

SERMON SUMMARY

Romans 12:1-2 challenges us to examine what truly forms and shapes our lives. We're reminded that Christianity isn't about earning God's favor through performance or subduing our desires, but about responding to the overwhelming mercy God has already shown us. The imagery is striking: we're called to be like priests offering sacrifice, but instead of dead animals, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices. This means deliberately surrendering our bodies, our calendars, our money, our attention, everything to God. The question isn't whether we're being shaped, but what is shaping us. Are we conforming to the patterns of this world, caught in phantom traffic jams of cultural expectations and algorithms that distract us? Or are we being transformed by renewing our minds in Christ? The Christian life emerges not from guilt or fear, but from gratitude for God's mercy. When we truly grasp that God justifies the ungodly, that He doesn't just acquit us but adopts us as heirs, our response becomes worship through our entire lives. This is the cruciformed life, being shaped into the image of Christ rather than the image of our age.

Key Takeaways

- The Christian life is a response to mercy, not an attempt to earn it. Grace is opposed to earning, not effort.
- Worship is whole-life devotion. Presenting our bodies means offering God our time, talents, treasures, sexuality, calendar, and attention.
- We are all being formed by something. The question is: what patterns are shaping us—the world's or Christ's?
- Transformation happens through mind renewal. We must intentionally discipline our thoughts around God's truth, not the world's patterns.
- God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect. As we walk with Christ and renew our minds, we discern His will more clearly.

INTO THE SERMON

- 1. What did you find most helpful or challenging about this weekend's sermon?**
- 2. Pastor Sam described the Christian life as a response to God's mercy rather than an attempt to earn God's favor. Why is that distinction so important?**
- 3. The sermon emphasized that everyone is being shaped by something. What are some influences or patterns in our culture that can shape the way people think and live?**

INTO THE TEXT

- 1. In Romans 12:1, what reason does Paul give for urging believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices?**
- 2. According to Romans 12:1, what does Paul describe as true or spiritual worship?**
- 3. What does Paul instruct believers not to be conformed to in Romans 12:2?**
- 4. According to Romans 12:2, how are believers transformed?**
- 5. What does Paul say believers will be able to discern as their minds are renewed?**

TAKE AWAY / NOW WHAT

- 1. The sermon emphasized that the Christian life is a response to God's mercy rather than an attempt to earn His favor. What stood out to you from that idea?**
- 2. Pastor Sam described worship as offering our whole lives to God as a "living sacrifice." What do you think that looks like in everyday life?**
- 3. The sermon talked about being shaped by patterns and influences. What are some of the strongest influences shaping people in our culture today?**
- 4. Pastor Sam said that everyone is being formed by something. Why do you think it's important to be intentional about what is shaping our thoughts and priorities?**
- 5. The sermon contrasted being conformed to the world with being transformed by the renewing of the mind. What do you think is the difference between those two ways of living?**