

“Through [Christ Jesus], then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” Hebrews 13:15-16. (NRSV)

Dear Christian friends,

We are plagued by worry through sin. Sin is the broken relationship with God, our source of Life. Therefore we are alienated from the One who initiates our life and has promised to keep us in life. We are separated from the very source of our life and we suffer from worry because we realize that we are mortal. We cannot trust God for the provision of all things which we need for life. Thus we worry and plan; we sin as we attempt to supply our needs and desires to sustain us in life.

Living sacrifices were made in ancient times as a mode to appease the governing deities or to restore a person into a harmonious state with their god. Even the LORD God prescribed for his people to offer sacrifices for atonement or for thanksgiving. The act of sacrifice was understood to be the rite by which one was reconciled in their relationship with their god. They were restored to the state of righteousness.

We continue to live under the curse and judgment of sin. This nemesis continues to haunt us even after our baptism and confession that Jesus Christ is LORD. The temptation is always there to set aside the blessings of God for the temporary luxury of the personal indulgence. The blessing and comfort that Christ Jesus has attained for us can fade in our memory, driving us deeper into that state of worry.

God alone can restore us into rightful relationship to himself. God, in and through Christ Jesus, has acted for us. God, in and through Christ Jesus, continues to offer us his blessing of peace – the wholeness that drives away all worry. We are blessed through Christ Jesus and that blessing can be experienced in a constant renewing way.

The writer of Hebrews stresses for God’s people that we live in that renewed way of life. It calls for us to be honest in our assessment of our personal will and our personal living of that will. Living in the blessedness of God will exert the need for sacrifice to be made in our personal choices of life. September is that time of year in which we make choices for our personal schedules, as to which activities we will enroll; those things which will consume our time. As we select those options in our life, may we be ever mindful and encouraged to allow the full blessing of God to have time and space within that schedule.

Worship, study, prayer and compassionate acts of service always will feel like sacrifices, but they also return to us the fruit of God’s peacefulness. As we enter into this “new” year of activity may the Spirit of Christ Jesus lead us into holy choices for the enrichment of our soul.

In Christ forever,

Pastor Kevin