is not up to capacity. And actually I'm recording this pretty late at night, which isn't always unusual, I tend to do that at night anyway; but after a series of days going to-and-fro this will be fun. So hopefully I can maintain my energy and not fall asleep on you guys. So if you just hear a big thing of silence, you'll know what happened. Which that's actually silly because I would edit that out in which case you would never know. So see, this is what happens when I'm tired, I just ramble. Okay enough rambling. Let's get to Romans in chapter 12.

3:15 So for this episode we're going to just look at vv 1-8 and then we'll come back the following week or next time we're in Romans and we'll pick up on verse 9. But there's enough here in these first eight verses to give it its own episode, as we'll see. So I'll just read vv 1-2 and then we'll make some comments and then we'll finish up vv 3-8. Okay. So Romans 12:1-2 says,

Romans NRSV

12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

There's a lot here that I think is worth bringing our attention to. This is a well-known passage. I'm sure you learned this in V. B. S. You grew up hearing this all the time. I know I did. And it's just one of those passages that we Christians remind ourselves of, which is a good thing because it's a great passage to consider, to meditate upon, and pray through. A couple of things I want to point out here is, notice in these verses how Paul appeals to Christians. He says he does so *by the mercies of God*. In other words, in light of all the stuff we've been talking about in chapters 1-11, all the mercies and the graces of God through Jesus Christ. Here's what I want you to do, says Paul, I want you to present your *bodies*, your bodies plural, as a living sacrifice. Sacrifice singular. We'll say more about that in a minute. But he wants them to, he wants all of us to present our very souls, our lives, our bodies, to God as a living sacrifice, something that's holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual act of worship. So it's important to see here that there's a response that we're responsible to make in light of the mercies of God. So God shows us all this mercy, God shows us this grace; he gives us this grace freely. That's what Grace is. And as a result of that, we present our lives to God as a living sacrifice. Okay, so it's in that order, right? So we don't put God in our debt. We don't do good works

and then God pay us for those. That's not how salvation works. That whole merit idea really needs to be tossed. And so it's all grace. It's all mercy.

6:07 But there is that element of works that come in after that, that we are legitimately responsible to carry out. So this is again, Romans chapter 2. We talked about works before. Go back and visit those. I think there's one or two episodes where I talk about the relationship between grace and works. And here Paul is not saying anything new. He's continuing alongside that same conceptual framework and so go back and think about *pistis*; that word faith here in the New Testament, and here especially in Romans, faith is tantamount to being faithfulness. So we have a response of faithfulness that we make to Jesus in light of the fact that he has shown us so much mercy. It's really the *Johanin*, or John's, idea of *we love him because he first loved us*. So we see that later in the New Testament.

I want to bring your attention to just something pretty interesting here in that he's appealing to the brothers and sisters. He's appealing to the Christians and he says *I appeal to you therefore brothers and sisters*. And that *you* there is plural. So in Oklahoma we would say *y'all*. I appeal to *y'all* therefore brothers and sisters. So that's going to be plural. *I appeal to you all brothers and sisters*; *adelphoi* [αδελφοί] is the Greek there for brothers but it's clearly meant to be gender neutral. So that's why the New Revised Standard Version has brothers and sisters. I think that's totally appropriate because it's what *adelphoi* is going to mean there. *But I appeal to y'all by the mercies of God to present your* (that's going to be plural as well) *bodies* (plural) *to present your bodies*; (as what?) *as a living sacrifice*. I find that really interesting because sacrifice here which is the word *thusia*, [θυσίαν] is in the singular. So just think about what what's going on here. Paul is appealing to multiple people, plural, but he's saying *you all* present yourself as a singular sacrifice. Now I think that's a pretty important, but probably not often noticed, feature in this text and so I want to pose a question to you. What does this mean for our ecclesiology? Ecclesiology, meaning our doctrine of the church. What is your what is your doctrine of the church? How can the many be one? And I mean that practically, like how actually can the many in the church, the many members, be one? I think what Paul is appealing to here is this idea of corporate solidarity.

9:20 So if you're in western culture, (I don't know where you're listening to this podcast), but if you're like me embedded within American Western culture, you probably think individualistically. You probably think in terms of me and Jesus. Now there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, I think it's important. I want to preserve a personal relationship aspect with our Lord. I think salvation includes that. So you're never going to hear me say, don't have a personal relationship with Jesus. I think that's important. I think this is where evangelicals can help us. They can help us think through that, but it is wrong to think that's all there is to our ecclesiology. Like, some people think I can have church at home by myself. No you can't. You can worship the Lord by yourself, you can you can do that, but church by definition is pluralistic. And by pluralistic I don't mean the common vernacular for that, or the usage of that. I mean pluralistic in a sense that there's a plural aspect to it, like church is an embodied group of people coming together in unity, coming together as a single sacrifice to God. And so we need to really think through our ecclesiology. Like, what did your doctrine of the church? Do you need other people, do you need other Christians to help you? And of course the answer is yes we do. We do need other Christians to help us and specifically with respect to worship. Notice what Paul

says here. He says *present* (you all, y'all), *your bodies* (plural) as a *living sacrifice* (singular). So he says, *this is acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship*. And I think we need to recapture this idea of worship within the holy communion of God's people. That is, God's people, the body of Christ. And so something to think about there when you go to church, when you are with your brothers and sisters in Christ, you know what you are doing is you are coming together and you are pledging your allegiance. There's something unique happening among the members, among everybody, but also at the same time it's an act of unity. It's happening to one group of people. There's a union there between your brothers and sisters that I think is super, super important in that respect.

I guess I'll just leave it there. I just want to toss that out, and perhaps further inquiry is warranted; and I'll leave that up to you go and check that out and think through that, and pray through that, and meditate through that. I think that's what I said at the beginning is like this is a passage worth meditating through.

I want to talk about *thusia*, this idea for sacrifice. It's a loaded term, *thusia* is. It's used here in the Greek New Testament. It's the word here for sacrifice. It's also used in Leviticus so you can find this in Leviticus chapter 1 and 2 for example and I'll just read maybe a section here. Leviticus chapter 1, talking about one of the sacrifices. I'll just start chapter v.1:8-9. By the way, I'm reading from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint - not Hebrew Bible here because I want to connect that word *thusia*. I want to show the connection. Leviticus 1:8-9 says,

8 and the sons of Aaron the priests will pile up the divided parts of the sacrifice and its head and its fat on top of the wood that is over the fire, which is on top of the altar. 9 And they will wash its internal organs and its feet with water and the priests will place everything upon the altar. It is a burnt offering (a thusia), a sacrifice, a sweet smelling odor to the Lord..

And you also see this in chapter two. I guess it's going to be vv 1 and 2. It says,

And when a person presents an offering as a sacrifice to the Lord, (so sacrifice, there's thusia), when a person presents an offering as thusia to the Lord, his offering will be the finest flower, and he will pour olive oil upon it, and he will place frankincense upon it. It is a thusia.

I'm reading there from the from the Lexham English Septuagint. I highly recommend this resource. You can get it on Logos and elsewhere. Go look it up, it's a good resource if you want to read through the Greek Old Testament.

I just bring our attention to that for the simple reason I want us to notice Paul's constant interaction with the Old Testament ideas and Old Testament concepts. So Paul is not inventing the will. He's simply spinning the same will that has been spun throughout ancient Judaism, and bringing it into the present day. Maybe that metaphor works here. He's drawing upon the language and the conceptual framework of the Old Testament to discuss and talk about his *Messiahism*, if you will. He's Christologizing it, that concept is yet again. We've seen how Paul christologizes the Old Testament, which is exactly what

the Old Testament, I think, anticipated. I think we see this throughout some of those messianic texts; that we would call messianic text, anyway. For another time of course, I recommend just thinking through that christology aspect. Go back and think through that here, especially.

15:25 So the New Testament equivalent of Old Testament sacrifice is the action of the church in worship. Isn't that fascinating? So for the church today that the people who are in Christ Jesus, those people in the living of their lives, and the day to day living of their lives, and the choices they make; that is the equivalent of Old Testament sacrifice. It's the actions of the church, when the church comes together in union, in their worship, in their lifestyle; that's what happens. And there's much to be said about that. I think again it goes back to what is your ecclesiology; do you have this concept of the many being one, or are you a Lone Ranger Christian. It's an old cliché but it's true, there are no Lone Ranger Christians within the Kingdom of God. And so we need each other and other people need you. We need to see ourselves as going to church to be a blessing and to be blessed, because that's what happens when we're around God's people. You need the church, and the church needs you. We are the body of Christ after all. We are his body. And by the way, think of Christ's physical body. What was it? Well, it was a sacrifice. I mean it's literally where the sacrifice took place. It's where atonement happened. It's where brokenness was found. And as the body of Christ as Christians, we too should live lives sacrificially, cruciformally; we should be people of the cross. And that's our spiritual act of worship.

I'm thinking here of Romans 6:1-5. I won't go through all of Roman 6, but you do get that idea of a union with Christ. He says in Romans 6:3, *do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.* So this idea of union with Christ, I think, is coming to play here. It's the source of our union with one another. But it's also the basis for which we can legitimately call ourselves sacrificial, or sacrifices, or a *thusia*; because we are united with Christ, and because Christ is the sacrifice, we are by definition partaking in the sacrificial way of life, if we are truly in Christ. And so if you are in Christ, and I'm in Christ, and our neighbors are in Christ, then we are one with each other. We come together as a singular living sacrifice. It's a pretty cool when you think about this.

So, go back and read Romans 12:1-2. If you're just listening to this on the podcast, I don't think that'll do. I think you need to go and grab a pen and read through this, and underline and highlight and write in your Bible. I hope you write in your Bibles. You know it's funny. I don't think I can read my Bible without a pen in my hand. I've got to be engaging the text and underlining and circling and opening things in the margin. I don't know, maybe that doesn't help for you and that's totally cool, but it does help me.

I want to say something about the mind Paul. Says here, *do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.* So the thing about the mind is that number one, it needs changing. Paul does not think that the human mind, the human psyche is okay. We need help. Our minds are situated upon that which is not good. And so we need transformation of the mind. The mind has more than one option. You know,

we can think about this or we can think about that, we can think about life or we can develop on the things that bring death. Another way to put that is to say the mind is fixated on the world and that's why Paul will say *do not be conformed to this world*.

20:12 Now I need to say something about this translation *world* because it's arguably it's not a good... it's not what I would have chosen. It captures the idea of world, worldliness. I mean I think that's present here, but actually it's important to know that we should not think of this as an indictment against the physical realm. Think of it; lots of Christians think the world is bad, therefore I can't wait to escape to heaven where I will live forever. That's not the Christian worldview. The Christian worldview does not promote escapism. The Christian world view is this; yes, the world is bad, therefore I can't wait until it is renewed. So when Paul says, *don't be conformed to the world*, he's not suggesting this dualistic escapist mentality. That's a wrong way to think. No, he's saying something else here. He's saying that as we saw in Romans 8, that the world will be renewed. Paul is not an escapist. I guess you can say he's a revivalist. I don't want to bring in modern connotations with that idea of revivalism, but he is a revivalist in the sense that he thinks the world will be revived; again the physical order. Now the other thing to say here is that word *world* really shouldn't, arguably, be translated something different. It's actually the word *aión* [*aiŷvi*] and we get our word eon from it. Or it could be translated as this age; *do not be conformed to this age*, to this time period. And I think the emphasis here is on the timing not on escapism. It's the idea is that finally the world is disjointed and broken, but there's coming a day when this current era is going to change; and in fact in Christ we are already seeing the change of the world, resurrection is going to happen in the end, but it has already happened in the body of Jesus Christ and spiritually speaking, it is already happening in the body, the Christian church. When our hearts are renewed we are experiencing new life, resurrected life. And that's why as a church we show the world what it means to be truly human, to be like Jesus. Jesus was the truest human there ever was. And so in the current era, the current age, we don't see the consummation yet of that full resurrection, the bodily physical resurrection for all hasn't happened yet. We haven't seen the resurrection of the world. We haven't seen the renewal of all things because we're still living in this age of groaning, this era of angst, this time of pain. And so we wait. We are waiting for this age to pass. It's important here not to see a dualistic idea. The world is not bad, the world is not going to be... well the world is corrupted, it's not inherently evil. Like the physical time-space is not an inherently evil. It's just corrupted. It'll be renewed and God doesn't trash his creation. He restores it. And that's really good news, right? So in the meantime we live our lives in light of the Eschaton, in light of the end era. You know we don't anticipate our day of escapism; we anticipate our day of resurrection. We currently see ourselves as living sacrifices, notice *living* sacrifices. So we're embodying the cruciform way of living to our neighbors. We anticipate that day. And again, if we if we participate in the death of Christ in our lives now, in our sacrificial lives today, then if we are united in a death like his, we will be united in a resurrection like his at the Eschaton. In the meantime we show the world what it means to be human. We show the world what new life is going to look like and they don't have to wait to see it because we're showing them today because we are the body of Christ.

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26:05 OK Let's move on to vv 3-8,

Romans 12, NRSV

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

So, some cool stuff here. I want to start by considering this idea of thinking rightly. *For by the grace given to me*, Paul says, *everyone among you should not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment*. This brings us into this idea of **phroneó** [φρονεῖς], or **phronêsis**. So this this word *to think* is the Greek word *phroneó*, and that means to think, to set your mind upon something, to consider. It's... how far do I want to go here? It's more like a practical thinking. Like when you read Aristotle for example, (and the philosopher Hans Gadamer actually picks up on this too. But that's beside the point), this whole connotation of *phroneó* this idea that it conveys is that of like practical thinking, it's not like philosophical thinking per se, it's just like everyday kind of practical thinking is the best way I know how to describe it. That's the word *phroneó*. So remember that word because we're going to revisit a passage in Philippians that talks about it.

So, this idea of don't think more highly than you ought to think; what Paul is saying here is don't have an unhealthy hyper-view of yourself; don't think about yourself in terms of being better than everybody else; don't think that you have all the gifts; don't think that you that your spiritual endowment is better than or more significant than other people, but rather Paul says to think of yourself accordingly according to the faith that God has given you. Think with what he what he calls sober thinking, sober judgment. I think that's a very important idea. That's the word *phroneó* and it just means to think wisely, think carefully. I like that New Revised Standard Version here of sober, think soberly; don't get drunk on your own pride in a sense. I think this is just a really, really important word here.

29:42 But notice the emphasis here the emphasis in this chapter is to build up each other in love. Remember he talks about we are many members but we are one body, so the context is about building each other up in love, to seeing each other as part of a corporate group; we are many members one singular living sacrifice. And so the point in bringing these gifts up is to just show that we are to use our gifts for the sake of unity. There is after all, one body. Now when it comes to spiritual gift sometimes the opposite actually ends up happening. So sometimes we might think of our various gifts that we have and we might become prideful with them. So sometimes the gifts of God can become means of competition and even division. And it's one of those things where if God gifts you with something he's stewarding it to you. It's like anything; anything that you have can be used for good or for evil. Like money for example, that's a gift of God to you. How are you using it? You can use it wickedly or you can use it wisely and charitably, and so the same goes with spiritual gifts. They can be abused. And so what Paul wants us to see here is that we need to use them for each other's benefit. But sometimes what ends up though is that these spiritual gifts become means of competition, means of division, means of putting each other down. So things like, my spiritual gifts are more important than yours; that mindset could be a predominant in the church, unfortunately.

And so sometimes Satan will use the good things that God gives us as ways of bringing division within the church. So it's important to remember that everybody's spiritual gift is significant and important for the building up of the body. Some gifts are more public than others and some are more behind the scenes, but that doesn't mean one is better than the other. Everybody has a spiritual gift that God has given them and they're all important, every one of them, and so we should never see one spiritual gift as more important than another. And sometimes people might say, "well my spiritual gift is just this over here and man I wish I had that spiritual gift because that seems really cool, that seems better than mine." That's a wrong way of thinking. We need a transform our mindset about that actually. Because again, every spiritual gift is important.

You know, I've often struggled with this where I think to myself, "man I see that Christian over there and they're really good at this", or whatever; and I might I might be tempted to say I wish I had that, but the truth is God hasn't given that to me, he hasn't given me that ability, or that gifting or whatever, and so my calling is to be content and joyful in the gift that he's given me. So I just want to encourage you; no matter what your spiritual gift is, rejoice in it, and thank God for it, and be content with it, and just use it to the glory of God and for the good of your church family. I think that's an important piece here.

So I'll say more about spiritual gifts in just a little bit, but back to this idea *phroneó*, this idea of thinking. He says, *don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think*. And

again this is that word *phroneó*. And so every time I come to this passage in Romans 12, I immediately think of another place where *phroneó* is used and that would be Philippians 2:5. And you're probably very well aware of this text. This is sometimes called the Christ hymn because it's pretty rhythmic. And so the idea might be is this is a hymn, perhaps Paul took it from (I'm not up on the latest scholarship on this), but it might be a hymn that Paul is quoting. It's a beautiful, beautiful hymn and it goes from Philippians 2:5-11. Let me just read it. He says,

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

Can you guess what that word mind is? If you guessed *phroneó*, you are correct. **Let the same mindset, here its *phroneó*, Let the same mindset, way of thinking, *be in you that was in Christ Jesus*. What sort of mindset did Jesus have? Well, Paul tells us, Jesus, **6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.****

35:35 So here Paul in Romans 12 is saying, think rightly. And in Philippians he's telling us how to think rightly, namely, have the mindset of Jesus, who did not consider his position as something to be held onto to the point of not serving other people. And I think this is just an important example. And, you know, go figure that Jesus is a good example for us to follow. Jesus should be our mentor. I hope you see Jesus as your mentor. We think of him as our Lord and our savior. But see him as your rabbi, see him as your mentor your friend, the companion, someone who walks beside you, imitate him because he is someone who has as very god of very God, 100% divine. He's someone who washed feet. When you think of when God comes to your house you would expect everybody to bow down to him and to serve him because he is God; but what we see in the image of Jesus of Nazareth, is that when he walks into a house he washes feet. And it just blows my mind. I mean it should blow all of our minds that God almighty grabs a towel and a water basin and starts scrubbing feet. I mean that's insane. It's amazing. And what Jesus is showing us here is the heart of God. And that's why he says I have not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. And so Jesus is someone who had, I think it's safe to say, every spiritual gift. No it's more than that, he is the gift giver; he is God almighty. You get my point, right? And yet even though he possessed everything he was still willing to be a servant to humanity, to fallen humanity.

Now he never gives up his divinity. He holds on to his divinity, but at the same time he through his divinity, shows us the heart of divinity as the God who serves us by redeeming us. Again, this blows my mind. I want it to always blow my mind. I think about that now, and I just want to worship him because he is so good. He's so good.

So in light of that idea, that picture of God in Jesus Christ, the Messiah; how can we think too highly ourselves? We shouldn't. We should think with sober judgment, and we should use our spiritual gifts soberly, but definitely use them for the benefit of serving our brothers and sisters. We are many members, one body, many Christians, one church. So this is the whole context. Let's serve our brothers and sisters in Christ with our spiritual gifts.

38:55 Next up is vv 6-8. Let me reread it again just for clarity. We have it on the front of our minds here. It says,

6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: We have gifts that word. Gifts is *charisma* [χάρισμα]. *Charisma*. And it's a beautiful word. We have *charisma* that differ. Actually, *charismata* [χαρίσματα]. We have *charismata* that differ according to the Grace, or *charis* [χάρις], given to us. **prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.**

But notice those words gifts and grace. We have *charismata* this idea comes from the idea of the word *charisma*, we get our word charismatic from it. So we have these gifts, *charismata*, that differs according to the *charis*, grace, given to us.

So what's my point in bringing that up? Well, I think it's important to remember that the gifts that we've been given have been given to us by grace. So really you know you might have heard this before, but these sort of gifts, these spiritual gifts should be called grace gifts; because you can hear it in the word itself, this idea of *charismata* or *charisma*; you can hear that word *charis* in that. *Charis* means grace and *charismata* means gifts. And so gifts should be translated, I think, as grace gifts. Anyway the point here is just pretty simple actually; all gifts are grace gifts, and again, there should be no boasting. I mean how can you boast about a grace gift that you've just been given a graciously? You can't and you shouldn't. And so again, all the more reason to think with sober judgment and not to think too highly of ourselves based on whatever special gifts we have. And by the way, we shouldn't compare ourselves. I think comparison is such a deadly thing for Christians because again, God has given us what he's given us, and we're responsible for developing our spiritual gifts by his grace even. But just to recognize that these are grace gifts, and so we don't want to compare ourselves with each other. We don't need to. We've been given grace just like other people have been given grace. We certainly should never boast, because again, these are grace gifts and God disperses his grace to us in these gifts.

42:10 And the second thing here is that this necessarily means, it demands even, that we should be faithful stewards with our grace gifts. We need to use them. Now what ends up happening I think in the church and with many Christians is that we get the grace gifts but we're too afraid to use them. Sometimes fear paralyzes us into just taking our talent and burying it in the sand hoping that Jesus will be pleased when he returns and gets his gift back. No, that's not what he wants. He wants you to do something with his gift. So that's the question. What are you doing with your spiritual gift? Are you pursuing what God has called you to do? Are you developing that spiritual gift? Because I think it's important to remember that just because God gives you something doesn't mean that it's not going to take work afterward, right? So if God gives you the gift of teaching, don't think that your first lesson that you teach is going to be, you know, amazing, right? You need to develop those gifts that God has given you. The gift of teaching or whatever it is. Again, it goes back to the parable of the talents. God wants to give you however many talents he gives you, but it's going to take work, investment, time and energy; and then when you're done,

you'll have something to show for that time you've put into taking what God has given you and multiplying it. I hope that makes sense. Again, it's late.

So be faithful. Don't let fear paralyze you and don't let fear keep you from using the gifts because where God gives a grace gift Satan brings words of condemnation. He'll say things like you can't do that, or what makes you think that you can actually do that? You know, he starts sowing seeds of doubt which at the end of the day, that's just nonsense because what does he know? I mean, God alone is the one who has given it to you. And if God has called you to do it, he will equip you to do it. And indeed he has. I don't know what he's called you to do. I don't know what he's equipped you to do, but he's called you to do it; to do the good work of building up the church with your spiritual gift.

So last thing I want to say here is just responsibility. I know. that's a word that most of us don't like. But you know, we got to deal with it. We are responsible. You don't have a you don't have an option. If God has given you a grace gift, you're not free to say no to that. You have to be responsible with it as a steward, you are expected to take the time, the talents, the abilities that God has given you and to put them to use; and not for your own glory. What reward is there in that? I mean, that's pointless. Do something that lasts. It is more blessed to give than it is to receive. So you have a responsibility to use your spiritual gifts for the building up of the church into the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace; and you do that by employing your grace gifts.

So you might ask, what is my grace gift? Well, there's several listed here in Romans 12. That's not an exhaustive list. There are other lists in Scripture. So you can go look that up. And I would say, reach out to mentors, reach out to your brothers and sisters in Christ and ask, what do you see God doing in my life? What do you think God has given me? And then and then the other thing I would say is, listen to what they have to say and then just start prayerfully engaging in ministry activities that God is leading you to and see how God develops the things that he's given you. And pretty soon it'll become apparent what sort of spiritual gift that God has given you. It takes time. So be very patient.

Maybe you already know what your spiritual gift is. Seek ways of using it. The best advice I ever learned and ever received about that is, just bloom where you are planted; bloom where you're planted and use the tools that you already have. My calling is to be a teacher and I feel like that's what God has called me to do. If that's you for example, if you're called to teach, if you've been given the spiritual gift of teaching, start teaching. Go to your pastor and say, hey how possible would it be for me to do a Bible study. Or maybe just maybe start a Bible study in your home and it could be super simple. Maybe your Bible study is just with you and another person that you are mentoring at a coffee shop once a week. I mean be creative with this because I think that's honoring to God; no matter what you're doing to employ your special gifts wherever you are for the building up of the church.

So again, Romans 12:1-8 is fascinating. It's so good. It gives us a good window into ecclesiology and gives us a great window into christology, and verse 3 about thinking like the way we should think with wise sober judgment. And of course in Philippians, we bring Philippians in there with this idea of *phroneó*; of the mindset that Jesus had a willingness to serve and to lay his life down for all. That's our model for using our spiritual gifts. And so here you have ecclesiology, you've got christology, you have ministry, and you have

spiritual gifts. And so all this sort of just ties in together very beautifully in Romans 12:1-8.

48:20 Well, friends, that's all for today. It's been so good to run through this passage together with you. I hope that's been beneficial and encouraging to you. I encourage you to go through this text line by line with your pencil, of course, or your pen, highlighter; and mark it all up. Think through it and see what else you can glean from it. The next time we're in Romans, we're going to look at vv 9 - 21 and finish up this chapter, Romans chapter 12. So it's going to be a fun time to do that. I'm not sure if we'll get to that next week. We might do something special, something different next week. But either way, stay tuned. Look forward to being back with you once again, and I hope that you have a blessed rest of your week. And it's Thanksgiving week. So for my American listeners, blessings to you, this Thanksgiving. And I look forward to seeing everybody once again next week when we return. Actually, I won't see anybody, but I look forward to being with you and going through Scripture again as we journey through this fabulous book called Romans.

49:30 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You can also support the podcast by becoming a Patreon member. Go to: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted> - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.