

The image features a background of ancient stone ruins. A prominent circular stone structure is visible on the left side. A semi-transparent cross-shaped overlay is positioned on the right side of the image. The word "ROMANS" is written in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

ROMANS

Another Transition/Hingepoint ... (Romans 12-15)

1. Romans 1-3: **God's glory.**
 - doctrine of *Total Depravity*.
2. Romans 4-8: **God's love.**
 - doctrines of *Justification & Sanctification*.
3. Romans 9-11: **God's sovereignty and my responsibility.**
 - doctrines of *Election & Free will*.

4. Romans 12-15: **Transformed Relationships.**
 - what happens when I give God ALL of me.

God's Mercies

Rom. 12:1

My New Life

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy, ...

Romans 12

First Week: My Transformed Relationship With God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

... I live in His *mercy*, not in my *fear*.

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, *in view of God's mercy,*

- ***Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.***
- ² ***Do not conform*** to the pattern of this world, ***but be transformed*** by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

My Transformed Relationship With God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

1. Because I live in God's mercy, I am no longer afraid.

- Mercy, not fear, is how I understand my life ...

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy ...

2. Because I live in God's mercy, I offer myself entirely to Him.

- because it's the only response that makes any sense!

Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God – this is your rational response of worship.

3. Because I live in God's mercy, I reject *conforming* for *transforming*.

- the forming of my life happens from the inside-out!

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test & approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing & perfect will.

2nd Week: My Transformed Relationship With The Church. (Rom. 12:3-8)

... I see the Church through God's eyes.

1. an Organism, *not* an organization.

- a living entity.
- empowered with supernatural abilities through the Holy Spirit.
- expressing His Son, Jesus, to the world.
- led by Jesus, and accountable to Him.

The Church is not a mere organization but a living organism. It has life *because* it is the Body of Christ ... (and) **through His Body, Jesus wants to express Himself to the world.**

T.H. Epp

2nd Week: My Transformed Relationship With The Church. (Rom. 12:3-8)

... I see the Church through God's eyes.

1. an Organism, *not* an organization.
2. A Body, not a business.
 - a living, breathing, dynamic & beautiful expression of Jesus Christ.
 - a physical representation of Jesus, where every part of His Body moves in harmony as he directs them.

*⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so **in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.***

Romans 12

This Week: How The Body Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

Note: Paul is not writing to individuals ... he is writing collectively to the Christians living in Rome (*The Jesus Community of Rome*), through whom Jesus wants to express Himself.

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.

Romans 12

This Week: How The Body Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

- Love (agape) must be **sincere**.
 - ... Gk. – *anhypokritos* – undisguised
 - *Don't just pretend to love each other. Be real!*
- **Hate** evil.
 - ... Gk. – horrified; to loath
 - *Be sick when you see evil.*
- **Cling** to good.
 - ... Gk. – glue
 - *Bond yourself to good – like a drowning man to a log.*

This Week: How The Church Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

- Be **devoted** to one another in brotherly (phileo) love.
... the tenderness between parents and children.
 - *Care for each other as kin.*
- **Honor** one another above yourselves.
... Gk. – deferring to one who outranks you.
 - *Always put each other first.*

This Week: **How The Church Cares For Itself.** (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

- Never lack in **zeal**.
 - ... Gk. – the opposite of lazy; giving one's best.
 - *In your commitment ... don't be a Sloth.*
- Keep your spiritual **feravour**, serving the Lord.
 - ... Gk. – a boiling pot; bubbling in intensity.
 - *Boil over in your enthusiasm for the Lord!*

This Week: **How The Church Cares For Itself.** (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

- **Joyful in hope.**
 - ... Gk. – glad; rejoicing.
 - *Rejoice as you approach heaven.*
- **Patient in affliction.**
 - ... Gk. – persevering; enduring; not complaining.
 - *Don't give up when things get tough.*
- **Faithful in prayer.**
 - ... Gk. – constant; intentional; habitual
 - *Pray intentionally with intensity!*

This Week: How The Church Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church?

- **Share with the Lord's people who are in need.**
... Gk. – to make the needs of another one's own; partnering with.
 - *Look for opportunities to help each other.*
- **Practice hospitality.**
... Gk. – to pursue
 - *Eagerly extend hospitality.*

What happens when the Church cares for itself?

1. We learn how much we need each other ... and that God has intentionally made it so. Health happens in relationship.

- God has hard-wired interdependence to spiritual vitality. No Christian has the ability to live a healthy, self-sufficient life.
- Independence cultivates poverty, frustration & disillusionment.

⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Romans 12

What happens when the Church cares for itself?

2. Together, we become a healthy, strong & beautiful Body – the Bride of Christ.

- We make up for each other's short-comings, contribute to one another's strengths.
- No part has to overexert itself for other parts that refuse to function.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

1 Corinthians 12

What happens when the Church cares for itself?

3. The surrounding culture is exposed for what it is ... empty & broken.

- Secular humanism, emphasizing individual autonomy, is bereft of meaning ... there is nothing holding it together but self-centeredness.
- Churches that conform to individualism create religious consumers, begin to lose their zeal & spiritual fervour, and stop serving the Lord.

⁸ Don't let anyone capture you with hollow and deceptive philosophies that depend on human traditions & the spiritual powers of this world rather than on Christ ... ²⁰ Since you died with Christ, and he has set you free from these spiritual powers, why, as though you still belonged to the world, would you submit to their rules?

Colossians 2

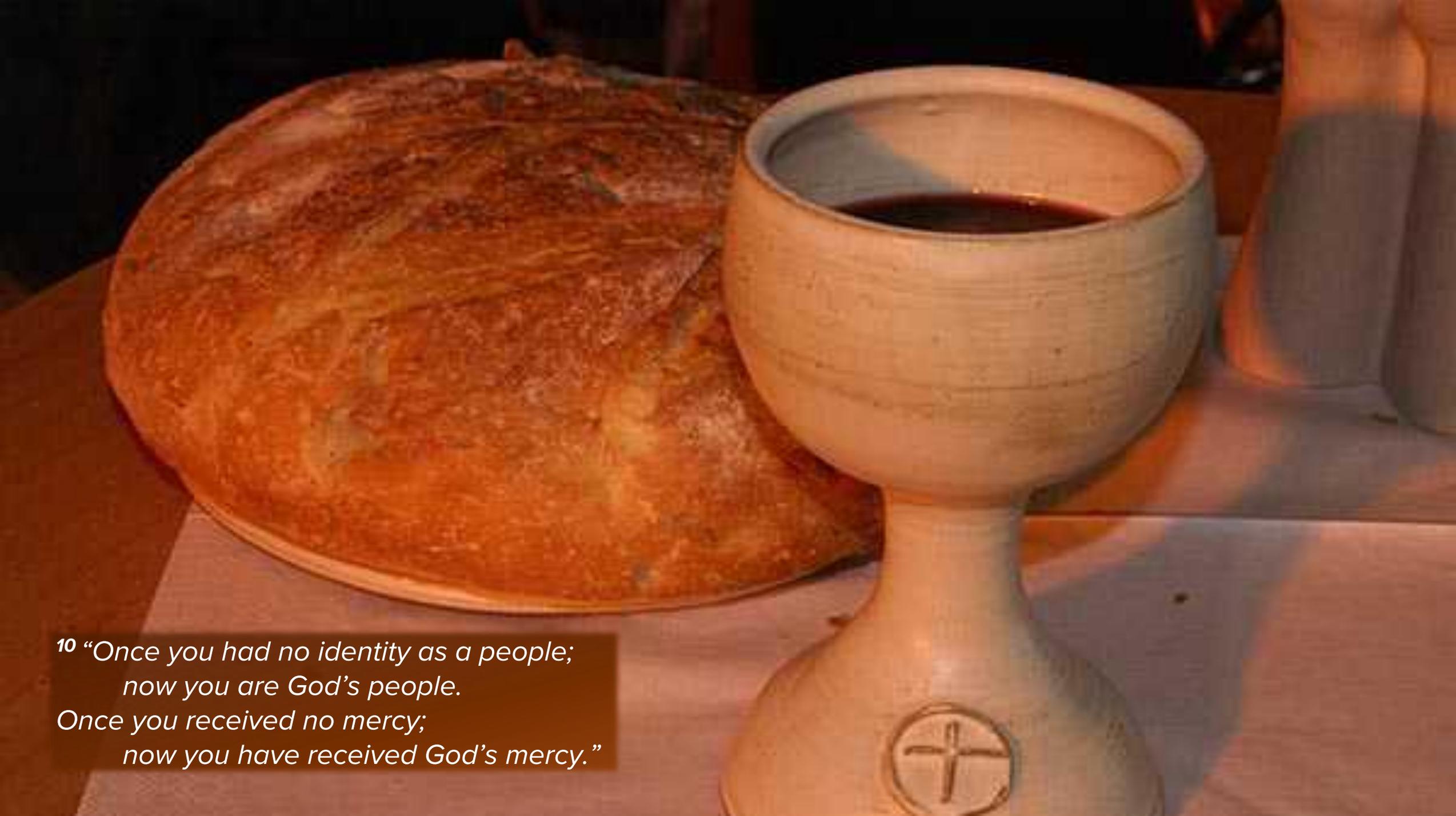
What happens when the Church cares for itself?

4. Our Valley sees all of Jesus ... not just parts of Him.

- and what they see will never be mistaken for anything else.

*⁵ And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple ...
⁹ What's more, you are a chosen people, his royal priests, a holy nation,
and God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the
goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful
light ... ¹² So be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors.
Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable
behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.*

1 Peter 2



¹⁰ *“Once you had no identity as a people;
now you are God’s people.
Once you received no mercy;
now you have received God’s mercy.”*