

February 2015

Dear Friends,

***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***

***<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”***

***Romans 12:1-2***

As we journey through the season of Epiphany, we hear Jesus speak quite often about the importance and nature of discipleship. The Apostle Paul addresses this subject as well, in his letter to the Romans. But what does it mean to follow Jesus? Quite simply, the key to understanding discipleship is sacrifice. The amazing thing is that the Apostle Paul calls presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice our “reasonable service”! This certainly doesn’t sound reasonable to me. My natural mind says that reasonable service means giving up a great deal of my life for God, but certainly not all of it. Jesus says otherwise.

***“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. <sup>36</sup> For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”***

***Mark 8:34-36***

My sinful flesh tells me that what Christ asks me to do is impossible. The cost is too great. The answer is not in focusing on my sacrifice, but on that of another. Paul encourages us that our sacrifice is not only possible, but reasonable because of “...***the mercies of God...***” The key to understanding discipleship is not found in my sacrifice, but in the sacrifice of Christ Himself. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer summarizes it beautifully in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*:

***“Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: 'Ye were bought at a price', and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.”***

We follow Jesus Christ, not in order to receive mercy from God, but because we have already received mercy from God. We forgive, because we are forgiven. We love because we are loved. By faith, we offer our meager sacrifice, because God has offered the greatest sacrifice at Calvary’s cross to purchase our salvation. May God grant us grace to joyfully follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Chuck Bylkas



## *Donations Received...*

*In memory of David & Joseph Krutzig*  
from Audrey Krutzig

*In memory of Kirk & Milly Otto*  
from Kirk Jr. & Carol Otto

*In memory of Ray & Elsie Maikkula*  
from Renee Isaacson & family

*In memory of Marion Weidner*  
from Steve & Marilyn Dahlmeier

*In memory of Joyce E. Magner*  
from Joan Ostapenko

*In memory of Donald Spear*  
from Melvyn & Judith Mikkola  
Betty Ruohonen

*In memory of Adam W. Ostapenko*  
from Joan Ostapenko

Bob & Norma Nominelli  
Dave & Marilyn Mickelsen  
Jim & Ruth Johnson  
Ed & Anita Hulkonen

*In memory of Jim Besonen*  
from Jack & Elaine Bergstedt

*In memory of Gordon Mattila*  
from Marjorie Mattila



## **UPCOMING SEMINARY SERVICE SCHEDULE**

7PM

### **February**

8<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Seminary  
15<sup>th</sup> – Heath Anderson @ Laurium  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Ryan Kandoll @ Range

### **March**

1<sup>st</sup> – Ryan Kandoll @ Zion  
8<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Range  
15<sup>th</sup> – Heath Anderson @ Seminary  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Ryan Kandoll @ Laurium  
29<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Zion

### **April**

5<sup>th</sup> – No Service - Easter  
12<sup>th</sup> – Heath Anderson @ Laurium  
19<sup>th</sup> – Ryan Kandoll - Range  
26<sup>th</sup> – Josh Bergstedt @ Zion