



## Notes

- Romans 12:1 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
- What does the Bible say about sacrifice?

## Sacrifice In The Believer's Life Today

- Present your body as a living *sacrifice*.
  - A believer is never called to intentionally end his or her life
  - Everything someone is, body and soul, belongs to God. No one is his or her own keeper. And thus we offer what belongs to God, namely ourselves, back to Him in all we do.
- A *living* sacrifice.
  - God has breathed life into the believer, and now they are no longer dead but *living*.
  - Matthew 16:24-25 - Then Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
- Worship requires the whole person, body and soul, and will require dying to one's self in the worship act of pursuing Christ-likeness.

“Worship is to the Christian what the mainspring is to a watch, what the engine is to a car. It is the very core, the most essential element.” - John McArthur

- Worship of God must take that essential place in our lives, and in *all* aspects of our lives.

“Our definition of worship is enriched when we understand that true worship touches each area of life. We are to honor and adore God in everything.” – ibid

## Sacrifice And The Fall

- Where did sacrifice come from and why is there a need for it?
  - Genesis 3:16-19
- God has declared that life will not be interwoven with hardship and death because of sin.
  - Mankind was still alive. God had every right to completely obliterate Adam and Eve for their sin, but in His mercy decided to curse them instead.

“God’s response to Adam and Eve’s faith (in God’s promises vv 15-16), was to remove their flimsy man-



made garments and clothe them with acceptable garments he himself provided.”

- Those garments God provided came at a cost.

## Sacrifice And A Promise

- Sacrifice was a symbol of hope

Genesis 15 and God’s covenant with Abraham

- Genesis 15:7-11 say

“And he said to him, ‘I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess’ But he said, ‘O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?’ He said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.’ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.”

- Somehow Abram knew that he had to cut these animals in half. This implies that this was an already established way of forming a covenant.

“In commanding the slaughtered animals to be parts, it is probable that he followed the ancient rite in forming covenants, whether they were entering into any alliance, or were mustering an army.” That is interesting though, because somehow for anything to have significance or weight, a life must be given. So, in verses 15:17-18 Abram falls into a deep sleep, and God makes the covenant with Abram: “When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram saying, ‘To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.’” – John Calvin

- The smoke and torch are symbols that represent God passing through the animals, thus making the covenant with Abram.

“I willingly admit what I have alluded to above, that the covenant was ratified by a solemn rite, when the animals were divided into parts. For there seems to be a repetition, in which he teaches what was the intent of the sacrifice which he has mentioned. Here, also, we may observe, what I have said, that the word is always to be joined with the symbols, lest our eyes be fed with empty and fruitless ceremonies. God has commanded animals to be offered to him; but he has shown their end and use, by a covenant appended to them.” – ibid

- Through sacrifice, God established that He is forever the covenant keeper, and he *promised that* He will



bless Abram by giving him a nation.

## Sacrifice With A Purpose

- Sacrifice in the OT was not only a provision because of sin, but also a means by which God would make covenant promises
- God in His mercy revealed to Israel the Law.
  - Within the Law there was a system of offerings.
    - burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offering, sin offerings, and guilt offerings.
- These sacrifices were required for Israel to dwell with their holy God.

“While we might be frightened by blood and gore, let’s not forget this crucial point: this was the best thing going. There was no better way of worship in the world. God dwelled with Israel and with no one else.” - Mike Cospers, *Rhythms Of Grace*

“Let’s also remember that this was all evidence of God’s grace. Nothing *required* God to provide a way for redeeming fallen man. He had every right to simply allow us to suffer the deadly consequences of our actions, but he didn’t. He never abandoned us. He stepped into our world and made a way for us to know him.” – ibid

- God in his mercy and grace, through a system of offerings and sacrifices, had now provided a way for Man to dwell with God.

“Just as we underestimate God’s holiness, we underestimate how deeply sinful we are. We think of ourselves as good enough, smart enough, and likeable enough to *deserve* forgiveness from God.” – ibid

- *The purpose of the sacrifices was that man’s sinfulness could be dealt with on God’s terms.*
  - However, the sacrifices themselves weren’t effective unless the believer had a repentant heart.

“That repentance is of greater importance than sacrifice is shown by the fact that in cases for which no sacrifice was prescribed true repentance might lead to forgiveness. No sacrifices are prescribed for such sins as murder or adultery. David, who was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba and of the death of Uriah, was rebuked by Nathan and his conscience was touched into genuine repentance. And Nathan said: ‘The Lord also hath put away thy sin.’ No act of sacrifice is recorded; for none was relevant. The spirit is of more importance than any spiritual act. This was stated in an utterance ascribed to Samuel: ‘Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.’” - H. H. Rowley, *WORSHIP IN ANCIENT ISRAEL: Its Forms and Meaning*



- The Old Testament believer could not repent without the act of the sacrifice, yet the Old Testament believer could not have an effective sacrifice without true repentance.
- This was not a permanent solution. The sacrifices were pointing to something far greater.

## The Ultimate Sacrifice

Isaiah 53:7 - He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent so he opened not his mouth.

- Jesus is the something far greater.
  - Since Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice and now dwells in the hearts of those He loves, animals are not needed to atone for sins. (Hebrews 9:11-14)
- Believers now live their lives as living sacrifices, in gratitude to the ultimate sacrifice on their behalf.
  - Hopefully there will be renewed resolve to live lives of constantly putting to death self, and finding life in the one who gave His life as a ransom for many.

## Works Cited

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