INTRO: Mercy, Love & Transformation by the renewing of our minds

4 sections: RELATIONSHIP – To God, to ourselves, to one another, to our enemies (SLIDE)

I wonder how you describe your faith – I often talk about Relationship rather than religion. (A humanist – I love humans; not religious – I have a relationship; not blind faith.)

Traps: Sacrifice, pride, competition and revenge (note to self!)

* THEREFORE: looking back to chapters 9-11 – let’s remind ourselves about God’s mercies

SLIDE John Stott: “God’s mercy to inexcusable and undeserving sinners, in giving his son to die for them, in justifying them freely by faith, in sending them his life-giving Spirit and in making them his children.”

Offer bodies as living sacrifices: 24/7, wherever we are whatever we do. Our relationship to God is a WHOLE one. This isn’t a TRADE – I’ll do this if you do that…..it’s an integral, rooted response to what has already happened.

TRAP 1 – sacrifices! Jesus was the one true and perfect sacrifice. We don’t have to please our gods with sacrifices and religious rituals, as the Greeks and Romans had to. (Theirs were DEAD sacrifices) The LIVING God!

Our whole being is being offered to God for service. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul. RENEWING – an on-going process…… your mind is being renewed and because it’s your WHOLE BODY that’s the living sacrifice – your actions are transformed too. The problem with ‘living sacrifices’ is that they crawl off the table! Paul is reminding us that we have to pay attention to our minds and our actions – to what is good and pleasing to God. This is our worship – ALL WEEK! Alive to God, in Christ.

VERSES 3-8 our identity and gifts. THINK = MIND = RENEWED = TRANSFORMED (more highly – curtseying to the Priest!)

TRAP 2: measurement of faith. It’s not the volume – it’s the fact that GOD GIVES us faith. (Prayer meeting on Wednesday) HE gives us our faith and we know he has no favourites.

Body image……. Each member belongs to all the others. What a beautiful body.

Gifts; if it’s your gift, USE IT!

Ministries: SPEAKING: teaching, encouraging, leadership

DOING ministries: serving, contributing to others’ needs and showing mercy

Help can help one another to see our gifts and learn to use them diligently, generously and cheerfully. (Garden at a church I used to go to)

RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER: (The great Bible Bake-off! 28 ingredients for this recipe of how to LOVE) Rapid fire list…… not a command, it’s an instruction. Be transformed by the renewing of your MIND – key to transforming behaviour.

Assumption that we’ll love one another. Sincere, not patronising. Not because I have to. Cheerfully!

Paul can see what’s ahead in our lives and he’s instructing us so our MINDS are ready and, as living sacrifices we are ready to serve God and test and approve his will. (Prayer, Bible, sharing with other members of the body)

VERSE 9: HATE – CLING - nothing lukewarm.

VERESE 12: Little trio – it’s not always easy – God gives us the faith and body of Christ to do this. Be TRANSFORMED by the renewal of your mind.

VERSE 13: Share…..as in Acts 2 v 44 (read)

Practise hospitality: Last week. My first essay.

Bless – it’s got to be sincere! (my mind runs back to the OT – ransacking of countries who took slaves…….look what a blessing Daniel was. Namaan’s servant girl) The beatitudes.

Mourn with those who mourn: funeral visit. How tired and sad I am. Take time off after funeral.

TRAP 3: Pride. Be willing to muck in with what you need to do and who you need to be with. (St. Mary’s pews for the Radcliffe family.)

17-21: 4th TRAP here – revenge: be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody – don’t put yourself in a vulnerable position. (Billy Graham – never stayed in hotel room on his own; always had a chaperone. The press couldn’t have a go at Billy Graham when he died, because he’d done what was right in the eyes of everybody.)

V 18: as far as it depends on you. “Lest we forget” Jackson film. Kindness to the enemy. They couldn’t stop the war but as far as it depended on them, they were kind.

4th TRAP here – revenge: with our renewed minds, we hope and pray that our enemy will turn to God and repent.

Renewal of mind is an ongoing process. LETTER – I’d let it go. How easy to go to revenge.