

Spiritual Sacrifice - Romans 12:1-2 February 11 2018

This may sound like an unusual question to start a sermon, but **what is Sacrifice?**

The reason I ask that question is because a sacrifice means different things to different people.

What I might call a sacrifice, you might not call a sacrifice

What you call a sacrifice, I might not call a sacrifice

We could give all kinds of examples of what we consider to be sacrifices.

I know somebody in our house who might think a sacrifice is doing without a dishwasher or Microwave oven for a month.

What I call a sacrifice and what you call a sacrifice may not be the same thing. **But when it comes to Spiritual Sacrifices we cannot have a difference of opinion.** God knows what a sacrifice is, but it's important that we also know.

Jesus sacrificed His **Life** by dying on the cross and shedding His blood for our forgiveness.

Both His **Living** and His **Life** were dedicated to God.

Today God expects no less of us.

We're to focus upon being **Living** sacrifices each and every day.

What is a living sacrifice? A living sacrifice is someone who makes the appropriate sacrifices within one's life each and every day, to glorify God through His Son, Jesus.

Paul's words in Rom 12:1-2 are some of the most important and strategic words ever penned in human history. They serve as a halftime address - a coach's "chalk talk," capable of leading

God's people to victory. **But please don't let your familiarity with these verses lead to passivity.** Hear them again anew and afresh.

After devoting eleven chapters to heavy-duty theology, Paul transitions in Romans chapter 12 from **doctrine to duty, from creed to conduct, and from belief to behaviour.**

He says, **“In light of what God has done, here is how we should live.”** To put it another way, the apostle encourages us to turn our theology into **“walkology.”** In other words, to live out our beliefs.

In fact this chapter has more commands in it than any other chapter of the New Testament. **It's a chapter of action!** Paul's thesis is: **Beliefs should impact behaviour**

There are three qualities of our sacrifice: (1) Living: In the Old Testament believers were called to **“make” a sacrifice from a dead sacrifice.** In the New Testament believers are called to **“be” a sacrifice from a living sacrifice.** Most believers could take a bullet for Christ in a moment of courage, but every believer struggles to die to self and live for Christ on a daily basis.

Our second quality of sacrifice is **Holiness:** **“Set apart”** from the world and belonging to God. This means that as individual Christians and as a corporate church, we must do all that we can to ensure that holiness is promoted. **We're commanded to be holy as God is holy.**

Our third quality of sacrifice is **Pleasing or Acceptable:** The term **“acceptable”** builds on the Old and New Testament concept of the sacrifice as pleasing God. When you present your body as a sacrifice that is living and holy God is pleased.

So to try to get a better handle on this let's take a look at the concept of **“sacrifice”** through three prominent Biblical examples using the **“Who Am I”** game.

1) One was a poor person

2) One was a preacher

3) One was a pilgrim

Introduction: Read: Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-8

See if you can guess these examples as we go through this sermon on sacrifice. **I'll give you one hint.** These are all Bible characters, so no need to guess anyone who's not a Bible character. **Hold your answer until I give you all the clues.**

Are You Ready?

I. "Who am I?"

I'm A Very Poor Person

- 1) I'm someone who Jesus saw.
- 2) I'm on a limited income.
- 3) I'm poor financially, but I'm rich spiritually.
- 4) I'm alone in this world, but someone was with me one day.
- 5) I'm found only in the books of Mark and Luke.
- 6) I'm a woman.
- 7) I rebuked the rich by my example.
- 8) I gave everything I had to God.
- 9) Though I'm poor, I gave more than all the rich.
- 10) **Who am I?**

11) I'm the widow of Mark 12:42 and Luke 21:2 who gave her last two cents to the Lord.

Read Mark 12:41-44.

What lessons concerning sacrifice can we glean from this?

1) It's not sacrifice if we give what we can afford - whether this is money, possessions, time, etc.

a. Notice the example of the Macedonians in **2 Cor.8:1-5**

2) It's not sacrifice unless it's given with the right purpose and for the right reasons.

a. Jesus was watching **"HOW"** people gave.

b. We know that some in that day often gave for the glory of men to be seen of men (Matthew 6:2).

c. The widow gave with the right spirit.

3) **It is** sacrifice when we give to God things that we genuinely **Need**.

a. Widows were the most neglected member of that society.

b. That widow needed that money.

II.

1. "Who am I?"

1) I was born a Jew.

2) I met Jesus personally.

3) I'm an apostle.

4) I travelled by boat in my lifetime.

5) I preached the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.

6) I wrote several New Testament books.

7) I gave up everything that I had worked for in my life for Jesus.

8) I suffered beatings, imprisonment, shipwreck, and other persecutions for the cause of Christ.

9) Before I became a Christian, I fasted for three days.

10) Who am I?

11) I'm Paul who was once called Saul of Tarsus.

2. Read Philippians 3:3-8 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

3. We learn from Paul the following lessons concerning sacrifice.

1) Sacrifice involves the dedication of all our personal accomplishments to Christ. There is nothing we can accomplish that is too noble to sacrifice for the sake of Christ.

a. How often we fall short here.

b. Educational degrees.

c. Business credentials.

d. Humanitarian awards.

e. All should be laid at the feet of Christ.

2) It's not a sacrifice when we try to serve God from the comfort of our easy chair. Would we be willing to suffer personal loss or personal suffering for the sake of Christ.

a. Jesus said, *"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."* (John 15:20).

III. "Who Am I?"

- 1) I lived under a different covenant than you.
- 2) I lived in tents all my life.
- 3) I was a fairly wealthy man in my day.
- 4) I was not a high priest, but offered sacrifices before one.
- 5) During my time, God spoke directly to the Father's of the families.
- 6) I sacrificed the nearness and comfort of family to follow God.
- 7) God promised me that all families would be blessed in my seed.
- 8) I cast out one son and offered up the other to please God.
- 9) I'm spoken of in the scriptures as the **"friend of God,"** and **"the Father of the Faithful."**

10) Who am I? - A Pilgrim - Abraham

2. Read Hebrews 11:8-10; Genesis 22:1-12

3. We learn from Abraham the following lessons regarding sacrifice.

Sacrifice means to obey God and follow His leading.

- a. Abraham went out.
- b. He didn't know where he was going.
- c. God told him where to go.
- d. Abraham sacrificed his present situation for a better country.

2) Sacrifice means we are to trust in God that He will provide for whatever it is we need.

a. Abraham didn't know what kind of land awaited him.

b. He put his faith and trust in God that where he was going God would provide.

c. Abraham had to sacrifice trust in self to do this (Pro.3:5, 6).

3) Sacrifice could involve forfeiture of that which is very near and dear to us.

a. God asks us to give him everything we have today as a living sacrifice, holding nothing back

b. "If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honourable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work." **2 Timothy 2:21**

So to Summarize:

1. We have looked at three examples of sacrifice.

1) A Poor Person--The Widow and her two cents.

2) A Preacher--Paul the Apostle

3) A Pilgrim-Abraham the Father of the Faithful.

2. From these examples we have learned the following lessons regarding sacrifice

1) **It's not sacrifice** if we give what we can afford - whether this is money, possessions, time, etc.

2) **It's not sacrifice** unless It's given with the right purpose and for the right reasons.

3) **It is sacrifice when we give to God things that we genuinely need.**

4) Sacrifice involves the dedication of all our personal accomplishments to Christ. There is nothing we can accomplish that is too noble to sacrifice for the sake of Christ.

5) **It's not a sacrifice** when we try to serve God from the comfort of our easy chair.

6) Sacrifice means to obey God and follow His leading.

7) Sacrifice means trusting in God that He will provide for whatever it is we need.

8) Sacrifice could involves giving up something very dear to us.

So how can you present your body as a sacrifice?

Resolve to make worship a priority. Worship is a Monday through Saturday lifestyle that doesn't have to end on Sunday afternoon. Throughout the week worship the Lord through your own private worship services. **Determine today to present yourself as a sacrifice.**

Seek out ministry opportunities. Do some chores, run an errand, lend a hand. Take the extra time to make a visit. Pick up the phone and check on someone who is going through a struggle. Volunteer to help on a project that will show God's grace to someone else.

Look for ways to demonstrate your love for the Lord in practical ways. Why? Martin Luther once said, **"Idle hands are the devil's workshop."**

Commit yourself to physical exercise. (e.g., walking, hiking,). God wants all of you! This shouldn't scare you because if you let God have your life He can do more with it than you can.

E.G. John Paton was born in Scotland in 1824. As a young Christian he laboured as a city missionary in the slums of Glasgow. But he felt God's call to take the gospel to the fierce cannibals of the New Hebrides islands in the South Pacific.

John Williams and James Harris made the first attempt to take the gospel there in 1839. They were clubbed to death and eaten within a few minutes of their landing. Paton and his new wife landed there on November 5, 1858.

On February 12, 1859, she gave birth to a son, but on March 3rd, she died from complications after childbirth. On March 20th, the baby died. Of course Paton struggled with his grief and loneliness. Just before his wife died, she expressed her wish that her mother could be there with her. Then she added,

“You must not think that I regret coming here, and leaving my mother. If I had the same thing to do over again, I would do it with far more pleasure, **yes, with all my heart.** Oh, no! I do not regret leaving home and friends, though at the time I felt it keenly.

Her dying words were, “**Not lost, only gone before to be forever with the Lord.**” Paton lived into his seventies, devoting himself to the cause of the gospel among these cannibals.

At the end of his life he exclaimed, “Oh that I had my life to begin again! I would consecrate it anew to Jesus in seeking the conversion of the remaining cannibals on the New Hebrides.” (John G. Paton Autobiography [Banner of Truth], pp. 84-85, 496)

Prayer: Thank you, Lord for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for us. Thank you that no further sacrifice is required for our sins.

How can we make a lesser sacrifice when Jesus gave His all etc? May we be the living sacrifices of which Paul speaks?