

With Knowledge of what Israel should do

I Chronicles 12:32a—Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.

James 1:25—But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Leviticus 3:1-2—Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD. He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

Leviticus 7:28-30a—Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the LORD.’”

John 19:30—When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said: “It is finished!” And he bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Let’s bow for a word of prayer.

Lord, this morning we come before You, our King of kings, knowing that You are coming. This morning we ask that You might take Your rightful place on the throne of our hearts in the throne room. We pray that here in our meeting, You would have the highest place in every heart, in every word spoken, and in every word heard. Lord, we thank You. We ask that this morning You would take down any barriers that we have put up between You and us. Lord, we have done it without even knowing that we have done it. We ask this morning that You would take them down and enter into our hearts. Lord, we worship You. Be magnified. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Going from a Flicker to a Flame in our Heart

In John 11 there are a couple of verses about Martha, and the Lord put on my heart to begin with these verses. In this chapter we are told that this is when Lazarus had just died. Mary and Martha called for the Lord Jesus when he was sick, and He did come, but He delayed. I think purposely He delayed, and by the time He came Lazarus had died.

We remember that Martha was a little bit of a busy body in her daily life. She would work for the sake of working. When others were not carrying their load, she would probably be the first to point this out: “You are not carrying your load!”

So that day the sisters called for the Lord, but He did not come in a timely way, and Lazarus died. When Martha heard that He was coming, she ran to Him; her heart was

broken. When she reached Him, the Lord said to her, “Your brother shall rise again” (v. 23).

Now Martha knew a lot, she had heard a lot, and in her mind she understood certain things. And she said to the Lord: “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day” (v. 24). This was the correct answer, and it shows the knowledge that she had. Then the Lord looked at her and said: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies” (v. 26).

In Martha’s knowledge from the things that she had heard and in the things that she had learned, she could say from her wealth of knowledge that was in her mind this technically, correct answer: “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

As the Lord looked at her and she looked at the Lord, He said to her: “You have learned a lot, but I AM the resurrection and the life.” It was like taking something that had been in her mind that she had heard and all of a sudden making it alive. This was someone she could see, whom she could hold, whom she could look forward to and put her hopes in.

We have heard many things. We have been so blessed with the ministry of the Word from faithful brothers and seeing the testimony of their lives. We have heard them, and it has entered into our minds; we may even have memorized them. But at some point in our lives the Lord causes Lazarus to die. Then he brings us to the point where something has to go from a flicker to a flame. It has to go from something buried in our head to something living in our heart.

The sons of Issachar had learned a lot through many, many lessons taught them by the Lord in real ways. Then the time came when the Lord brought them to Hebron as we read in I Chronicles 12. Because of what they had learned, they had knowledge of the times. It was a real knowledge, and the Lord had personally taught these things to them through many journeys and many difficulties. Then, at that point, at the right time He brought them and all the tribes of Israel to Hebron to make a choice. The sons of Issachar knew the knowledge they had that had gone from their minds into their hearts was now going to be born forward in what they were going to do.

So the burden for our time for these two messages has been knowing what Israel should do. And we cautioned that the knowledge of Israel and what they should do comes second after an understanding of the Lord Jesus and an understanding of the times. The danger for all of us is that when we are saved or when we are enthusiastic or when we are “on fire,” we like to jump into the action and do something. But when we do that and do things in the wrong order, there is always a danger. So what we would like to reinforce at the beginning is that the message I am sharing these two times comes in conjunction under the authority of the messages that are given by our brothers of a knowledge of the times that might ultimately yield in our hearts the understanding of what we should do.

We have shared about some of the moments in our lives in which the Lord brings us to a place where we have to make a macro decision, a sort of foundational-life decision of whom we should follow and where our home will be; a decision regarding whether we will engage or draw back; a decision of what we want the testimony of our life to tell. These are large foundational decisions.

Our brother yesterday morning reminded us that Christian life is a daily life, and if every day we were put in Ittai's situation, I think we would all wear down pretty fast. Daily life is normal life, and sometimes it just kind of runs under the radar. It is sometimes easier for us to think if someone challenged us with life or death such as "Do you believe in the Lord? I think most of us would say, "Yes, I do." But when it comes to something daily such as, "Will you go to the prayer meeting?" That is much harder. This is daily life, and I have to decide between my own weariness and something like a prayer meeting. But if my life depended upon it, I would go with the Lord. So daily life becomes much more difficult.

God has Given Us the Liberty to Choose

So we want to suggest that large decisions in our life are so important, and they have to do with an understanding of the times we live in. But the large decisions, as our brother was sharing the Kairos vision, when we have an understanding of it, trickles down to influence our daily decisions. It helps us to know how we should live simply every day, and these decisions that we make every day are based on choices.

The Lord, in His manifold wisdom, gave us the liberty to choose. We shared about how this could yield the opposite of what in our minds He would be asking for because when you give us the choice to choose, we so often choose the wrong way. We feel that it could be a risk to the Lord's purposes, but we should have no fear because our wonderful Lord knows exactly what He is doing. In His wisdom and love and grace He is raising us up, teaching us, and guiding us to these points in our lives where we are able to make decisions and choices for Him. The choices we make tell of the things that are really in our heart.

My son, Aaron wrote me a card, and it said: "Dad, I love you." I was so happy! I thought this is the best card I have ever gotten, and I was going to frame it. And I said, "Aaron, thank you for this card!" And Aaron said to me, "Mom made me write it." So because this is my story I get to selectively remember which details I want to remember.

What we see here is that love cannot be coerced. Love is a free will decision and in the building up of the house of God, the Lord needed to give us this free will because He wanted us to come to him with a freedom to choose Him. Even though the enemy would throw all these alternative choices our way of different things to capture our hearts and draw us to him, the Lord needed for us to see him through the camouflage of all these things and say, "Even though there are all these other things, I still choose You, Lord." And this is the victory that the Lord is going to receive.

Sometimes we look at ourselves and think, "What a mess!" We look at the house of God and we think, "What a mess!" But the truth of the matter is that the Lord is working.

The ark is in the field, and He is always, always preparing His bride, and He is bringing us to these decision points in our lives in order to choose Him.

The Lord Willingly Laid down His Life

Now freedom, free will or choosing the Lord sometimes can seem as if they are in two opposite directions. In the Lord Jesus' life there is a very interesting picture. In John 10:17-18 the Lord says of His freedom, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

We see in the history of the Lord's relationship with His Father that at one point His Father gave Him a command: "You have the liberty and the freedom to lay down Your life and also to pick it up again." The Lord said: "I willingly lay down My life," and it was an expression of His love to His father. So this is a statement of freedom. But then when we turn to John 5:30, the Lord says: "I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear I judge." What we now see on the one hand is the Lord saying, "My father commanded Me that I have the freedom to choose." But then in verse 30 the Lord says, "I cannot do anything on my own."

These are two seemingly opposite points of view in our Lord Jesus' life: "I have the freedom, but I am constrained and have no choice." What does this mean? It is not really that the Lord had no choice from an objective point of view. It was that He loved His Father so much and knew what was in His Father's heart that even though he had the freedom to choose, he knew that because of His great love for His Father it was like He had no choice. He wanted His Father's heart to be pleased. This is how the Lord Jesus lived; He had a free will and yet it was with a heart of subjection to His Father's will. And for us it is the same.

Set Free to Choose to be a Servant of the Lord

I Peter 2:16 says, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for sin, but use it as bondslaves of God."

So what was true for the Lord is also true for us. The Lord, through such a terrible cost, set us free. When He set us free, He gave us the choice of how we would live our lives. The Bible here is reminding us that we should take that choice and choose to be slaves to the Lord. This is the law of liberty that we read earlier in James; we have this freedom, but what are we going to do with it? How are we going to live? What will we do?

It reminds us of the story of the Hebrew servant who, after seven years, had earned his freedom if he chose to, but went back to his master and said: "Even though I have been freed, I love you, and I choose to be your servant of my own freewill." And the master would pierce his ear as a testimony of his decision.

Here we see this choice the Lord has put before us. We have all been set free. Praise the Lord! But what are we going to do with this freedom in our lives? How will we live

with this knowledge of the times? We believe that the choices we make in this context will not only prepare us for the bride being made ready, but it will hasten the Lord's return. So this is the question that is set before us.

The Peace Offering

We shared about the larger decisions we might make that the Lord has put before us. Now we will share about our daily decisions. There is an example in the Old Testament that is called "a freewill offering." The freewill offering is linked or encompassed in the peace offering. It is one of the offerings that is described in the Old Testament, and it is a non-mandatory offering, unlike the burnt offering and the sin offering.

The freewill offering was exactly what it was—a freewill offering. It fell under the umbrella of the peace offering, and it is quite remarkable what the Bible tells us about it.

So let us go back in time and consider for a moment the altar. Every morning an offering was placed upon the altar; it was a continuous offering and a mandatory offering. It was called the burnt offering, and it was there every morning. The burnt offering was followed by a sin offering, and it was mandatory. If you and I did not bring a burnt offering and a sin offering, we would die. There was no choice.

But the peace offering was volitional; it was optional. We did not need to bring it, for it was not mandatory. It was an offering of our own freewill. So we would like to take a look at this offering and see what it teaches us of how we are to live.

We would like to consider three functional parts of the offering and three reasons why we would give it. But before we get to that we have to consider for a moment what a peace offering really means.

The peace offering is not what we would consider in our culture. As an example: when I offend my wife (in my notes I wrote, if I offend my wife but I should clarify it), I might bring her some flowers because the flowers would represent a peace offering. A peace offering in the context of how we think of it in our everyday vernacular is to restore peace, to make up for something that we had done wrong. But this is not the peace offering that is mentioned here in the Bible. The peace offering that is mentioned in the Bible speaks of an offering that we make because peace has already been established for us. It is an offering that we make because there has been a burnt offering and a sin offering.

I work in a cancer hospital, and there are times when people come in for a biopsy. I have to remind myself to call them immediately when the results are available because I know that every single time we take a biopsy, between that point and when I call them with the results, the patient has no peace. It is because there is uncertainty; they do not know what is going to happen; there is the risk of something bad coming from the biopsy. So while they are waiting for the phone call, in my heart I know there is the risk of difficulty or bad news. But when they learn that the results are good, then that fear of bad news has been removed and replaced by something secure and good.

This is a poor example because peace is not always linked with the removal of something bad and the introduction of something good in our daily lives. But from God's point of view something bad removed and something good coming in will give us peace.

The Lord Jesus came into this world because He is the Prince of Peace, and every one of us has fallen short of the glory of God. Something bad is awaiting every person born on this planet; there is no escaping it. But the enemy has so distorted it that he has made men and women now feel that there may be something good in us that is redeemable outside of God. Even among Christians this distortion has entered into many hearts to believe that there is something good in us, so that our children and our testimony have become confused. As we look at one another, somehow we think the lifestyle of Christianity can bring something good to us.

However, the Bible is very clear. We know in our hearts that each of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. For each one who has sinned there is a judgement. From the very beginning the Bible was clear: if you have sinned there is a judgement that will fall upon everyone; no one is spared, and that judgement is death. No one can escape by offering anything out of our life no matter how good we think we are or have done, such as acts of kindness or random acts of good. We could bring every good thing before the judgement seat and say: "Can I trade these things in for my life?" The judgement seat is characterized by the law, and there is going to be a balance. We will see the weight of our sins and then put on the other side our perceived goodnesses. And when we bring every last bit of goodness before the judgement seat, none of us is going to be found worthy. This is a fact, and we have to get over it; it is the truth.

What hope was there for us? Something bad was coming and there was no peace. But then, on that wonderful day in Bethlehem, the Lord Jesus came down from the majestic throne of God and was born as a baby in a feeding trough for animals to a young dad and mom. You would think going from the throne of God to a feeding trough would be a big change, but he was right at home. He grew up in a home in which his mother and father were normal people. He was obedient as a good son. He worked with His hands learning to build because His earthly dad had taught Him how to be a Carpenter. He was an older Brother and a good Brother. Not only the people around Him would listen to Him talk but also the rabbis, and they would question Him: "Who taught Him all this?" But they did not know as He was growing up that He not only had an earthly father but He also had a heavenly Father.

Then one day, the time had come for Him to come into the light, and He did. He began to be visible, not just to His family, but the children would see Him. Children know. They would run to Him and He would hold them. Then all His disciples would say to them, "No, He is too great for the children," but the Lord said, "Let the little children come." He was so approachable.

The Lord Jesus never sinned; He was sinless. When He was struck on the cheek, He would turn the other cheek. When He would go with His brothers and it would get cold,

He would give them His cloak. What He said, He did. Later on, His brothers were saved and some of them wrote books in the Bible, but before they were saved they might have had a little jealousy. The older Brother was considered by so many to be such a wonderful Person. He did no wrong; He was obedient, and He was listened to by the people and rabbis. They might feel a little uneasy about that and maybe even have a little jealousy.

People may have come to recruit them by saying something bad about their Brother. "Your Brother said this on the Sermon on the Mount." And it might have been that James or Jude would have said: "You know No wait, He was always like that." They might have thought, "You know ... No, He really did do that." This is how He was; He was perfect. And if we met Him, He would win us over. Your heart might be so hard, but if you were to see Him, your heart would melt. He was just that way. The enemy has done such a work of distortion in us; but for those of us who know Him, who He really is and what He has done in our lives, we can never forget it.

And so that day came when the burnt offering and the sin offering needed to be placed on the altar. We had no hope; there was only bad in our hearts. But on that day when He was crucified for us, something bad died. It is very strange for us to think of the Lord Jesus as something bad because there is nothing bad in Him. Everyone who knew Him, knew there was nothing bad in Him. But on that day when He died and we died in Him, He became sin for our sakes. He took upon Himself all of the bad, the evil and the sin we had committed. On that day something bad died; everything bad in me died in Him. And everything good in Him came to life in me. Something bad was dealt with and something good came in. He is the Prince of Peace. He became that burnt offering and sin offering for us, and we put our hand on the Lord Jesus and claimed Him; He is mine. This is a fact, and the Christian can rest assured that our own goodness plays no role in who we are. We need to get it out of our minds.

The temptation of the enemy says, "Who are you to serve?! Who are you to stand for the Lord?! You are not good enough!" That goes without saying, because I already know this is true! Our goodness rests on the Man on the cross. He is our burnt offering and He is our sin offering. Therefore, it is only after this burnt offering and the sin offering that we could come into His presence with a peace offering. It must go in that order!

The burnt offering that spoke of the greatness of God and fallen man and this delta we could never make up needed to continuously be there that a perfect God might be approachable by sinful men and women. It is always there for us—our perfect offering. The sin offering speaks that there must be a punishment; it is never acceptable that sin could come into the presence of God.

We sometimes think that sin got swept under some great rug in heaven and it is still there, but we just cannot see it. No, every sin carries with it a punishment, and every punishment fell on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our sin offering forever! It cannot be taken away! No matter what the enemy might suggest, it cannot be undone for the Christian.

So these two things are always true. After the burnt offering and the sin offering can then come the peace offering. Again, the peace offering is not to suggest that we can earn anything on our own; it has already been done! We are only coming with an offering. We have to have this clear.

The peace offering is so down to earth. The burnt offering and sin offering are, to be honest, big deals! They should be big deals. And in our hearts we remember them all the time. But the peace offering can be so simple. It can be as simple for us as a prayer of thanks in the car, a song in our hearts as we are taking a shower, a word of kindness to a brother or sister in their need. The peace offering is something given of our own freewill to the Lord because He is our burnt offering and our sin offering, and He has made a way for us to come.

The Peace Offering Comes after the Burnt Offering and the Sin Offering

So, the first functional point of the peace offering is that it must come after the burnt offering and the sin offering. So our daily life, brothers and sisters, is built upon what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

Leviticus 3:2a: “And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering ...” If we could, for a moment pay attention to how the Bible talks about this offering. It says: “He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering.” It is saying that we brought something of our own to the Lord.

Then we will turn to Leviticus 7:30a: “His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to the Lord.”

After the burnt offering and the sin offering were placed, then we would bring our peace offering. An interesting part of the peace offering is that we brought it ourselves. It was our offering and we brought it with our own hands. So many of the offerings are conducted by the Levites, the priests where they would take the offerings for us and offer them up. But we would offer up the peace offering on our own with our own hands.

The Peace Offering is Personal

The second functional point of the peace offering is that it is personal. It cannot be brought by someone else.

What does it mean for something to be personal? When we are on our own and no one else is around, that is when we know who we really are. When we are in public and people see our public personas, that is oftentimes not who we are. But when we are on our own in our rooms in the dark, all of the true nature of who we are can be noticed by us. This is exactly who we are.

And the personal nature of the peace offering is very precious because we would bring it to the Lord every day ourselves. Now it is one thing to come to a meeting like this because it is so easy to engage in, and we are brought to our feet by the hymns and the rhythms and the words to the songs. However, when we go home, it is sometimes a little more difficult. But the peace offering is very personal; we come exactly as we are.

In Ephesians 2, the Bible tells us that He brought peace to us who were far away and peace to us who are near. And sometimes we think: "I am far away from the Lord. I am a sinner, and I am captured by sin. Therefore, I must not be able to bring a peace offering." But the Lord brought peace to those of us who were far away, and He brought peace to us who are near. So if you and I are far away, the enemy's whispering in our ear will be: "You cannot possibly bring a peace offering in your condition."

When that happens, we turn our eyes to the cross, and we remember that "it is finished!" And it should bring us, in our hearts, to this reality, "I am going to come personally just as I am, exactly as I am, with all my weaknesses and failures. I am going to come as I am based on the blood of Jesus, and I am going to offer up an offering of my own freewill to Him." And then watch in our lives what will happen! To be able to come out of our own heart's desire and offer this up to the Lord is an amazing thing. And when we bring peace offerings to Him for His blessing, He showers us with blessing. This is so personal! This is one of those things that cannot be replaced with speaking at a pulpit or leading the hymns or leading a Bible study or functioning in the body of Christ. This is a personal, hidden relationship.

The Bible tells us that in the architecture of our bodies there is a room that is hidden in our hearts. It is called the inner room. Moses called it the secret place. In our heart there is an inner room that really only fits two people. It is a room with a door, and the Bible tells us that you can close the door. In Matthew 6 it tells us we can go into this inner room and close the door, and no one else can go into that room except you and the Lord. This is a room in which you and I are supposed to live every day, but for many of us that room is kind of empty. But this is a room that was designed into the human heart, and when the Lord Jesus became our Savior, He came in, and He is waiting for us. This is the room where these personal peace offerings can be brought to Him, and we bring it with our own hands.

This is not to suggest that we live on our own; it is not. But we must have this personal time with Him. So in our daily lives, what should Israel do with the knowledge of the times? We must live in this inner room.

I wander easily, and sometimes when brothers or sisters ask us to serve, we do not really want to, but the Lord is bringing us to a place where we cannot be without Him; we cannot make it without Him. So we run back into that inner room.

Brothers and sisters, may I ask you when was the last time that you and I were in that inner room? When was the last time that we found peace there? There is no peace elsewhere, and might we find our life there again. So this was a second functional part of the offering.

The first being that it comes after the burnt offering and the sin offering. The second part was it is personal; it is brought on our own.

The Peace Offering Induced Fellowship

The third part of the functionality of the peace offering is that it induced fellowship. In reading through chapters 3 and 7, we realize that when you or I would bring the peace offering, it would be from us, and it would be unto the Lord. And they would take the kidneys and the lobe of fat above the kidneys and offer them to God. Then the breast and the shoulder would be given to the priest. And the rest of it would be given to the one offering it to be shared with others.

There are some peace offerings that catch our attention like the prodigal son. They had a fatted calf, and when time came to make this offering, it was unto the Lord, and there was a part that went to the priest and the rest of it was shared for thanksgiving because the son had come home.

This is a very interesting part of the peace offering because in our lives when we bring an offering before the Lord, it induces body life in some heavenly way. It is difficult to describe, but when brothers and sisters are thankful and they share their thanksgiving of what the Lord has done in their lives, this brings joy and life into the house of God. When we share each other's joys and oftentimes share each other's sorrows, when the sorrow has been brought to closure by the Lord it induces joy, and we share in that together.

I remember a number of years ago when my wife and I lived in the Bay area, there was a brother and his wife who wanted so badly to have a child. They tried and tried but never had one, and we prayed for them every Tuesday night that they would be able to have a baby.

One day our brother, who is very soft spoken, came to the meeting and said: "I just wanted to share some news." It was so dry that we were expecting something about his work or maybe he had had a car accident. But he said, "I just wanted to share that by the Lord's grace my wife is pregnant." We just jumped up, we were so happy! Because we are bound together in the house of God we are meant to shout for joy together.

We are meant to go through the valleys together. The Lord's intention was that we would be bound together, not finding faults in one another or gossiping. The Lord's intention is that His house would be built together. We would suffer together, we would have joy together, and we would grow together.

So this peace offering that comes after the burnt offering and the sin offering which is personal, would then yield the fruit of fellowship when we share our lives together. This is not easy because we are all wired differently, and it is not just that we are all wired differently, but we each have different cultures and outward forms that look different. The world and the attack of the enemy in these days is to cause us to run into camps and hide. There is no greater thing that will go against the building up of the body of Christ than human man-made camps. These are not constructs of God. The overcoming in the house of God is that we would see Christ in one another, and we would share in one another's joys and in one another's sufferings and go on together. But it is so easy to say, and we all know that it is so easy to say: "Only the Lord Jesus can do this." Only the Lord

Jesus can cause brothers and sister to reach out and be willing to suffer in the sense that our flesh does not feel comfortable. You know that our flesh loves to identify differences; it is just the nature of man and the nature of the enemy to be able to see and compare myself to you and identify differences. But in the house of God, the Lord said we cannot identify these differences. See Christ!

So what we see here is that the offering was meant for us to be bound together. We share our lives together, we share our joys, and we share our sufferings. And when the Lord delivers, we are to rejoice.

Three Reasons Why We Would give the Peace Offering

Thanksgiving

Leviticus 7:12a says, "If he offers it by way of thanksgiving ..."

So the first reason why the peace offering, a voluntary, freewill peace offering in our hearts was given is that we are thankful. In the deception of the world these days, the thankful heart is being attacked. We know that the enemy is so on the attack against the church and our families, and sometimes we see superficial things as to how he is attacking. I remember that in military strikes in the history of man the initial attacks were always on critical points in order to break down the communications in a country. The initial attack might target the communication factories or the supply lines and take them down so that the entire country would fall.

In the enemy's wisdom is a tactical strategy in order to bring down larger things. So there are tactical strikes here and there, and one of the strikes has been on thankfulness. This kind of sounds a little hokie, right? But it is so true that in our current time of living we somehow feel that the Lord Jesus' coming to die for me, I could possibly be worth it. Or I have some right to this because in my heart that is what I feel. But in Luke 17 there is an example for us:

"And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' When He saw them, He said to them: 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And it came about as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when He saw that He had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him: 'Rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well'" (vv. 12-19).

There were ten healed, one turned back, and when the one turned, the Lord said something so interesting to him. He had already healed all ten of them; they had been made well. But the Lord said to the one who turned back, because you turned you have been made well. So what we see here is thankfulness. Now there was a superficial healing that happened in all ten of them; their leprosy was gone. But in the one who turned and

was thankful, the Lord had an additional being made well. He told him because of his faith he had been made well.

In these days it is so important that we appreciate the things that He is doing in our lives, and sometimes the Lord needs to cause us to go through a difficulty in order for us to remember to be thankful again. Sometimes when we have gotten so hard-hearted and we feel entitled to certain things, the Lord will bring some difficulty into our life, and then we wonder why the difficulty is there. But as the Lord brings us out of it we begin to feel thankful again. This is grace. So the first reason that we should bring a peace offering is to be thankful.

I ask my children sometimes during thanksgiving to enumerate all the things they are thankful for. They will say, "Mom, the dog and a couple other things, and maybe Dad." But this exercise we do with our children is sometimes worthwhile for us. (I hope this is not coming out as below us; it should not be.) But if we think for a moment of the things we are thankful for, and we go to the Lord and thank Him for these things, there is sometimes a softening of our heart and a bringing in of peace.

Brothers, may I ask you a question? When was the last time you realized how thankful you are for your wife? We have so many problems in our families that sometimes we forget what a blessing our wife is to us. So in our households, as brothers, as fathers, as heads of our households, to be thankful for our wives and to be thankful for our children is a life-changing thing. It sounds so simple, but we so easily forget. And the distortion of the enemy's attack on thankfulness will cause us to point out everything that she does wrong and never ever be thankful for the things that she has done for us. Isn't this true, brothers and sisters? I know the sisters think so! Brothers, isn't this true. Might it be that in our normal life we would have a thankfulness for the things He has done. Outside of the functionality of it, to be thankful is so important.

The Nazirite Vow

The second thing that was mentioned is in Numbers 6 and it is the story of a Nazirite. The Nazirite, as you know, dedicates himself to the Lord, and at the end of all the things that he does, there would be a burnt offering and a sin offering, then he would put on his own peace offering.

We probably remember from the children's stories that the Nazirite would grow his hair out like Samson, and at the completion of his vow he would cut off his hair and tuck it underneath the peace offering. Actually it is a cool picture.

In Numbers 6:18 it says, "The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head *of hair* at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and take the dedicated hair of his head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings."

So at the completion of his vow, he would cut his hair off and then put it under the peace offering. "This is for You, Lord." It is an incredible thing. The burnt offering goes without saying, and a sin offering was so necessary. But in his heart he had dedicated

something to the Lord and upon the completion of his obedience he tucked it under the peace offering.

Sometimes we hear about vows and we shy back, and the Lord said in Matthew, “Do not make any vows and do not make any oaths.” What he meant was, “Do not say, “By the Lord I am going to do this. Just let your yes be yes and your no be no.”

This Nazarite vow was different. It was to say that there is something of me that I have been asked to do or charged with and I will obey, and in that obedience it will be for You. After that obedience has been completed, the capstone of the offering would be that he would make a peace offering.

So in our lives have we said to the Lord: “I am going to do this for You”? Again, we kind of shy back because it makes us fearful, and it should, because the danger of such events is that somehow we feel that there is some merit in ourselves, that these completions of our obedience make us worthier in His presence. They do not! The worthiness comes from the burnt offering and the sin offering. We need to keep that in mind.

The second thing is that it cannot be perceived as a ‘quid pro quo’ (a favor or advantage granted or expected in return for something). I will give this to You, Lord, and maybe you will give me that.

I will be honest with you, brothers and sisters. Whenever I share, I tell the Lord a personal thing, but I cannot tell it to you, brothers and sisters, because it is personal. But I tell the Lord something. It does not increase merit; it is not a quid pro quo. It is just something the Lord puts in my heart; it is what it is. I am going to be honest with you now, but there is such peace when the message is done and I am able to sit down and thank the Lord for that peace.

So brothers and sisters, in our lives to be able to say, “Lord, I am going to live for You. Or on this day I am going to have the heart to do what I know You want me to do, and I am going to try to be faithful to it.” We see all of these sisters and brothers who are teaching the children, all the service that is going on in this conference, and then we hear about all the little interferences the enemy is doing. Nevertheless, at the end, after all this is done, we are going to make a peace offering to the Lord, and there has to be victory no matter what the enemy does because it is unto Him. It is real; it is daily life.

We remember when Nehemiah and the people finished the wall, they made an offering of thanksgiving. It was so real to them that the Lord had brought them through.

We remember at the end of Paul’s life, he said: “Even now my life is being poured out as an offering.” It was the end of a life given to the Lord, and the capstone was still an offering.

In our lives, might we look every day to bring something to Him and finish it with a peace offering. It has nothing to do with our own good. All of our good is in the burnt offering; all of our good is in the sin offering. It is just something in our heart of our own freewill. There is no obligation; it is genuine and authentic, and we bring it to the Lord.

In these days we hear that young people are leaving the house of God; they are leaving the church in droves. When we look at the reasons, they do not seem authentic and genuine. There is nothing more genuine than a freewill offering that is personal and no one else can see. These normal, daily real things can bring about the return of the Lord Jesus. These daily things reach to heaven, and they should not be underestimated. So this was the second of the reasons.

The Sacrifice of Worship

And the last one is in Romans 12; it is the sacrifice of worship. In this chapter the Bible does not say that it is a peace offering. But we know it is not a burnt offering or a sin offering.

In verse 1 Paul is urging us: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*”

Sometimes, if we are honest and we look at our lives, we often think, what a mess! I think that very often. And as we have shared, sometimes we feel that we cannot come and bring an offering. Worship is an extremely wonderful thing. It is the lifting up of the Lord Jesus in our lives. “I worship you, Lord,” is such a simple thing to say. But when it is said with an honest heart when no one is watching, and it is hidden in a personal offering, it is really a wonderful thing.

The best example of a peace offering for us that will bring the entire story together is that in our daily life, if we could lift up the Lord for a moment with a worshipful heart, the Lord’s heart is pleased. And as the Lord’s heart is pleased and we live this way, we must believe that there is something of eternity, something consequential in it.

At the end of Revelation when the Lord is coming, He says: “And my reward is with me.” I have to believe that as we live these daily lives and in our hearts we worship Him and lift Him up, there is something that He remembers of this.

There is a quantification (the expression or measurement of the quantity of something), a being made ready that worshipping Him in our heart everyday makes us ready. So when was the last time that for no good reason, spontaneously, we worshipped Him? There is something so powerful in that for our lives. What might we bring? If you look at yourself and I look at myself, again there is not much that we can bring. But do you know that hidden in our broken lives and in our broken bodies there is a treasure? On that day when the Lord offered Himself up for us, something good came into me. There is the life of the Lord Jesus that came into my heart, and something of that life I can put down to give back to Him.

I remember many years ago, I had a weakness for diet coke. I used to buy it with my own money and put it in my kitchen; it was mine. I remember one day I was going to work and my little son, at that point was so little, but he ran to the cabinet, took out the diet coke, which was mine, and he brought it to me and said: “Dad, diet coke?” I took it from him, and I was so happy! That diet coke was already mine. Objectively speaking, it was

mine when it was in the cabinet, it was mine when he took it out, and it was mine when he gave it to me. But my son took something of me, brought it to me, gave it to me, and it brought so much joy to my heart!

The Lord gave something of Himself to us; He deposited it in our hearts. And if we could bring it back to Him every day and say, "Lord, thank You. I worship You with the only good in me, and that is You, and I am going to give a little bit of it back to you." This will bring joy to His heart! It will bring us to that end day when there will be joy inexpressible with no bounds. And this is normal life.

The Relation of the Son to the Father

As I come to the end I have to share something. I had begun thinking about this message months ago, and only as I considered it between then and now that I began to see something that was really precious. When the Lord Jesus became your burnt offering and sin offering and my burnt offering and sin offering, there was something else that was happening that was behind the scenes. The Lord Jesus Himself did not need a burnt offering or a sin offering because He was already perfect. But there was something that was going on between Him and His Father in those days. When everyone would tell Him: "Do this, do that" the Lord kept saying: "My time has not yet come." He was waiting for the completion of an obedience to His Father, and it was personal. The offering that He was making was unto His Father, offered up for us and shared with us in the Lord's table. When we come together every Sunday, we can share in the offering that was made. It was unto thankfulness to His Father, and it was unto worship.

We begin to see that when the Lord Jesus was offered for us, He was a burnt offering for you and me, and He was a sin offering for you and me. But there was a relation there between Him and His Father that we sometimes cannot see. I am thinking as I read this that there was a hidden peace offering that He made to His Father apart from you and me. But in that moment when it happened, all these things were fulfilled. And it was a personal, dedication worship-offering to His Father that pleased His Father's heart.

In our daily life may we find our example in our Lord's life in how to live because we have heard many things, and we are not worthy of the things that we have heard. But may it be that we have a heart to live every day and make those things that we have heard become a part of our life for the glory of our Father and for the return of our King. And so may the Lord have mercy upon us, and this week and this year may there be many, many peace offerings made unto the One worthy of each one. We worship Him.

Let's pray:

Dear Lord, we thank You. We thank You for the example of Your life. We thank You, Lord, for being our burnt offering and our sin offering. Lord, we put our hands upon You and claim You as our own. Lord, we pray that You would give us a heart for You in our daily life. Lord, we pray that You would reign, not only in our lives globally but in every

*moment, every day. Lord, have Your place as number one in our hearts. Thank You, Lord.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*