Authentic Sacrifice

Joshua 3:5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

Oh, the longing that must have risen in the heart of the people Israel as they stood on the shore of the river Jordan and looked across to the other side.

- Finally the day had come.
- Finally they were encamped alongside the boundary of their promise.
- Finally they could look across and see the land that flowed with milk and honey.
- For so many years they had dreamed of this day, for so many years they had looked forward to this moment.
- All of their hopes and dreams centered around this land that had been promised to Abraham and now they, the sons and daughters of that great patriarch were finally prepared to claim their inheritance.
- Hope had been delayed for many years, their entrance into God’s promise was long overdue.
- But, now, the promised land, fertile and beautiful, rested just on the other side of the mighty, swollen, river called Jordan and tomorrow they would pitch their camp on the other side.

As they stood there, on their last day before they crossed into their promised land,

- on the brink of the miraculous, on the verge of a mighty move of God, as God prepared to do wonders for his people, there was issued a very familiar command.
- Sanctify yourselves, Joshua said to the people of God, separate yourselves unto God for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.
- Every mighty move of God, every divine display of the miraculous is preceded by times of sanctification and sacrifice.
- Moses stood at the base of Mount Sinai and issued a similar command at the prompting of God.
- He also told the people to sanctify themselves, to prepare themselves against the third day when the Lord would come down upon the mountain in the sight of the people and display his majesty and the might of his presence.
- On the third day, the display would be so incredible as to be absolutely terrifying to the children of Israel.
- Though they were the descendants of Abraham, they had no real knowledge of how might their God really was until he put his power on display on the mountain top where the Shekinah presence of God was shrouded with a thundering cloud.
- Likewise Jacob, he who was the namesake of Israel, when he prepared, at the command of God, to leave Laben’s house instructed his entire household to search their tents and to put away strange Gods.
• Emphasizing the fact that, before he could go make an altar at Beth-el that they first must sanctify themselves.

Tonight I believe that we are standing on the threshold of the promises of God.

• I believe, with all that I have, that God is ready to show himself strong and mighty on our behalf.
• I believe that we are encamped right alongside the promises of God and that before this year is over we are going to see God do wonders in our midst.
• But I must join my voice with the patriarchs of old,
  o before the miraculous,
  o before the mighty display of God’s glory,
  o before the Shekinah glory of God can settle upon the house of God
  o there must be a time of sacrifice and sanctification.
• Tonight I am issuing a summons to sacrifice.
  o Our theme for the church this year is to be an Authentic Church,
  o a place where an authentic presence of God ministers to real people, meeting real needs,
  o where lives are genuinely changed by the touch of the master’s hand.
    ▪ Our vision for this church is that we will be an Authentic Apostolic Church.

I don’t want to be stuck in a rut,

• I don’t want to be guilty of just going through the motions,
  o I don’t want to put on a false front,
  o a pretense of holiness and Godliness while we try to satisfy soul hunger and soul thirst from empty cisterns and dry wells.
• I want this to be the kind of church where there is a continuous flowing of that life giving living water that is issued from the throne of heaven.
  o He that believeth on me, the scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
  o That’s what kind of church this is.
• When Ezekiel saw the vision of the tabernacle, he saw a church where that water flooded the sanctuary and flowed under the door and under he walls,
  o it was an incredible move of God that couldn’t be contained in the sanctuary.
• That’s the kind of church we have envisioned in Lake City.
• That’s the kind of church that we are striving to be in 2012.
• A place of refuge for the embattled soul,
  o a place of rest for those that are weary,
  o a haven of hope for those that are hopeless,
  o a place of healing,
  o a source of new beginnings a shelter from a dark and lonely world – that’s what kind of church this is.
• We want this church to be the kind of church where every person who walks through those doors is ministered to,
  o where every life is touched,
  o where anyone, regardless of their past,
  o regardless of their problems and hang-ups,
  o where anyone can experience God.

This is what it means to be an authentic church.

• It means that we push past pretenses,
  o that we are no longer satisfied with faking it,
  o that we refuse to just go through the motions
  o but, rather, that we commit ourselves to having a rich genuine move of God in our own lives that can spill over and flood through the house of God every time we come together.

• This is a corporate effort, but it is not a corporate commitment.
  o You, as an individual, are an integral part of this vision.
  o If we are going to have that kind of church it will be because you have determined to BE that kind of church!
  o This is an individual commitment.

• This is why we must pause here, in January, just as Joshua did on the banks of the river Jordan, for a season of sacrifice and sanctification.
  o What God is getting ready to do will absolutely blow our minds,
  o what God wants to do in our midst is unprecedented in scope and unexplainable in magnitude,
  o God will do wonders among his people
    ▪ when we get ourselves in the place where he can work through us!

An authentic church is founded upon an authentic altar and requires an authentic sacrifice.

• Where there is a real altar with a sincere sacrifice there will always be a genuine move of God!
• That’s what we want, that’s what we are hungry for!
• The month of January will be for us a month of Authentic Sacrifice.
• We are asking you, as a church, to join together for 21 days of sacrifice and sanctification.

Sanctify yourselves –

• In scripture, when the command is issued for people to sanctify themselves
  o it is a command for people to search their hearts,
  o to search their lives and to set themselves apart for the Lord.
• The vessels used in the tabernacle of the Lord were consider Holy.
• As Holy vessels they were not used for any other purpose than the service of the house of the Lord.
• That process of being set aside is the process of sanctification.
• In real world terms it means to look through my life with a critical eye,
  o recognizing that I am a vessel that belongs to God
  o and as such I am set aside from the things of this world
  o and reserved for the service of God.
• We recognize that there is no fellowship between light and darkness,
  o that the kingdom of heaven doesn’t mingle with the profane and ungodly.
• The command is a command to search both the heart and the possessions,
  o an edict to search our homes, our lives, everything that we are
    ▪ and to put away from us anything that will hinder us from being
      what God has called us to be.
• An integral part of this season of sacrifice is a personal time of soul searching.
• I’m asking each of you to spend some time in the presence of God and to pray an
  honest prayer –
  o Search me, Oh Lord, and know me
  o and if there is anything in my life that would keep me from being what
    you have called me to be
  o then let conviction rest upon my soul that I might be sanctified and set
    apart unto your service!
• This is not a prayer that you need to pray once and then check it off of your list as
  something that you accomplished,
  o this needs to be a daily cry from your heart to God –
    ▪ Lord search me and know me!

That’s the kind of personal prayer that brings the blessings of God.

• That’s the kind of personal posture that prepares you for the outpouring of God’s
  power.
• When we start praying, Lord align me with your desire, with your will, with your
  purpose – then we will start seeing the outpouring of his power.
• This is 21 days of prayer and fasting and by prayer we don’t mean the kind of
  prayer that you do when you whip you your list of wants and desires and ask god
  to give you this and to do that.
• I like to call that kind of prayer “Jesus, please us” prayers and that’s not what this
  is about.
• I’m asking each of you to make a daily commitment to spending time in prayer
  each day for the purpose of sanctification.
  o Pray, lord search me.
    ▪ There are attitudes and mindsets that we have long harbored in our
      hearts that are contrary to God,
    ▪ there are problematic habits and lifestyles that have hindered us
      from being what God has called us to be,
    ▪ there are weights and even sin that have crept into our lives that
      keep us from running the race with excellence.
• This season is about cleansing our lives,
  o its about being washed in the blood of the Lamb,
• Its about asking God to make us into the people that he wants us to be and then listening for his response.

• To be successful in this endeavor you will have to be sensitive to God.
  • We tend to fill our prayer time with our words,
    ▪ leaving little time for God to speak to us.

• I’m asking you to have the kind of prayer sessions where you set aside some time to listen to God,
  • some time where you aren’t the one speaking but are instead meditating on his word or his goodness in your life –
    ▪ giving him a space in which to deal with your heart.
    • This is what it means to sanctify ourselves.

Fasting –

• There is no more effective way to position yourself for a move of God than by building an altar of sacrifice in your life through fasting.
  • There is no other way to achieve the vision of being an authentic church with a continual authentic move of God
    ▪ except by fasting and seeking the face of God.

• Sacrifice is about giving to God something that is valuable to you.

• Fasting is all about sacrifice.

• It’s about giving God an offering in our lives that is of great significance.

• Sacrifice is costly.

• David refused to offer sacrifices on Ornan’s threshing floor unless he was allowed to pay the full price for the threshing floor.

• He recognized that he couldn’t offer to God a sacrifice that hadn’t cost him anything.

• For the next 21 days we are calling this church to a time of fasting.

• I’m not going to dictate to you exactly how you fast, but I am going to ask that you make a significant commitment to God and keep it.

• Some will fast the entire 21 days by giving up something in their lives that is significant to them.
  • Remember the gauge of sacrifice is its personal cost not its perceived value.
    ▪ I knew a diabetic preacher who used to go on extended fasts of this nature by giving up Diet Cokes.
      • He drank Diet Coke with every meal, it was his go-to beverage of preference and it was a genuine sacrifice for him to say that he would go the next 21 days without drinking a Diet Coke.
    ▪ Some will go further.
    ▪ Some will do what is called the Daniel fast, sacrificing all sweets, all protein and all caffeine.
    ▪ Others will give up a single meal for every day of the week throughout the 21 days, or partake of only one meal each day.
Some will abstain from food and water for a single day each week in the three weeks.
While still others will abstain from food alone for 2 or 3 days of each week.
Whatever it is we are asking you to make a personal commitment to fast unto the Lord.

The reason is simple, in denying your self,

- in submitting your fleshly desires to your spiritual desires;
  - you place yourself in a position where God can anoint your life.
- This is what it takes to have a genuine move of God.
- As we fast, we aren’t fasting for the lost,
  - we are fasting for ourselves –
    - we are asking God to sanctify us, to set us apart for His service –
    - to allow our lives to become His vessels of anointing so that He can work through us.
- We want to be an authentic church,
  - we want an authentic move of God,
  - we want to see the power of God prevail in our church and in our lives –
  - all of this will be preceded by a season of sacrifice.
- For the next three weeks we will actively seek the face of God!
  - Our Wednesday nights for the next three weeks will be corporate prayer events,
  - our Sunday services will be geared towards personal growth and revival.
- We are asking God to position us for an outpouring of His spirit.
  - We are endeavoring to start this year out with a season of sacrifice that will result in the abiding presence of God!

In Genesis 35:1-3, God said unto Jacob,

- “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”
- So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.
- Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”

Watch what happens after they sanctify themselves:

- And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

God showed himself mighty on their behalf.
• I truly believe that, in January of 2012, God is calling this church to arise and sanctify ourselves.
  o This is something that God started dealing with me about several weeks before the New Year started.
• We will start this year by building an altar of prayer and fasting and we will see the mighty hand of God working in our church.
  o He will go before us into this year
  o and He will bring us into times of revival and seasons of growth.
    ▪ He will bless us and through this church, He will bless this city.
      • It starts here and it starts now!

Close

We are standing, from a spiritual perspective, on the banks of the mighty Jordan.

• On the other side are victories we have long yearned to win,
  o cities we have long desired to possess,
  o blessings that we have only dreamed about
  o and provision like none we have ever known.
• This year we will walk in places that we have never walked before,
  o we will see things that we have never seen before.
• God will show himself to be mighty,
  o he will bare his right arm of power on behalf of his people.
• Strongholds will crumble, principalities will fall,
  o kingdoms of darkness will come tumbling down
  o and an atmosphere of revival will permeate this city.
• But all of that must be proceeded by a season of sacrifice.
• Before we can cross over,
  o before we can lay hold of victory,
  o we must first sanctify ourselves!
• This is an altar that must be built and an altar that must be revisited many times in the coming year.
  o Authentic church comes from authentic sacrifice.
  o Let us build the altar and let us place our lives upon it.
• Paul beseeches us in Romans 12:1 to present ourselves, our lives – our bodies, as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service.
• That phrase reasonable service is really interesting.
  o The Greek words used are one pertaining to worship which is rendered as “service”
  o and one pertaining to the soul or center of our reasoning which is rendered as “reasonable.”
• The ESV renders the verse this way: 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.
lends himself to the idea that perhaps the best translation of reasonable service is “soul worship” or “worship rendered by the soul.”

Pentecostals of Lake City, I am asking you tonight to bring worship that flows from your soul.

- Build an altar.
- Place your life upon it.
- Make sacrifice unto God.
- Sanctify yourself for his service.
- And let's see the glory of God poured out upon his church.
- Let our souls, the very center of our being, worship him with all that we have and all that we are!
- I'm calling you to commit to sacrifice.
- It starts here.
- It starts now.
- Would you come and let your soul cry out?
- Could we start right now with a heartfelt plea, Lord sanctify me.
- Could we start with some “soul worship?”
Wednesday Night Focused Prayer

Week 1

Worship – Ryan

- 2 Worship Songs
- Talk about the significance of worship before and between.

Repentance -- Pastor McCall

- Talk about importance of repentance
- Lead in a prayer of repentance

Health and Healing – Andrew Sanders

Financial Blessing – Randy & Bro Anderson

Lost Family – Justin Frederick

Binding and Loosing --