

Truly The Community



2023 Lenten Journey

Based on Marva J. Dawn

Romans 12 – How to Be the Church

Dealing with the Connections

Romans 12:1 “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.”

The passage begins with the word “*therefore*” This draws us to the background of the book. Paul worries about God’s people in the previous Chapters 9-11 and offers God as the only solution to the problems, and “*therefore*.” The “*therefore*” is a continuation and not the beginning. This word offers us an opportunity to map out our journey with God. I say, our journey with God, because we have always dragged God to chase after us, mopping up the mess behind us and creating alternative paths for us to walk.

- I wonder what paths have you walked?
- What litter is lying behind you?
- What possible paths has God created for you?

There is no better time to ponder these questions than now during Lent. The journey helps us to see the riches of God’s mercies. As Chapter 11 ends, using the doxology (set of prayers praise) Paul opens our minds and our hearts to see what God is doing without us having to understand all of it (Romans 11:33-36). Because of this glorious work God is doing, “*therefore*”. The word connects us to the glorious work He is doing in our lives without us having to fully understand it. God’s mercies are a mystery. It is not often that we listen to our breathing all the time, and yet even when we are less aware of our breathing, we are still breathing. So even when we are less aware of what God is doing, God is at work.

- How can you praise God for the things God is doing in your life even if you are not always aware of God’s presence in your life? Perhaps as we ponder this question we can “*therefore*” become even more aware of what God is doing.

And then Paul urges us that as we become aware of God in our lives we can “*therefore*” respond by offering our bodies as a living and pleasing sacrifice. To offer is a free and cheerful giving without being forced. How can we “*offer*” to serve God “*therefore*” there are connections between our awareness of God and making others aware of God. When we do this, we begin to be Truly The Community as our lives become pleasing to God. The starting point is to know that God is pleasing to us and “*therefore*” we too “*offer*” pleasing lives to God. Paul calls this a spiritual - true and proper worship.

Prayer:

Lord, make my life a living and pleasing sacrifice.

Amen



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