

Spiritual Sacrifices Pt. 4

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[0 : 00] I'd like to do the fourth and final part of a recent study here on Wednesday nights about spiritual sacrifices.

Acceptable unto God by Christ Jesus. And then we saw in Hebrews chapter 13 a little passage that offered three sacrifices by which God is well pleased.

That was the sacrifice of praise. The other one was to do good and then to communicate. What we studied last Wednesday night about giving and being a blessing and a help to others.

And the thought was through all of this that although these things are being carried out in the physical realm, in the carnal realm, and even with carnal means like giving money perhaps or doing good deeds for others, they're called spiritual sacrifices.

And if it's a sacrifice, as I said so many times, then it's going to have a cost. It's going to cost you something. And the idea with all of this is that we're doing what we do and what we give and what we offer is to the Lord Jesus Christ, first and foremost, for his glory and for his pleasure.

[1 : 26] And if it can be a blessing to somebody else, praise the Lord. But we don't just give to fix people's tires and to dress and clothe them or to feed them. We give to the Lord Jesus Christ because they're his servants.

And in the case of missions or in the case of needy people or so forth, we want the Lord to be glorified. And it's spiritual sacrifices that we're covering. Now there's one more that I want to cover here. And notice in Romans chapter 12, in verse number 1.

Now I've heard this passage, this verse preached on all my life, generally verses 1 and 2.

I feel like it's such a common theme at a summer camp, a youth camp, a youth rally, like this real charge to perform the will of God for your life and to not be worldly and to just give yourself to the Lord completely.

And I've heard so many messages on it. I'll be honest with you. I mean, I think the last time I heard somebody say, turn to Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, I almost in the back of my mind felt like, heard this before.

[2 : 46] And I don't do that. Try not. I hope nobody in here is doing that right now. You could be. But that's how I felt about it. I feel like I've heard this so many times. But here we are closing up this study, this fourth part about spiritual sacrifices.

And this is one of them. This is definitely one of them. It's called presenting yourself a living sacrifice. Now other ways we say things like this about serving Jesus Christ or fulfilling what this requirement is, is to take up your cross.

As Christ said, and follow me. Or mentions in the gospels of putting your hand to the plow and not looking back. Or Jesus Christ talked about yoking up with him and learning of him.

And other things we say is surrender your life to Christ or dedicate your life to Jesus Christ. Give yourself over to him completely. And here's the passage. This is probably the foremost passage.

To present your bodies a living sacrifice. I want to kind of cover this, unpack this passage, this verse a little bit tonight. And first thing I want us to consider is that he says in verse 1, I beseech you, that's a plural pronoun, therefore brethren, plural, by the mercies of God that ye, plural, present your bodies.

[4 : 00] And so I want you to consider this is for all believers. When we start talking about offering yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, this isn't for the clergy. This isn't for the man or woman that feels God tugging on their heart to surrender to a particular full-time service or the ministry.

It's not for that person alone that you may consider, yep, oh, God called them. And now they have to answer the call by presenting their bodies a living sacrifice.

Paul didn't write to the elders at Rome, I beseech ye, therefore brethren. He wrote to the saints at Rome, to believers in Christ Jesus, and told them all to do this.

Told them all that it's their reasonable service to present their bodies a living sacrifice. So I don't know of any exemptions to this material that we're going to be speaking on tonight or to this directive that Paul gives to this church at Rome.

If you've been bought with a price, then it is your duty and obligation to God, as we've read, I don't know, several Sundays ago in 1 Corinthians 6, to offer your body a living sacrifice or to yield yourself to God, your body and your spirit to glorify God in them, which are God's.

[5 : 17] Now mankind universally seems to understand the necessity to sacrifice. And I'm speaking in the kind of the religious realm here. If you study history, if you look at the entire globe, there are tribes or civilizations that all offer sacrifices to some deity.

And they don't know which one they're really offering to or what they're doing in many cases. But it's surprising to an extent how man has this ingrained desire to sacrifice, to appease something, someone.

They do it with money, as is still done today. They've done it over years with their animals. They've done it with their crops or what they could bring to themselves from their labors.

They've even done it despicable, their children. They've even offered the fruit of their own loins, their children. That blows my mind.

The wickedness, the devilment, the deception. And I just got to think, well, it's so devilish, that kind of thing. And that's all over this Bible, though, the heathen practices.

[6 : 34] They sacrifice. They sacrifice. Even today, even today, there are sacrifices that are made that are similar to this in India of, I've mentioned this probably Sunday or maybe on the roadside.

You'll see these little huts look like a little outhouse. And inside is this idol, this whatever. I mean, there's thousands and thousands of them across their land, maybe millions of different idols.

And they bring their little handfuls of what they have or they'll bring some food, some drink, some offering to this idol and to that idol and a little bit to that one.

I mean, you don't, this isn't just out there. This is today. Some woman went through her home and found something or got into her pantry of her food and put enough of it into a sack or a bag and as she was traveling, pulled off, stopped off and laid it down to appease whatever one that was.

It happened today. It's happening all over the world. Man is still offering sacrifices. But despite the sincerity and despite even the cost or the value of whatever that item would be, those sacrifices are not acceptable by God.

[7 : 56] Now, why is that? Well, the reason is because God determines what is and what is not acceptable. If he's going to receive it, he'll make that call and he'll determine the qualifications.

Now, come all the way back to the beginning of your Bible and look at one of the very first chapters of this book that has people offering sacrifices. Come back to Genesis chapter 4.

I'm just laying some groundwork here to describe that God determines what's acceptable and what's not.

We don't. And it might be what you feel that this ought to be acceptable to him or this is what I, I'll give God this and it may not be acceptable at all to him. He determines if it is or it isn't.

Genesis chapter 4 and we don't need to read all of this but you know Cain and Abel, the brothers that Abel's the keeper of the sheep in verse 2, Cain's the tiller of the ground. In verse 3, in the process of time came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

[9 : 01] And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? Like, what's your problem? Why is thy countenance falling? Falling. If thou doest well, Cain, if you'd have done right, here's the thing, shalt thou not be accepted?

I would have accepted your offering if you'd have done it right. But he says, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. Cain, and theologically, this is Cain's self-righteousness offering to God, not accepted.

the offering had to be of blood in order for God to accept it. Now, who is God to determine whether Cain was accepted or not? He's God.

Thank you. Exactly right. That's the answer. Well, what if it offended Cain? So what? Cain should have did right. He should have did well. And he would have been accepted.

[10:05] God sets the standard for what's acceptable to him. He sets the qualifications. In Exodus chapter 12, you don't need to turn there, but there's the Passover lamb. And that Passover lamb, there's a few things listed about that lamb that it has to be.

It has to be a male. It has to be without blemish. The man or the woman couldn't just go out and say, give me that one. Give me that one. Or just whatever you've got, I'll take it.

No, he had to be very descriptive or accurately fulfill the description God gave or it'd be his firstborn that's dead that night. That Passover lamb, God set the parameters or the qualifications for what was going to be offered and you, it was up to you to follow through and obey and appease him. He determines what's acceptable. Under the law, there was very specific guidelines and instructions of what could and could not be offered before the Lord. Some animals were determined these are unclean.

You will not offer them to me. Ever. When even before that, when Noah was on the ark, he brought clean beasts seven by seven. He brought the others two by two. So there was a, there was a, a, some qualifications there that were, had to be met.

[11:19] Now, back in Romans 12, where I want to be here tonight, we're going to, we're going to be looking at some verses here since this is Wednesday night. Hope you're not afraid to be turning.

In Romans 12, the Bible tells us this, the verse says, by beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.

I want you to notice that you're not sacrificing your bodies. That's not the statement. What are you doing? What's the action? You're presenting your bodies. You're offering your bodies to God for his service.

It's presenting it to him and it's a spiritual sacrifice. Now, how are you going to present it to God? In what manner are you going to present yourself to God?

Well, since God determines the qualifications of what he will accept, what does the verse say? The next word, holy. Hmm.

[12:22] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

First thing I want to say this evening about this spiritual sacrifice is that you're to present your body acceptable. It's got to be acceptable. And the way God accepts it, he says, is holy.

Now, I know we can let our minds go and start getting a little like, oh, well, none of us are holy, all have sinned, and we can start making excuses right away why we can't live up to this standard.

But isn't that what he's calling us to do? Isn't that the directive to present your bodies a living sacrifice? And of what kind? Of what's holy?

So let's see if God's interested in that. Some Christian says, oh, Lord, use me. And God would reply, I can't. Not the way you are.

[13:23] You've got to let go of some things. You've got to change. I want something better. I deserve better. And I want to talk tonight, I want to, just something I found interesting here is all of the presentations, since that's the word here, present your bodies.

When God's people are being presented, it's always holy. Look at 2 Corinthians 4. Let's run just a couple verses here on this. 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

The presentations of God's people to him are always this way. 2 Corinthians 4, and the first time this shows up after Romans 12, our presentation in Romans 12, one is to be holy, acceptable unto God.

In 2 Corinthians 4, it's in verse 14 where it shows up. It says, knowing that he which raised us, raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you.

Now this is talking about in the future, isn't it? After a resurrection and being presented, and I'll just keep that thought and go to chapter 11 and verse 2.

[14:43] Same book, 11 verse 2. Paul says, I'm jealous over you with godly jealousy for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Christ. The picture there is purity, isn't it? Keep moving though, go to Ephesians 5 and watch as this begins to build this same scene and it's always the same description.

Ephesians 5 and I'll start in verse number 25. speaking of husbands and wives, Ephesians 5 verse 25, Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it that he

might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Alright, keep going to your right Colossians chapter 1. And Paul's speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ the hope of glory and he says in verse 21 I'm sorry 28 whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom why?

That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. There's a presentation and it's complete and it's holy and it's without blame.

[16 : 26] One more verse all the way to Jude all the way to the back Jude a handful of times that this word shows up in our Bible as a verb of presenting it's always with the same context of being clean and pure.

Jude and it's verse number 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy faultless faultless unblameable holy perfect all of this language in Romans chapter 12 present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God presentations of God's people to him are always this way that's what he wants that's what he expects and that's what he accepts now come to 2nd Timothy chapter 2 and we are not done turning in our pages 2nd Timothy chapter 2 and let's notice in this passage that your body likened to a vessel and in this passage there's different kinds of vessels let's start in verse 19 2nd Timothy 2 19 nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure nevertheless meaning some people before that concerning the truth have erred and they're wrong but the truth is still sure hasn't changed having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are his and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity now here's an illustration of this but in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver but also of wood and of earth and some to honor and some to dishonor if a man therefore purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honor sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work now there's a vessel the illustrations only in verse 20 saying that in this house look there's all kinds of things in here and some are wonderful and some are not so wonderful they're all different vessels have different uses and the context he's talking about is staying away from some people all the way back to those in verse 14 that strive about words to no profit subverting the hearers and he's telling them to shun profane and vain babblings in verse 16 they'll increase more ungodliness and he mentions two people by name and it says

Hymenaeus and Philetus who concerning the truth of error and saying the resurrection's past are ready to overthrow the faith of some but don't worry about those guys if you're going to name the name of Christ number one depart from iniquity and number two get away from those people he says if a man will purge himself from these I believe that these is a reference to those people those vessels of dishonor that aren't accomplishing anything for Jesus Christ but causing problems he says purge himself from these if you'll do that you'll be a vessel unto honor sanctified and meet for the master's use and then he tells them not just to stay away from them on the outside but stay away from some things on the inside verse 22 flee also youthful lusts but follow righteousness faith charity peace and there's the people on the outside with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart there's some people you need to purge yourself from in 1st Timothy chapter 6 he told them to what's the word he told them to from such withdraw thyself and there's some people that Timothy needs to get away from and purge himself from and then there's some also some things he needs to flee his own youthful lusts and follow righteousness and so forth if you're going to be a vessel that is meat for the master's use if you're going to be a vessel that's unto honor the word the word says sanctified and meat for the master's use you're going to have to separate yourself from some things and maybe from some people

Lord I want you to use me how can I use you when your heart is over here with these people or when your heart is entangled with these things of this life you need to present yourself holy before the Lord the Bible says God has not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness now it's easy for to stand up here and just say holy holy holy Lord God almighty be holy for I am holy and it's a little harder to live it but we can't just dismiss it because it's easy to say we're sinners if God keeps calling us to this and keeps pointing this out to us it's our job to submit ourselves and make every attempt we can to submit or to present our bodies holy and acceptable unto God your body's a vessel it must be purged and it must be prepared and that's going to be getting away from some things I'll come back to Romans 12 not only does God want you to present your body acceptable

which means you may have to sacrifice some of your carnal desires you may have to sacrifice some of your carnal lusts for the glory of God so that you can be used by him so that he'll find you acceptable there's something else beyond just presenting your body acceptable

I want to say that you need to present your body as available in the verse we read acceptable unto God it closes by saying which is your reasonable service your reasonable service we often focus on that word reasonable and say it is within reason if God has done so much for you that you but he calls it I want to look past that adjective and see the noun which is your reasonable service it's a service presenting your body a living sacrifice acceptable to God is a reasonable service it's a service like the apostle Paul said Paul a servant of Jesus Christ a reasonable service similar in liking to serving the Lord a service to the Lord come back to numbers chapter three numbers chapter three this had me all over the Bible today this word present and serve and service and offering and sacrifice and it just there's so many things intertwined together that it was very hard to make sense of it

[23 : 42] I had to just walk away from it and try to focus on Romans 12 verse one because it just seems like it went forever in numbers chapter three I want you to see here verse number five this is the tribe of Levi that God is separating for his own self and what God does just in a brief moment here he he he said this in a few spots here in numbers back in maybe Exodus well he says when I slew that firstborn in Egypt I redeemed all of the firstborn in Egypt to myself when I came it was that blood that paid for them redeemed them and I redeemed them and he said the firstborn are mine every firstborn that openeth the matrix is mine and then he said now as a substitute for me taking all the firstborn from every single family all over this nation as a substitute I'm going to take Levi they're going to be my inheritance and you're going to have to redeem with money your firstborn for man or beast now in chapter 3 verse 5 the Lord spake unto

Moses saying bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest that they may minister unto him and they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole before the tabernacle of the congregation to do the service of the tabernacle and they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation the charge of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle why are they being presented what are they there to serve they're there to do the service of the tabernacle to minister as God says other places to minister unto me and now even as you go through this passage it describes what I told you about the firstborn in verse 13 and 12 and 13 they're being presented for service and in Romans chapter 12 we're to present our bodies a living sacrifice holy except one to God which is your reasonable service you're being presented to the Lord or you're to present your body to the Lord for his service is what we're getting at to make yourself available for God for his use no strings attached offering yourself to God as a servant willing to obey willing to be used by him it may be in the construction field it may be on the mission field you don't decide you offer yourself to God it's your reasonable service come back to the Pauline epistles here and I want to run a few more verses 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 2nd Corinthians 8 and I want to just read this verse again about this church at Corinth and how they offered themselves in chapter 8 and verse number 5 and this they did not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God presenting themselves to the Lord for his service now your bodies to be presented acceptable is to present be presented available God is looking for vessels to use he's looking for vessels that are clean to use he's not going to take a filthy vessel and go use it you say well God can use me yes God

I look I'm not drawing lines here super fine but you understand this is what he's calling you to he's calling you to be clean to be holy something that's acceptable to him so that he can do something what does he want to do he wants to work through you he wants a vessel that he can fill and work through he doesn't say I want your talent because you have got something I need he has the talent he has all the ability he wants you to make yourself available come to Ephesians chapter 2 God's looking for vessels that are set apart that are purged from certain things and certain people and they've let go of those things or those people or whatever these needs in this life and they've committed themselves to him and yielded their members as instruments of righteousness to God he's looking for vessels that have done that that are sanctified and meet for the master's use now that it's prepared unto every good work he'll start doing some work

Ephesians chapter 2 verse number 10 for we are his his his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them who does the work he does the work what are we we're the vessel that he made that he fills and that he wants to use

come to Philippians chapter 2 put a few verses together on this and this truth will be as plain as it gets Philippians chapter 2 we just got three more verses to cover here and verse number 13 Philippians 2:13 the bible says for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure who does the work

[29 : 42] God does the work it is God which worketh in you what's he trying to work his own will and his own good pleasure through you through a vessel a vessel that's been set apart a vessel that has been sanctified and meet for the master's use a vessel that's been purged of some things a vessel that's off presents itself holy unto the Lord and then he starts working through that vessel to accomplish his pleasure you want to be used of God look at Colossians chapter one you present your bodies a living sacrifice according to his terms Colossians chapter one I read verse 28 a minute ago let's start there whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus where unto I also labor striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily who's doing the work

God is doing the work through the vessel of the apostle Paul who has offered himself to God Paul said I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I not I but Christ liveth in me and as Christ is living in me Christ is working in me and I'm laboring I'm striving according to his working one more reference Hebrews 13 all the way back to where this passage was about these sacrifices Hebrews 13 and we'll close here Hebrews 13 and I'll start in verse 20 20 and 21 now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through

Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever amen who is doing the work who is making you perfect in every good work to do his will who is working in you that which is well pleased it's God doing it through Jesus Christ the Colossians one said that Christ is in you the hope of glory and that's when Paul went on to say he's working in me mightily so God is fully capable of doing the work that he sees fit to be done in the church in believers in this world he's just looking for some vessels some willing believers that will present their bodies number one acceptable number two available acceptable which is holy which is clean which is sanctified and set apart and let go of these things that attract us here and willing to serve and do whatever he asks available available for service not tied down with other responsibilities willing to serve him and offer themselves to God as a servant now that's presenting your body a living sacrifice it's according to his parameters it's according to this directive has no exemptions it's for all of us it doesn't mean you're going to the mission field it just means you're presenting your body acceptable to God in a holy pure as you can manner so that he could use you so that he could accomplish what's called his good pleasure or his will you want the will of God for your life he wants to use you he wants to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through you through your tongue through your feet through your hands through your mouth through your eyes through your body it's your job to present yourself to him we're going to close here but have you ever done that have you ever presented your body a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God it's just your reasonable service we get that right we understand it that's reasonable but have you ever done it and sometimes you do it and then sometimes you take it back somebody told or have a note written down in my Bible that a living sacrifice likes to crawl off of the altar doesn't want to stay there too long and sometimes I guess that's true sometimes you have to go back and offer yourself to God again and get it right and release whatever it is that's holding you back so that you can be used of him and bring glory to him the last thing I'll say is this you won't regret it if you do you won't regret letting go of anything in his life that's holding you back when you're with the Lord when you're presented to him you'll be so glad that you did what you did all right let's close in prayer father thank you for our savior the Lord Jesus Christ lord I pray that our hearts would be open to this truth and this spiritual sacrifice that we present our bodies Thank you.