

The Heart of an Acceptable Sacrifice

November 29th & 30th, 2014

Romans 12:1-2

“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. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

One of the challenges for every Christian in our time is to give it all for God and to be able to challenge other Christians to do the same thing. Hundreds of teachings take place on a regular basis that admonish believers to surrender everything and live as a sacrifice to God. In order to do this, we often go to intellectual explanations, Biblical promises and Biblical warnings; and even though we labor with the Word of God, often we produce guilt trips in ourselves and in our hearers. But the reality is that we as Christians often struggle in how to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

1. Finding the Correct Motivation

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, ...”

Appeal: to make a call; to encourage and strengthen; to instruct and teach; admonish and exhort. ¹

- In this passage, Paul makes an urgent call to Christians. In the same way, I believe the call is as relevant today as it was then.
- ❖ Understanding the call in our lives is necessary, yet more than that, it is vital to know how we are to come up with the passion and the strength to accomplish such a marvelous request.
By the mercies of God: properly, compassion (pity), ("visceral compassions") deep feeling about someone's difficulty or misfortune. ¹
- ❖ What is the motivation that urges us to present our lives before the Lord?
Romans 5:8-10 *“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.”*
 - The redemptive work of salvation to my life gives me the desire to give it all.
 - God gave it all and did it all for our salvation!
 - Legalism or fear will not give us the motivation to serve God with the right attitude. But instead, out of joyful appreciation and gratitude for His grace in our lives, we explode in our passion to submit everything to Him.

2. Surrendering Willingly

“...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

- ❖ If we understand the mercies of God, this request to “present [our] bodies” becomes possible in us.
 - We voluntarily want to be everything God wants us to be!

“...as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

- ❖ What is it to be a living sacrifice before God?
 - We offer our bodies, that very thing that we cherish the most.
 - We live in a relationship with God that affects every area of ourself, spiritual as well as physical, affecting not only the heart, but also affecting every action in our lives. In other words, it is readiness in my physical body to please God!
 - Consecrated living is something that affects our heart and our bodies!

Matthew 23:25-26 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.”

- When transformation takes place in the core of a believer, transformation will also take place on the exterior!
- God is asking for everything in our life, not just the heart, but every action in our daily walk.

Psalm 73:24-26 “You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

- The struggle of Asaph to serve God and the conclusion of his heart shows us that every believer experiences discouragement to surrender all at times. Yet it is in the understanding of God’s mercies on our life that gives us the willingness to follow hard after God like Asaph.

**When our motivation is correct
our submission will be real and
lasting!**

*“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*

Endnotes:

¹ Strong, James. *Strong's Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1980. Print.

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