

# Message Transcript

A LIVING SACRIFICE | NEW YEAR MESSAGE

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Traders Point how are we doing? Welcome to church.

Welcome to 2026. You guys ready to start this year off right? There is something exciting about the first of the year. Right? Clean slate. Endless possibilities like I might mess around and dunk a basketball later today, on an eight foot goal. But just to make myself feel good. You know what I mean?

Maybe you're already beginning to think these thoughts that I know I've already been thinking as I look back on last year and I'm looking at this year. Anybody have this thought? This year is going to be different. Hey, really quick. Anybody had a different year yet? You know what I mean?

I'm no Miss Cleo. I've got no crystal ball up here, but I can say a few things that I think are probably going to be true about your year. You are going to have moments this year where you are like, "I can't believe this is happening. This is almost too good to be true." And you're going to be in a room, you're going to be somewhere with family and friends and you're going to pull out your camera and take a picture. "This is almost too good. I want to take a picture of it and remember this day, because I can't believe this is happening. I want to remember this moment."

And on the flip side, you're probably going to have moments this year where you are like, "I can't believe this happened. I didn't see this coming." And you're going to experience hurt, sadness, and maybe even loss. And you're going to pull out your camera and you're going to take a picture because this may be the last time you get to see this person. You know what I mean?

This year, as unexpected as it will be, we can expect some things. And what I want us to do as we gather here on this day is as we look ahead at this year we just say, "Even if this year is not going to be different, I'm going to be different." Anybody with me? "This year I'm going to be prepared."

Church, I want you to hear this today. God wants to do a transformational work in you no matter your circumstances this year. Transformational. Big change. I'm not talking about iPhone 16 to iPhone 17. You know what I mean? Like, "Did it change? Oh, the camera is different. I get it." I'm talking like caterpillar to butterfly, like completely brand new. Like unmistakable. Like, "This is different." That's what God wants to do in your life.



As I was getting ready for this message, it was the end of the year and I was really just praying and asking God, "What have You revealed to me? What have You shown me this year? And what should I say?"

There was a word that came up and I got to hear it when I got to meet the guy who was there for Asbury where there was this outpouring of the Spirit and all of these students from around the world came to hear about Jesus. I heard this word. And as I was reading these older pastors and authors I kept seeing this word over and over and over again. And we don't use it too often, but it's:

## **Consecrate**

Consecrated before the Lord. Consecrated before God.

And I started looking at that and just for you, if you don't know, no shame in it. I love the way Oswalt Chambers says it. He says, "Consecration is the act of separating ourselves to God in everything: every habit, every relationship, every ambition." It's saying, "God, all of me. I want to be for you. I want to be set apart. I want to be consecrated to the Lord."

And guys, that's really when things begin to change. When we want to make sure that we are going to change, we need to make sure that we are consecrated before Him. It's when we get skin in the game. That's when God does a transformational work—when we are invested.

I got to see this this past year with my kids. Every year they love to do a secret Santa with one another. So, they throw all of their names in a hat. They reach in. They get one of their siblings. And they get to be the one who buys a gift for their sibling. Now, it's a twenty-five dollar limit because I ain't got it like that. You know what I mean?

But what is fascinating to me is that on Christmas day those are the presents they want to open up first. And I'm not bragging but I spend a little bit more than twenty-five dollars on them a piece. But that doesn't matter.

And they want to open that present underneath their tree. I don't know if your house is like this but in our house, in the living room in the main room, we have our tree which my wife and I perfectly curate: lights and ornaments. It's pristine. It's beautiful. And then in the back room, the kids have their tree. All of those ornaments that they bring home every year, like, "Papa, look what I made!"



"Why are you calling me Papa? Oh, that's such a beautiful thing. You should put that right there on that tree." And Christmas morning that's where they go. And what I love doing is watching them watch their siblings open up the gift that they bought. Christmas changes for them because they are invested in it.

And I think the same is true about us and our relationship with God and our relationship with the church. When we become invested, when we are consecrated, when we are set apart that's when things change. That's our hope and our prayer for you this year, whether this is your first time or your fiftieth year here at Traders Point.

That's what today is. What does it look like to be transformed? What does it look like to change even if this year doesn't change? And here's what I want to offer you as an incentive. Stick with us for the next 30 minutes or so. Maybe you've already asked this question. Maybe you've thought about it. But, "What is God's will for my life?" We're going to get to that at the end of today. Here's an incentive. I'm putting it out there. Stick with me. Anybody have that on their Bingo card for 2026? What does God want for me this year?

To do that, we're going to be in Romans, chapter 12, starting in verse 1. If you have a Bible, go head and get to it. If not, all of the Scriptures will be on the screens here around me. This is Paul speaking here and he's writing to a group of churches in Rome. And they've become divided on a lot of different things. For the first 11 chapters he's really written a lot of doctrine and a lot of theology hoping to bring them back together. And then starting in chapter 12, he's very practical and he begins to turn the corner and he says:

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." Romans 12:1 (NLT)

And you know, usually, we go verse by verse through each chapter. Today we're going to go word by word through the verse. Okay? Every word is so full and has so much there.

So, I just want to start with just that transitional statement there: And, so. Some of your Bibles may say: Therefore, As a Bible study tool, if it says therefore you always ask: What is it there for?



And in this moment what Paul is doing, as he turns the corner, is he's saying, "And, so." Because of everything I've unpacked in the first 11 chapters, I want you to present yourselves as a living sacrifice."

Now, I don't have time to go into everything that he covers in the first 11 chapters, but I just want to give you a little bit of a fly over of what he's said so far. He's calling them back to the mercy of God and he starts in this space of saying, "Hey, listen. Bad news. All of us, all people, are under the power of sin. We are slaves to sin."

And then he keeps going and it kind of gets worse before it gets better, but he says, "No one can make themselves right. No one can save themselves. All have fallen short of the glory of God in sin."

But then in chapter 5 he begins to turn the corner and he says, "But, while we were still God's enemies, He chose to die. He chose to send His Son." And His Son came and lived a perfect life that we couldn't live. And He went to a cross and He died on our behalf.

But He didn't stop there. He defeated sin and death and overcame the grave and now is presenting a relationship to me and you where we can be saved. We are no longer slaves to sin. We have the Holy Spirit and we have been empowered. Now we have freedom over our lives. Can we celebrate that at this point? That is the Good News of the gospel.

He goes on to say that God is faithful and this whole Christian life—our eternity—is not wrapped up in our performance or how well we can do it, but it is in the perfect Son of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. And, so...

And so because of all of that, this is the way we worship. This is the way we serve. This is our response to all that He has done. This is the true way. And that's a fine definition. But a better, maybe closer, word is that this is the logical or rational or reasonable response to all that God has done. It's reasonable what he is asking us to do.

And I can tell you this? As a dad, one of the hardest things for me is when I ask my kids to do something and they act like it's unreasonable. You ever been there? I'll paint the picture for you. Alright?

You are sitting at dinner and it's been a lovely dinner. It was like a feast. It isn't a holiday. It's just a Wednesday. But it's a good day. Everyone eats and everyone is happy, clean plates all around.



And you get up to clear the table and you say, "Hey, guys. Really quick. Can you unload the dishwasher?" "Ugh. This isn't fair. Why do I have to unload the dishwasher?" Like it's the most unreasonable thing, in light of all that I've done, that they could do. "Why do you have to unload the dishwasher?"

"I don't know. Give me a second. Maybe because every plate, cup, and utensil that is in there—I bought it? Because now it's clean, but once it was dirty. It was filled with food that I bought. Every cup that was in there was filled with liquid that I provided to sustain the life that you have. Every utensil that you used to scrap food into your mouth; I gave you that. Why? Because I am your father and I brought you into this world and I can take you out. So, yes. Unload the dishwasher, please."

What Paul is saying here, not as clever as that, but he's saying, "In light of all that God has done, in light of the gospel, what I'm about to call you to is a lot and it's extreme and it's going to cost a lot, but it's reasonable. It's logical when you think about all that Jesus has done for you and for me."

What Romans 12, verse 1 does is it brings us to the line to decide how we are going to respond. In light of all that God has done, the ball is in our court. What are we going to do? Here's what God calls us to. We're going to read this verse one more time. Romans, chapter 12, verse 1. He says:

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." (NLT)

So, just to recap: What is our reasonable response? It's to give our bodies to God. To let them be a living and holy sacrifice.

What does that mean? Some of this goes over our head because of the culture that we live in. But to the first audience, those who Paul was writing to, this would have been very clear. The word sacrifice meant something. See, they lived within a sacrificial system. There was a temple terminology. And in the Old Testament system, people brought different kinds of offerings, different sacrifices, with a distinct purpose for God.

And I'm not going to go into all of them but I just want to give you two examples to kind of show what Paul is talking about here and what he's not.

### **Sin offering & Burnt offering**



The two big types of offerings that you could bring would be a sin offering or a burnt offering. And let's be clear here what Paul is saying and what he's not saying. He's not saying offer your bodies as a living sacrifice as a sin offering. Jesus is our sin offering once and for all.

Our offering is not to be forgiven of our sins. We were made right by Jesus on the cross. That has been settled. That has been decided. That is not our motivation. That is not why we do and bring the sacrifice. It is because we are loved. It is because we are accepted. It is because God has already done what He's done.

Our response is a moment of worship. That's why it is probably closer to a burnt offering, a burnt offering in the temple system. And a burnt offering was just simply the first and best animal that would come from your flock. It showed that all that you have is at God's disposal. It truly was an act of worship where it says, "Hey, God. You are worth more than my most valuable possession."

And Paul says, "In the same way, when you offer your body, you are basically saying, 'God, You are worth more than life itself.'" We're going to get there. We're going to get there.

This would have been surprising in some ways to the first readers because that culture grew up and was shaped by platonic thoughts. This idea that the body was a tomb, it was gross, it was good for nothing. The real life, the one that you had to ascend to was the spiritual life. Everything physical was bad and everything spiritual was good. So, when he is saying, "Offer your bodies," that would have been confusing to them because the body isn't worth anything.

And even for our culture, today, when you think about it, bodies are reduced quite a bit too. Our bodies are a tool. Tools to be able to reach out and accomplish and do all the things that our hearts desire us to do.

But Christian thought is something very, very different. It's not saying that the body is a tomb, it's not just saying the body is some tool, and you have some meat paws and you try to go out and handle everything. No, no, no. Christian thought is the body is a temple. A temple. Look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 6. It says:

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." Romans 6:19-20 (ESV)



You were bought at a high price. Make no mistake about it. God finds you very valuable even when it meant sending His only Son, even when it meant His death. That's what it took to purchase your body. He said it was worth it. So now He has plans for it. He has repurposed it. He wants you to use it in a new way. He wants it to be consecrated.

And it's your whole body. It's your eyes. It's the way you see the world. It's your ears, the way that you listen to and allow it to dictate what you do and what you don't do. It's your feet. It's where you go and where you don't go. It's your hands, what you build and bring into this physical world. It's your private parts. It's your sexuality. It is all of you. God wants a relationship with you, not just the spiritual you, not just the Sunday you, not just the church service you, but the physically consecrated you.

That makes sense to us in other relationships. Like, we would never just say, "I have a spiritual friendship with someone. Or a physical..." No, all of you is what God wants. God is saying the same thing to you.

And I just want to ask you:

### **Have you offered all of yourself to God?**

When you think back and you process this past year, and you look back to maybe last night or this week, is there any part of you that you have not offered up to God? Have you offered all of yourself to God? Your hands, what you do—your feet, where you go—your eyes, what you see and how you see the world. Is it completely shaped and consecrated before God?

Are you a living sacrifice or is there any part of you that you are holding back? Is there any part of you saying, "God, I'll give you all of this, but I'm going to hold on to that."? "God, I trust you with all of that, but I need to hold on to this for me." Do you have anything like that?

What we need to do, and I know it sounds extreme... Maybe you are like, "This is a lot, okay? I came the first of the year. I wanted to start the year off right. Thought I'd have some fun. And you're talking about sacrificial systems and sacrifices."

But I just want us to be very, very clear. This isn't that different. The things that you love, the things that you are passionate about, the things that you care about you sacrifice for every single day. You give up things so that you can have other things.



The question isn't: Are you going to sacrifice this year? It's: What are you going to sacrifice and who are you going to sacrifice to? What are you going to allow to change you? And we can either sacrifice for ourselves or those around us or we can sacrifice to God.

And I'll just say out loud what we all know to be true. Your body can do some amazing things. Your body is a great servant to accomplish many things, but it is a horrible master. If you listen to everything your body wanted to do, your life would be wrecked by the end of the week.

That's why the spiritual discipline of fasting is so important and helpful. It is a great way to show your body, "You are not in charge." And if you don't know, fasting is essentially the practice of giving up food or another habit that your body craves for a period of time to better focus on God and what He wants.

So, this year I want you to mark your calendars and prepare for a 21 day fast that we are doing church wide. It's going to kick off February 1 and run through February 22. You can sign up [here](#). We're going to have journals. We are going to have resources to go in the app—everything.

We just want to invite you in because this is going to be 21 days where we pause, where we fast, where we hear from God, where we put a pause on all of the things that we have become dependent upon, leaning on a little too heavily—things we don't even realize are that big of a deal until we take them away.

"I didn't realize how much I was leaning on a drink at the end of the day until I took it away."

"I didn't realize how big of a deal Netflix was until I took it away at night. And when I took it away, what God did in that space was powerful and life changing."

It's where we starve the flesh so that our appetite for God can grow. You guys in? I'll take your verbal confirmation there and I will be ready with you on February 1.

He says, "I want you to be a living sacrifice." There are actually two adjectives that he gives here. He says, "I want you to offer yourself." And look back at verse 1, he says, "Let them be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind God will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship."





Now, there are a few points about living. We offer a living sacrifice. This means that it is continual—ongoing. It's not just, "Hey, that one time in the 1900s when I gave my life to Jesus and I haven't really done much since."

It's this idea that every day, every hour I'm constantly and continually offering my body as a living sacrifice, remembering that I am not my own. I've been bought with a high price. "Guys, you have a purpose and it's eternal, from Me."

"God, You have a God purpose for my life that is bigger than me, and I want You to make me aware of it. God what do You want to do?"

And then the second thing, it would have been different for them in that sacrifices, 100 out of 100 sacrifices, by the time they got to the altar were dead. They weren't living. There is an old pastor's joke that the problem about a living sacrifice is that they crawl off of the altar, "I'm not going to stay here for this. I'm going to go."

I just want to ask you, have you crawled off of the altar? Maybe you experienced something this past year, maybe it shook you up a little bit. Maybe you hit rock bottom. Or maybe God started, in a beautiful way, helping you and giving you the life that you always wanted but then that holy fire came and started burning some things away that you weren't ready to let go of.

And you said, "Time out. I'm going to step over here. Maybe I wasn't as sure about this as I thought I was." I just want to encourage you to let this year be the year that you come back to the altar. I just want to encourage everyone at all of our campuses today that the heat has a purpose.

And Paul was being very particular with his words. You see, the Greek for sacrifice is to kill. So, literally what he's saying is, "I want you to be a living killer." It's paradoxical. And it reminds you of the teaching of Jesus. Do you remember when Jesus came and He said, "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it."

## **A Living Killing**

This is the paradox of the Christian life. It is a life of dying to yourself but coming alive in Christ. It is the process of experiencing one thousand deaths but one thousand and one resurrections. That is what God has for you this year.



In the Old Testament the animal sacrifices were burnt up. In the New Testament the people of God... As you stand on the altar and offer yourself as a living sacrifice, you can trust His holy plan because you will be purified, you will be made holy. That is what God has for you in this year if you'll stay in the pocket.

Holy, that's the second word that he had. He had living and then he had holy. And I know holy can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. So, let's just get a basic definition.

### **Holy means being intentionally set apart for God's purpose.**

Holy means being intentionally set apart for God's purpose. Sounds a lot like consecrated. Right? Once again, He bought you. He has a design for you and what He wants you to do.

But I also know that lives kind of out there, "Okay, I'm a living and holy sacrifice. What does that even mean?" And one of my favorite guys that I look up to as a pastor and author, he wrote a translation of the Bible. And I think he breaks it down so beautifully in The Message translation. Look at how he describes Romans 12. He says:

"So here's what I want you to do," this is all of us, "God helping you:" hold onto that, "Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering."

That's what God is calling you and me to do. Not to create something special, not to do something over here, or to have this holy huddle. No, it's to say, "God, You've given me life. You've given me family. You've given me friends. You've given me influence. You've given me a school. You've given me a job. Now, I'm offering it back to You saying, 'Not my will but Your will be done.' What do You want to do?"

For you, maybe this is what it looks like. You are a student and you're one student among hundreds of students all with the same idea, "I'm here to get some good grades, have some fun, play some sports, but eventually get on to my next thing. I'm going to get an education."

And that is still true. I'm saying, "What would it look like this year or this semester to say, "God, You are sovereign over this school. You have a plan for this school. And, God, I don't want to just ask You to bless my plans. God, what do You want to do in me and through me?" That is uniquely you. "I offer myself. What do You want to do?"



For those of us who have jobs and careers, maybe this year instead of just saying, "Hey, I want to have another great end-of-year review. I want to work hard. I want to climb the ladder. I want to be successful." What would it look like this year to say, "God, I'm open. What do You want to do in me and through me? How are You going to use me to impact those around me? How can I bring the love of Christ with me? God, use me to bring heaven to earth in these things." What would that look like?

For you, maybe you're a stay-at-home mom. And your goal has been, "God, just help me keep these kids alive." And that is a good goal. It's a big goal. But what if this year you say, "God, you have given me these kids and I do want to keep them alive. So, God, what would it look like for You to help me raise them in You? God, help me to help them to know You. God, help me to bring the love of God to them so they can have a strong foundation. They will know You today and they will know You for all of eternity. God, what do You want for my family?"

And what he says is that when we approach life like that, when there's not the secular and the holy but everywhere we go is holy ground because the Spirit of God is with us. That is when things begin to change because that's not just a way of life. That's how you worship God. Did you catch that little last part of verse 1? He says:

### **This is the way you truly worship Him.**

This is the way you truly worship God. So, what I want you to hold onto today is to remove that idea of secular and holy, church things and regular things, my work life, my home life, my church life—no, no, no. It's all bound up in your body.

### **What I do with my body is an act of God.**

I want you to think about this. What do we usually think of when we think of worship? We were just doing it a few minutes ago. What were we thinking of? Singing. And that is worship. And it's not just because we have these angelic voices on the stage leading us to the throne room of God, which helps.

But it's really in the words that we are proclaiming, the words that we are singing. Some of us well, some of us not so well. But when we sing we are worshiping because we are declaring the truth of the gospel. We're reminding ourselves of the sovereignty of God. That He is in control. He's the creator of all things. That He's good and He's powerful.

"He's beyond my circumstances. He's above them in every way. And He's a good God. He is infinitely good and infinitely powerful. So, now I worship His name. I lift up His name. I even lift up my hands in worship as a sign of dependence on Him." That is worship.



But can I tell you what Romans 12 says? When we offer our bodies in total surrender, here's what it is.

**The ultimate act of worship is opening my hands in total surrender.**

It's when we come to the end of ourselves and say, "God, I can do a lot of things with my hands. I can create a lot for the future. I can create a lot of possibilities. But, God, I want my hands to be a blessing to You and Your Kingdom. My gifts I give to You. What do You want to do?"

"When I look at all that God has given me in resources and money and finances I say, 'God, this is all given to me because of You. I want to offer it back. What do You want to do with it? Every word that I say in a day, God, I don't want these words to be mine. I want them to be Yours. I want You to use me to bring life. I want You to use me to bring the gospel everywhere that I go so that people can know how good You are. I want to surrender to You in everything.'"

I have a question, a moment of honesty. Is that how you are living? I want to give you a question to really think on this week as you get geared up for this year.

Am I surrendering my body as a living sacrifice or merely asking Him to bless the life I've already chosen?

Hm. Do you know what I mean? I think a lot of times, even the best of them, we come to God and we have this moment when we say, "God, I want to give You my life. God, I want You to lead me." But it's usually with one hand. The other hand is over here still closed.

Because we're saying, "God, I just want You to hear me out. I've got a pretty good thing going over here. If You could just bring in the last 10 percent, oh, we could really make some moves down here. So, God, I'll make a deal with You. I will do this and this and this and this if You just provide this."

And we get upset when God says, "No deal." Because we have to come to this place that God is not in the business of making deals He's already made. And He says, "I want you to give all to Me. In faith I want you to surrender it all, even the things that you are holding on to."

That place—what would it look like to open it up this year and say, "God, I don't want to just come around You and say, 'God, bless this thing that I am doing. Help me create what I want to create. Help me become who I want to become.' Or, what would it look like to truly surrender, to let go, and to trust Him with your life? What would that look like?"



I'm glad you asked because in verse 2 he's going to move directly into this. He's going to get to the how—how we live these transformed lives. Where it starts. What you and I can do this year to make sure that we stay on that altar and nothing moves us away? Change. Deep change.

Remember caterpillar to butterfly, not iPhone 16 to 17. I hope I don't get sued by iPhone or something, or Apple, or whoever owns it. I'm a happy customer. I have one. I enjoy it.

But look at what he says in verse 2. He says:

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."

I want you to think about that. This divide between secular and holy. This idea that if I can just commit to coming to church or coming to group, then I'm going to be okay. Can I just tell you that math ain't mathin on that?

We have to be constantly aware that our whole lives are living sacrifices. That we are moving for His Kingdom every moment of the day. Because, hear me, God isn't the only one who has a plan for your life. He isn't the only one who has a vision for your life. The world, at the same time that God is trying to purifying you and make you holy, the world is trying to conform you and make you into its image.

I love the way J B Phillips talks about these verses. He says:

**"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your mind from within..."**

And I just want to ask you, do you feel that? Doesn't it feel like sometimes when you come here, you hear a message, you think about what you should do and what God wants and what God calls good, and then you start the week and you are like, "Wow, this is exactly the opposite of what I just heard on the weekend."

What if that is not a coincidence? What if there is a real enemy? What if there is a way that is trying to conform you, but along the way God is saying, "No, I want you to trust Me. I want you to trust that what I say is good and pure and honorable. I want you to trust your life to Me and I promise you I will keep you safe."



This is what Pastor Aaron has been talking about. It's this idea of revival and resistance. It's not just seasons of revival where everyone is getting baptized, which they are. We celebrated over 2,000 people here who got baptized last year. Unbelievable. But it was at the same time that most of us were experiencing so much opposition, so much resistance. Every step we wanted to take it felt like it was like there was a force pushing against us making it harder and harder. I know that you feel it. I do.

And what God is saying is that we think that the foundation is just going to be all of these things, that something that we're going to find, "No, the internal work that I want to do, the foundational work, is with your thinking."

Thinking. And that's different. A lot of times our foundation for our faith is either a feeling or in doing. And maybe you find yourself in one of those camps. God is not against either one of those but He has something better, something stronger.

Because if your faith is built on feelings it will be a very self-centered faith. If you only go to church, you only worship, you only offer yourself as a living sacrifice when you feel like it, I've got a feeling you're not going to feel like it most of the time.

Or, if you make your life about doing—you just want to give it everything and you want to start and just go and go and go and go and you forget your motivation, you don't think about why you are doing what you do, just give it a matter of time and you will experience spiritual burnout.

What God is saying is, "No, no. I want to change you from the inside out starting with the way you think." Think about what? It's preaching the gospel to yourself every single day.

Romans, chapter 1 through 11, if you have time to read it, is reminding you of the story. It's reminding you of how good God really is. That He saw you when you weren't righteous. He saw you when you were hostile to Him. He saw you when you were His enemy. And He said, "I love you too much to leave you there."

God saw you from heaven and left heaven, came to earth, and lived that perfect life for you. God saw you—saw the worth in you. He knew what you were worth. And He showed that by going to the cross and offering Himself. He paid the cost of His life to show it to you. He paid the cost to redeem you.



And now, on this side, you and I have a relationship with God that no one or any thing can pluck us from His hand. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit and we have been given a great path, an eternal one. The Great Commission. To go and tell everyone about Jesus and all that He has done, to make disciples who make disciples who get to see the Kingdom advance. To get to see heaven touch down to earth. To see those who we love come to know the fact that there is a God who love us. We remind ourselves every single day what is at stake. That's the motivation.

I also want to give you a few things that are super practical. It all begins with this internal work that God wants to do. And if that's what is going to keep us on the altar, the more we know, the more we trust Him, the more faith we have, we have to change the way we think. I just want to give you a few things today that will help you through your journey this whole year. You guys ready? Alright. Cool.

I thought we would be better by now, but it's okay. This is the first week of the year. We'll get there.

Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (NLT)

### **How do I change the way that I think?**

**Reframe: Live today as a living sacrifice. Ask God to show you how each moment can move from ordinary to holy.**

And just to reframe, live today as a living sacrifice. Ask God to show you how each moment can move from ordinary to holy. Offer your day to Him before it begins.

Here's what I want to encourage you with. When you wake up, before your feet hit the floor, before you move the cup, just close your eyes and immediately pray and say, "God, today is Yours. Before I ask You to do anything, and before I ask You to lift a finger, before I ask You to bless anything I want, I just want to acknowledge that I am a living sacrifice presenting myself on Your altar.

"I give today to You. Show me what You want to do. And I pray that I have the courage to follow through on it." Let that be the reframe. Instead of, "God, bless this..." "God, what do You want to do?" And you just see how your days change and how you think about what you go through.

The second one is:



## **Read: Study God's word and put it into practice.**

Here's the idea. If we're going to change the way we think, we have to have good input. If we're going to change the way we think, we have to be constantly inundated with what God's Word says. What does God say is good? What does God tell me I should be doing? How does God say I should approach this relationship? What does God say about forgiveness? What does God say about money? What does God say about sexuality? And I'm constantly being reminded, "Okay, this is what God says and now I can use it and put it into practice."

And this year we're doing something new. As a church we've created a Daily Bible Reading plan. We're inviting everyone into this. Pastor Aaron is going to be doing it. I'm doing it. It's going to start tomorrow. And here's what it is. We're just going to take the year to read through the New Testament. If you've ever wanted to do that, this is your year. And everyone can do it—one chapter a day, five days a week. We would love for you to stand in this. Everything is in our app. We'll have additional resources about how you can study the Bible.

But if you want to change the way you think, it starts with reframing your day and it starts with reading God's Word.

The third thing is this:

## **Relationship: Practice daily prayer talking and listening to Jesus and find your crew by actively engaging in a group centered on the Word of God.**

Here's what I want to say about this. We have God's Word. It is open to you—His wisdom is there and you have a living relationship with the eternal God. Through the Holy Spirit you have access to the throne room of God. You can have a personal relationship with Jesus.

That means you talk: your fears, your worries, what you think is important, what you need help with, what you need wisdom for, you ask and you listen. You hear from the God of this universe. That's how you begin to change the way that you think because you get to hear directly from Him.

And then the second thing is find your crew. You need the voice of God in your life and you need other voices, other Bible believing Christ following Christians in your life to be able to speak into your life. They are going to hold you accountable when you begin to walk, kind of backwards, off of the altar. They are going to be there to encourage you, "No, no, no. Stay there. I know it's hard. I know it's a lot, but I promise you the work God is doing is going to be worth it." Do you have that? You need to get it.





And then the last one is:

**Repent: Ask the question where do I need to allow God to change my mind.**

Guys, we cannot get too proud, too prideful to believe that God has already given us everything we need. That we're never going to have to change our mind. That there is not more of God to know. That there is not something we've gotten wrong or just not completely right.

And what would it look like this year to wake up every day believing that you've come to this humble posture to say, "God, what do You want to teach me today? What do you want to reveal to me? Where have I gotten it wrong? And I can take it because I know that You love me. I know that You want what is best for me. There is no shame in it. But it's only for my good.

"So, I invite You to search me and to find anything in me that is not of You, burn it away. God, help me to repent. Not just to change the way that I think, but then even give me the courage and the power to walk away from it and walk toward You."

That is how we reframe our mind in the New Year. Yeah, it is good.

And then for all of you who maybe you are here and you are like, "I'm with you. I want that." The thing that I can give you that we've seen over the past few years, more and more people have the best experience with of going through this and really getting to experience that renewal of the mind in a new light, it starts with Rooted.

Rooted, you can sign up today. There are only a few spots left. I just want to encourage you. What it really is it's like a spiritual boot camp where you are going to get together for 10 weeks, you're going to be surrounded in relationships, you are going to be centered on God's Word, you're going to be challenged to memorize Scripture, you're going to be challenged to pray, to serve—it's going to set you up with a really good foundation moving forward. That's how you get skin in the game.

And it's there. It's when we become invested, when we consecrate ourselves, when we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, when we burn away disordered desires and only He remains, that's when we get to know His will.

Look at the last part of this. It says:



"Then you will learn to know God's will for you which is good and pleasing and perfect." (NLT)

I want you to see the confidence that Paul speaks with, "Then you will..." I think a lot of times we have this idea that God's will for our life is this mystery out there that maybe one day we'll stumble upon if we get into the right desert or maybe some drugs or something. Then we can know what God wants for our life.

Can I tell you that God's will for your life is not something that is hidden? It's not something that He wants to keep secret. It's not something that He is keeping from you. It's something that He wants to reveal to you and it becomes revealed more and more. It's not something that is found out there. It is what God unravels from within. He wants to share it with you. You will:

**Offer your body**  
**Renew your mind**  
**Know God's will**

My prayer... We end where we began today. And my challenge to myself and to us as a church is: What would it look like to move from this casual Christian? To enjoy and participate as consecrated Christ followers and say, "God, I want to be a living sacrifice. I want to burn for You. I want to trust You with every part of my life."

Do you want to know God's will for your life? I can give it to you right now. 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 18. This is what He wants for everyone.

"So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." (NLT)

2026—if you want to know your marker, what you should focus on this year, no matter the circumstances, no matter what comes your way, ask this question: Am I being made more and more into His glorious image?

Whenever this world tries to come at you and conform you into its image, I want you to push back with the power of the Holy Spirit and say, "I was made in the glorious image of Jesus Christ and I am not going to become conformed, but I am going to be transformed more and more into His glorious image."

And along the way we begin to love what God loves. We can begin to see the world the way He sees it. We begin to build what He wants to build. And then look at this. Psalm 37:4. It says:



"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires." (NLT)

You no longer have to question, "Is this me or is this God?" Our hearts are aligned. "What I want is what God wants." On the big things we're all centered. On the little things, He sees you as your Father. And He wants you to have the desires of your heart. Once you get all of this part right, that's the will of God for you. When I become invested, when I have skin in the game everything changes.

And I couldn't think of a better way to close out service today as we step into a new year than to remember that Jesus has skin in the game. To remember that, yeah, He is calling us to be a living sacrifice but He has already sacrificed His life for us. So, as we take communion today I just want you to remember that.

For all followers of Jesus, take the bread which represents the body of Jesus. It was broken on your behalf. All of it was given for all of you. Take it and remember. And we take the juice which represents the blood of Jesus, the blood that was spilled on our behalf, the blood, the high cost that was paid for our body. And we remember Jesus.

And now we're going to continue to worship. And I just want to ask you at all of our campuses if you would stand to your feet, to hold onto this moment. I'm going to pray and then we're going to go into a time of worship where we can truly fix our minds on Christ. So, right where you are close your eyes, bow your head and join us in prayer.

Father, we thank You so much for today. God, we thank You for the word that You presented to us in Romans. God, I pray for all of us right now, God, that we would be reminded this year of the gospel message. That it would be what motivates us, empowers us, and leads us every single day.

God, I pray that we would be a group of consecrated Christians on the altar. God, that we would stand there and we would be purified and made holy. God, that You would do a transformational work. God, that we would be unrecognizable by the end of this year. God, we offer ourselves to You and we remember that You've already offered Yourself to us. God, we have been bought with a high cost. And, God, You have plans for us.

So, God, I pray right now that we take this seriously. We're not playing church. God, we are the church. We are the ambassadors of Christ. We are ushering in a new Kingdom. God, where we go heaven goes. God, I pray heaven would fall in and Indy would feel the weight of it. They would experience love like they've never experienced it. They would experience grace and mercy and all of the fruit of the Spirit.



God, You would transform us from the inside out. We would no longer just ask You to bless our plans but we would come open handed in total surrender and say, "God, what do You want to do this year? And we would listen and we would obey.

And, God, I pray that we would get to see the miraculous. I pray that we get to see miracles. I pray that we get to see baptisms. I pray that we get to see life change. I pray that we get to see children adopted. I pray that we get to see homes restored. God, I pray that we get to see marriages brought back together. God, I pray that we get to see lost prodigals come home and know the love of the Father.

I pray that those who struggle with addiction, God, that they would overcome in this year in the name of Jesus Christ. God, I pray for Your Spirit to take hold. I pray for You to fill us. I pray for You to burn away everything that is not of You and let us be Yours and Yours alone. Let us live and serve an audience of One.

Father, we lay everything else down and we stand before You with open hands in complete surrender. Jesus, we pray in Your perfect name. And the church said: Amen.

