

In step with Jesus 184

1/2/26

Key Text: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (John 15:4)

Introduction

Last two weeks we started reading Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12 is the manual for practical Christian living, focusing on our relationship with God and our fellow human beings. The verses we read (Romans 12: 1-8) revealed the steps to a fruitful Christian life and the first step, as we learnt, is to present or submit ourselves to God as living sacrifices. Our overall success, or fruitfulness in the Christian journey relies on this sacrifice. Before we take our reading for today, I would like us to reflect more on what it means to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God. Presenting ourselves as living sacrifices implies giving our whole being to God. But how can we accomplish this?

The bible expresses the act of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices in diverse ways. The most common expressions are meditating on God's law, dwelling with God, or abiding in Christ. In the book of Joshua, chapter 1:8, God gave Joshua a clear instruction on how to be successful as the leader of Israel. He said to Joshua "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." In Psalms 1:1 and 2, the psalmist says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night." Giving ourselves wholly to God implies meditating on the law of God Day and night, that is, continually. Such meditation leads to effortless obedience to God. Psalms 91: 1 describes a life that is wholly giving to God as dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. Jesus describes it as abiding in Him as the branch is to the vine (John 15: 4).

Presenting ourselves as living sacrifices means that we must have a living, active and consistent connection and communion with God. Once we have that connection, we will bear spiritual fruits (obey God's laws) as effortlessly as a branch that is connected to the vine. In today's reading, we will learn about the

kind of fruits we shall bear once we have offered ourselves as living sacrifices to God. Let us read Romans 12:1-9 and see what our relationship with others and our overall conduct would be if we abide in Christ.

Romans 12:9-21

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Reflections

God has called us to be like Jesus Christ not, not the improved versions of ourselves. When we give our entire lives to God, we will manifest love and grace towards our fellow human beings. God called us to be joyful, peaceful, patient, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled people who care for their enemies. This kind of life does not come as a result of human effort to be good, but as a result of that living connection with Jesus Christ. To maintain that living connection, we must prioritize our time with God. We must meditate on God's word day and night. When we are connected to the Vine, Jesus Christ, love, peace, and joy becomes natural.