

Romans Chapter 12 verses 1-8

It has been said that the problem with living sacrifices is that they are always wriggling themselves off of the altar. We do not live the Christian life perfectly. Thankfully, in Christ, because we are baptised, and made children of God by faith, we can start each day knowing that He is renewing our minds and giving us hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26) in exchange for our hearts of stone. We can trust that he forgives our sins and that He gives us the strength to face a new day every day. God works this transformation in us through the Holy Spirit.

We walk a balancing act between being sinner and saint. As Paul said in Romans 8, we do the things we know we should not do, and we don't do the things we should do. Even so, God has created each of us as an individual with a set of strengths and a set of weaknesses. Everyone has been given a vocation – a reason for being and a reason for doing – which should complement the vocations of others. A farmer grows grain for the baker to bake bread. Drivers transport raw materials so that factory workers can fabricate and assemble machines and cars and other things. Police and firefighters keep order and respond to emergencies. We have vocations in both the earthly kingdom and God's kingdom. Sometimes they intersect, but we are made to embrace and pursue our vocations to the glory of God.

Paul has a complementary view of how we are to work together at being the Body of Christ. Some of us are positively not suited for doing certain things. Not everyone is in the position to volunteer to go do missions in Africa for a year, or to do plumbing and carpentry work, or to bake biscuits. Some people have the gift of hospitality, or the ability to go abroad to do missions work, but others may be more able to give financially, or teach, or encourage. Everyone has equally valid – though necessarily different and varied – vocations that we have been gifted with to serve God.

We have every reason as God's people to appreciate and thank God for the gifts we have been given. We are also called to appreciate and thank God for the gifts God has given others, especially the gifts they share with us that we do not possess. We serve others out of a joyful response to God's goodness, no matter what our gifts may be. Amen.

Faithful God, forgive us when we only turn to you when things trouble us and when we forget to thank you for your blessings and bounty. Help us to recognise all the wonderful things in your world for which we should be grateful and send us out into the coming week ready to show our gratitude in all that we do and say. Amen