

Principles Pictured by the Tabernacle, The Altar

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Date: 06 July 2025

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[0 : 00] Okay, let's go into the book of Exodus this morning.! Would you please find chapter 27.! Exodus chapter 27.

I'm just pleased, but also surprised that we're still in Exodus, and we're still moving through and drawing out substance that applies to this church.

And I think it's been good. I've been enjoying it. And I think it's of the Lord, because when I looked at this from the very beginning, over a year and a half ago, I looked at it and thought, what are we going to do when we get to the tabernacle?

But sure enough, the Word of God is quick and powerful. And there's life in this book. And it can be talking about something that seems to be the most vague and craziest thing, topic of our, that doesn't even pique our interest.

And yet there's life and power in those words that can find application and fulfillment and help. And it's what you need. You need the book. So last week we finished chapter 26 and the instructions that God gave Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle, specifically last week the veils and the hanging, which was the door of the tabernacle, and then the innermost holiest of all, where the veil hung.

[1 : 33] And we noticed a bit of a paradox that these veils were both preventative and yet they were permissive at the same time, where I said inclusion and exclusion working simultaneously together.

And what we learned from that was that Bible Baptist Church has got to operate in that same balance, maintain a degree of separation and protect what is holy and right and what God has given, what is, what's that phrase from, to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

We learned that Bible Baptist has to have that aside as well as remain open to all that are seeking the truth and all that are seeking a relationship with God and make it easy to facilitate growth in that individual, not despising anyone that walks through the door because they don't look like us or talk like us or they may have marks of the world upon them, but rather through the eyes of faith realize that God's seeking to work a work in their heart much like he did in yours.

And so we need to be welcoming and display that concern and care. Now in chapter 27, we're going to move to where God instructs Moses regarding something that is on the outside of the tabernacle building.

If you can picture there's a fence, a perimeter that's put up around this building. It's quite large and so there's a courtyard as it's called and inside that courtyard is one particular item, the first item, which is the altar.

[2 : 56] And it's the first thing that's mentioned here and it's obviously something for sacrifices. And so there's many offerings and sacrifices that this altar is going to be used for and it's mentioned later in the book and elsewhere, which some of this we'll look at today.

But for now, let's read the first eight verses of Exodus chapter 27 and the description. This is God in the mount, still with Moses, giving him instructions about building an altar.

Verse 1, And thou shalt make an altar of Shittimwood five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be four square and the height thereof shall be three cubits.

Now to get a picture of this, this piano stands about three cubits tall, maybe not quite, it could be a little taller, maybe where it's open it's about three cubits tall. But that piano could fit down inside of this altar.

Maybe that wooden wall there would be about the length of the one side, it would be a four square of something about that and then a little bit higher than that wall. Just to get in your mind the picture of how big this is.

[3 : 57] In verse 2, Thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof. His horns shall be of the same and thou shalt overlay it with brass. Thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes and his shovels and his basins and his flesh hooks and his fire pans.

All the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass and thou shalt make for it a great network of brass. And upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof.

And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass.

And the staves shall be put into the rings and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar to bear it. Hollow with board shalt thou make it as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

So the next item to construct is a brazen or a brass altar that is to be located outside of the tabernacle building, but within the court.

[4 : 58] And this is the first piece that you'd see if you walked through the gate or the door of the courtyard and entered or into that courtyard. The first piece you'd be confronted with is this large, massive, hot, smoking, burning, blood-stained altar.

This piece saw more activity than any other piece or area of this whole facility was that altar. They tended to, they offered upon, there was much work and much to do about this altar than there ever was about the candlestick or about the altar of incense inside or anything else.

It was out there was the most work. Now, we read here the guidelines for building the altar. Later in chapter 38, they actually build the altar. It's described them doing the building.

And then it's in chapter 40, the very close of this book, when the altar is placed in its position and it becomes operational. So we're going to take a look at this unique piece this morning and learn from its use and from its purpose.

And much of the information we're going to get about the altar is found in the book of Leviticus, where it's a book all about the priesthood and about their duties and it has to do with the offerings and the sacrifices.

[6 : 10] So we're going to spend some time in Leviticus there as we study this altar and learn some things about this special items. But before we do any of that, I need you to remember something. The first time we came to this tabernacle, God said, build me a sanctuary.

Make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. And we likened that and showed you that God desires to dwell in your life and to make your life a sanctuary unto God, a place where he can dwell and walk among.

And we looked at the body, soul, and spirit and kind of some of those things inside the innermost place and outside to show you that this is likened to your life and the care and the maintenance that needs to be done.

And then beyond that, we looked at the construction, the actual items that built this structure. And we looked at that and saw that. We learned lessons from that that applied to the local church because not only does a tabernacle represent your individual life, but it also represents a local church, like it says in 1 Corinthians 3.

I think that this altar that we're going to study today, the analogy works both ways. It works not only in your personal life, but also in Bible Baptist church.

[7 : 20] Where there must be an altar. The congregation that God dwells in needs an altar. And your personal life and walk with God needs an altar.

And so when we consider this altar, I want to be looking at your life and I want to be looking at this church and just putting it all together into one message and one thought. And it's going to have application. You'll see.

So we're going to study a little bit about this altar. Relate what we learned to your personal relationship with the Lord in a couple of ways. Before we do that, let's seek the Lord's help and his guidance through his words.

Our Lord and Savior, we bow before you humbly in seeking your wisdom and giving us understanding and knowledge in this topic. Not only of what we're reading about, but how it applies.

Lord, help us to see, help us to know and to take serious the importance of an altar. It's the first thing you place there for the priest to walk right into. And may we consider and understand how important it is that it's in our life.

[8 : 21] And that it's the first thing we come to. And may it make sense this morning. Help me to say only things that make sense. Help it to be received. Give your people ears to hear. And make up the difference wherever I fall short.

Pray that your spirit would take these truths and instill and apply them into hearts. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. So the first thing, this is very simple.

It's almost taken for granted. It's kind of a given. Is that this is a place for offering or a place for sacrifice. And there's certain sacrifices that are mentioned, but most of which you're going to find in the book of Leviticus.

So would you flip over to chapter 7. And we're not going to spend a lot of time on this part, but I think you can get this. I mean, even the heathen had altars that they offered sacrifices upon.

So this altar that is God's altar, it's a place of offering. It's a place of sacrifice. But there's something specific that I want you to be aware of when we talk about offerings and sacrifices.

[9 : 19] So in the book of Leviticus, the first seven chapters deal with different offerings, different sacrifices. And they're not all the same. And they're not all to be administered the same.

The operation of each sacrifice, in some cases, had different ways about it. Sometimes they were to be flayed in certain pieces, laid upon the altar, and other things discarded.

Sometimes it wasn't an animal at all, but it was a meat offering. It was flour and oil and frankincense. Other times there was portions that the priest could take to himself to eat before the Lord.

That was permissible and acceptable unto God. And so there's diversity in these offerings. And I want to show you just the very, kind of the last part of this.

Look at chapter 7, the last two verses, just to where you get the informations in the first seven chapters. But here's just the summary of all of that. In verse 37, this is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifices of the peace offerings.

[10 : 33] That's six different offerings God mentions by name. Six of them, which the Lord commanded Moses in Mount Sinai in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai.

So there's a lot of diversity associated with these offerings upon the altar. When you see the altar, you may just instinctively think offering blood sacrifices, animals, offering for, you know, sin and atonement.

But there's a whole lot more to it than that. There were six of them that he mentioned, and they all have different procedures of how they're to be offered. I'm not going to study them out individually. I'm not going to try to apply each one in a different way to you.

But just the point to get is that it's not always evil for the purpose of the sacrifice. Sometimes it's a good thing. Sometimes, and I'll show you some of this, it's an offering of thanksgiving.

So the offering is giving something over to the Lord. It's a sacrifice. It's out of your hands, and you're never to take it back. You're giving it to God, and it gets burned up and consumed upon the altar.

[11 : 41] So that's something important to consider. This is a place of offering, of a release, of turning it over to the Lord. And there's a diversity of how this altar is going to relate and apply to your life as well.

It could be something good that you need to give to the Lord. It could be something evil, something that you need to get rid of, something that needs to be released from your life and consumed upon that altar, never to take back.

God sometimes deals with you about things in your life. As you grow in the Lord, as you seek to grow in the Lord, as you come to church, as you read your Bible, as you fellowship with other Christians, you begin to see some things.

God begins to, little by little, take the veils off and open your eyes to something that's in your heart or life. Sometimes it's your language. Sometimes that shows up right away. The words that I speak are not pleasing to God.

And God wants you to bow down, kneel on your knees before the altar, and get that right with Him. And leave that with Him. Sometimes it's the things you watch on TV or music that you listen to.

[12 : 45] These are things that the Lord can convict you. There's a variety of things. But the Lord in time will start to show you, that doesn't please me. And you're letting it go in your eyes and your ears? This is not godly.

This is ungodly. And you start to see, I need to offer that to God. I need to put that off and get rid of that and give it to Him. There's a diversity in this offering.

Sometimes it's bad things that need to be released. And over the years, I'm sure some of you could say the same thing. I've been sitting in church, the preacher preaches, and I hear something. God speaks to my heart.

He just, I know exactly what He's telling me. Nobody else in the pew heard anything that God said to me. It's just like, He said something. It wasn't even in His message. Sometimes it's just off to the side.

And it's like, boom. The Lord just, just, bing, touches the heart and says, That's you. I'm talking to you. You need to get rid of that. You need to stop doing that. You need to start doing that.

[13 : 41] It's just a thing that the Lord, the way He has to speak into your heart. And whether you're guilty of something or whether you need to address something, He gives you an opportunity to come forward at the end of the service to the altar, to kneel down and to offer it to Him.

It's a Christian practice. Whether you've ever participated in it or not, you should understand. It's a Christian practice to offer things before the Lord. It could be things that need to get out of your heart, get out of your life.

And the Lord deals with you and you submit. But it could also be something positive. It could be like surrendering your life to the Lord. The Bible says in Romans 12, To present your body as a living sacrifice, doesn't it?

And it could be that. It could be just saying, Lord, I'm yours. And there's many a missionary, many a servant of God that has felt the tug of God on their heart in a sermon, in a conference, in a missions conference or something, felt God saying, I want you to give your life to me.

He doesn't do it all the time to every single person, but there's sometimes He just picks one, picks two, and squeezes their heart and says, I want your life. I want it. And you know it if it's you.

[14 : 54] You know it. You don't have to manufacture anything. You know it. God's just like, He's just squeezing on that heart. And you start to sweat. You start to think, oh, I can't do that. Oh, that means I'm going to have to, you start, your flesh goes crazy.

Your mind starts flooding you with ideas of why you can't. And you know it's the Lord. And so the flesh is fighting and the Lord's calling. And many a missionary, many a young man, woman, old man, old woman, have come forward after a service and knelt down on their knees and said, Lord, I offer unto you my life.

If you're calling me to something, I submit to it. I want to serve you. That's happened. It continues to happen today where God moves in the hearts of men and women and calls them to dedicate their life to Jesus Christ, to kneel and surrender and offer themselves before the Lord for His service.

There's tons of testimonies about that very thing. So it's a place of offering. It's a place of sacrifice. And what I want you to get from that is there's diversity in those sacrifices.

It's not just always sin and bad things, but sometimes it's a good thing for you to offer something before the Lord. So it's a place of offering and sacrifice, but it's more than that.

[16 : 05] Flip over to Leviticus chapter 1. Leviticus chapter 1. And this is the very beginning of going through these offerings one by one.

And I want you to see in verse 4, this is a burnt offering in verse 3. And in verse 4, he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

So not only is it just a place where there's diversities of offerings and sacrifices, it's dependent upon what God is doing or dealing with you about, but it's a place of atonement.

Or a place, another word we can use is reconciliation. Look over at chapter 8. Leviticus 8. And verse 15. Throughout these chapters, you'll see that word atonement all over the place, and it's a reference to covering a transgression, to covering it over by the blood.

He satisfies his anger or wrath toward that sin when he sees the blood applied. But in chapter 8, verse 15, I'll start in 14. He brought the bullock for the sin offering.

[17 : 24] Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of Bullock for the sin offering, and he slew it. And Moses took the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar, round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it to make reconciliation upon it.

So the altar is a place to get things right. It's a place to restore fellowship with God back to its proper place and proper order.

When Israel got away from God, and they did it many times, you read through the book of Judges, it's just an up and down, up and down history. When they get away from God, they found themselves in a place that God had once delivered them from.

They found themselves in servitude to a heathen nation, whether it be the Philistines or the Moabites or the Ammonites. God uses them. He just rescinds his blessing from his people, and he puts upon them what he calls his curse.

We've looked at this in Deuteronomy 28. If you obey, the blessing will be upon you. If you disobey, the curse will be upon you. And many times they experienced the blessing, many times they experienced the curse.

[18 : 35] God allowed their enemies to overtake them. They found themselves in bondage, in servitude, because they ignored the altar of God and making atonement for their transgressions.

I want to show you one individual case of this. Flip over to 2 Chronicles 29. Go past Samuel, past the kings, into the Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 29. And up comes a king named Hezekiah. When Hezekiah took the throne, the nation wasn't exactly in a state of godliness.

But Hezekiah moved of the Lord, did some things. I'll start in verse 20 and read to where this comes onto this altar.

Hezekiah, it's in 2 Chronicles 29, verse 20. Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the rulers of the city and went up to the house of the Lord.

[19 : 45] And they brought seven bullocks and seven rams and seven lambs and seven he goats for a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord.

Now I need to remind you, I didn't read this passage, but earlier the priests in verse 16, they had to go in, verse 15, they had to cleanse the house of the Lord. They had to remove some things out of that house, some ungodly, some abominations that had gotten set up in the house of God.

They were not worshipping the Lord. And Hezekiah cleanses that temple, gets all the trash out of there and says, we need to offer upon the altar. We need to get reconciled to God.

Verse number 22, they killed the bullocks and the priest received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. They killed also the lambs and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

They brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation. They laid their hands upon them. The priest killed them and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar to make an atonement for all Israel.

[20 : 56] For the king commanded that the burnt offering, the sin offering should be made for Israel. Sometimes the people of God find themselves back in the same position, in the same rut that they were in before they met the Lord, before the Lord delivered them.

They find themselves living the same kind of life, away from God, not worshipping God, abominations all over themselves because they've neglected the altar. They need to visit the altar.

They need to get things right with God. And it's a place of making reconciliation. Come back to Leviticus chapter 1. This is not just for the entire nation, although we read the case of that there.

It's not just for the full congregation of Israel. But I want to point out something specific here in Leviticus chapter 1. When God begins to identify these sacrifices that He's going to receive of them, He makes it a personal thing.

I'll begin in verse 1. The Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, If any man of you, any man of you, bring an offering unto the Lord.

[22 : 15] And He's going to talk about what that offering has to be. In chapter 2, verse 1, and when any will offer. It's an individual. I want to show you this even stronger.

Look at chapter 4. And this chapter breaks, is broken down into four segments or different sections of violators.

And it's going to, I'll show you. Verse 1, The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, say, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them.

A soul. Now He's going to clarify and show four different classes or groups of individuals that could be sinning against Him. Verse 3, If the priest that is anointed do sin, then here's what needs to be done so that he can make atonement for Him.

Look at verse 13. And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance and the thing be hid from the, the whole congregation's guilty. And when it's revealed, they need to offer.

[23 : 24] And He gives the details of a young bullock and how to handle that one. Verse 22 is the third class. When a ruler hath sinned and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments.

Verse 23, Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge, then this is how the ruler has to deal with it. And it's a he-goat. And then verse 27, the last class here is, If any one of the common people sin, and in this case, it's a goat, the kid of the goat's a female, in verse 28, without blemish.

There's a different offering depending upon, if it's the priest that is anointed, the one that stands before God, there's an offering for him. There's one for the congregation, for the ruler, for any one of the common people.

So from the nation to an individual, from the ruler to the priest to the common person, reconciliation must be made upon the altar to restore the relationship to its proper place.

The altar is the place to get things right. It's pretty easy to get things wrong. They say, Some things we do second nature.

[24 : 35] Well, sinning is first nature to you and I. It's real easy to get things wrong. I hope you, if you can conceive that thought, then how important is it that you have an altar?

And that you're not too far away from that altar. That you don't stray from that altar. But you get things right and you get them right quick. If you consider the frequency of your sin before the Lord is the frequency of your bowing before Him, does it match?

Does that connect? How quickly you can fall into sin? Is that how quickly you can get to the altar? Do you know that, I'll show you this, it's in Leviticus 6.

Look at chapter 6. Do you know that God loves a hot altar? You might think, well, the Lord would be happy if His people never sinned.

They would never have to offer sacrifices. But that's not the way this relationship is. He knows, He remembers our frame. He knows that we're flesh and we're going to sin and we do. And He wants that altar to stay hot.

[25 : 42] Would you look at verse 12, chapter 6, verse 12. And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it. It shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning and lay the burnt offering in order upon it.

And he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar. It shall never go out. You might think God would be happy if we didn't have any sacrifices to sacrifice because we're so holy and pure.

But really, God looks at us and He knows us and He says, I want you to keep that altar burning. I want you to keep it hot. Keep the flame hot because you need to come back quickly.

And if you're keeping that altar hot, that means you're not straying too far away either to where it can cool down and go out. Because God knows, whether you seem to agree or know or not, God knows you need to get to that altar more than you do.

It's a place of reconciliation. Get to that altar quickly. Restore that thing fast. When it gets out, restore it right away if you can.

[26 : 50] If you don't learn to get to the altar, if you don't learn to come before the Lord and confess your sins and to get that thing right, made right quickly, your sins will take you.

You'll be holding with the cords of your sins. Your laziness will get a hold of you. Your rebellion will get in and start growing. Your stubbornness, your pride, your anger will start showing up.

You'll start to love the pleasures of sin. It'll start to take a hold of your life. It'll start to be seen. Your carnal lust, your bitterness, your deceit, it'll get a hold of you.

Those sins will quickly overtake you if you refuse to ignore the altar. The evidence is in the history of this nation that we're studying. They neglected the altar.

They didn't get close to God. Their lives didn't get better. It's a place of reconciliation. If we keep that altar burning, it means we don't get too far away.

[27 : 48] And one of the things, I want to show you something that to me, this is one of the greatest things about our God. Would you find the book in Nehemiah? I want to show you something from Nehemiah and then from the Psalms.

Chapter number nine. This is a thing that's, you need to know this. You need to believe this from the Bible and as you do, it's going to change how you think when you sin, when you mess up because you do.

Every one of you do. And I don't know how you do it. I don't know in what fashion or manner you do it, but I know you do it. And when you do, this is something that needs to come to your heart and mind from the word of God.

Nehemiah chapter nine. Find it. You're going to find that this context is identical to what we're studying in Exodus. We're right there. And he's recalling what God did, bringing them out of Egypt and making known his laws and his Sabbaths.

Verse 15, he gave us them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought us forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, promised them that they should go in to possess the land which I'll sworn to give them.

[28 : 58] But watch this, but they and our fathers dealt proudly and hardened their necks and hearkened not to thy commandments and refused to obey. Neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them, but hardened their necks and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage.

Here it is. But thou art a God ready to pardon. Ready, ready, ready, ready to pardon. You rebel, he's ready to pardon you.

You fall away, you get into sin, it just messes you. He's ready. He's at the altar. He's ready for you to light that thing up. He's gracious and merciful and slow to anger and of great kindness.

That's the God that you come to, that you bow before. Get that in your mind when you mess up. God's ready to pardon me. The blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse me of us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[30 : 07] Flip over to the Psalms and look at Psalm 103. Christian, you need to believe these words and make that part of your life. This will help you.

The devil come beside you and say, you piece of trash, you're worthless, you did it again. God doesn't have mercy for you. He's exhausted it on you.

But the Word of God has a different story. This is one of my favorite passages in this whole book. There's a few that are just way, way up there for me as an individual in my walk with the Lord.

And it's Psalm 103. And I'll start in verse 7. You'll see the context very close again. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.

[31 : 08] He hath not dealt with us after our sins. I have above the little word us, I have a little initial, T-W. Because He hath not dealt with Toby Wolski after His sins, nor rewarded Toby Wolski according to His iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

That alters a place of reconciliation, a place of atonement, a place where the transgressions can be forgiven and removed. And God is there ready, ready, ready to pardon.

Thank God for that altar. Christian, you need that altar more than you admit. You need to get to an altar. I don't mean you need to come forward every Sunday.

I'm not talking about you need to be starting here and ending here. There's a different altar. Remember I told you there's a personal tabernacle and then there's the church and I think there's two altars that ought to be in your life.

[32 : 22] One that's in your heart where you run too quickly. When you sin privately, you privately confess and repent to the Lord. If there's something that the Lord deals with your heart here in this service, then this is the place where you respond.

You don't say, oh, I'll take care of that when I get to the car because you don't. And even if you mean to, it just doesn't hit the same. It's not as heavy. It's not as real. Find in Leviticus chapter 7.

I want to give you one more thought about this altar. It's a place of atonement. It's a place of reconciliation where you can get things right.

And my, how we need to get things right. Then thirdly, I want you to see from chapter 7 that it's a place of thanksgiving. It's a place of thanksgiving.

And the reason I point this one out to you is not because it's the only thing that there is to say, but I think this one's more important than you realize. It really is.

[33 : 21] God puts something, He puts this one way up. Leviticus 7 verse 11, This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which He shall offer unto the Lord. If He offer it for a thanksgiving, then He shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oils and unleavened wafers anointed with oil and cakes mingled with oil, fine flour fried.

Because the cakes, or besides the cakes, He shall offer for His offering, leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of His peace offering. The sacrifice, verse 15, The flesh of the sacrifice of His peace offering for thanksgiving.

It's a sacrifice, He calls it, of thanksgiving. For a thanksgiving, in verse 12. This is something voluntary.

I'll show you that, verse chapter 22. Look at 22, 29. And this is a voluntary thing. It is not obligated.

22, 29. And you'll see that very phrase, sacrifice of thanksgiving. Take a look, 22, 29. And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will.

[34 : 39] You make that choice to do that. And you come to the altar with a sacrifice of thanksgiving. It's not this time to get your sins forgiven and get restored to a relationship because you messed up.

This is a special one. This is something that God enjoys thoroughly. The reason I point this out is because this is about an attitude of subjection and worship to the Lord where you're bowing before His person to offer Him something that nobody else can offer Him.

It has to come out of your heart. Praise. Thanksgiving to God. There's a little chain of references I want to run on this for you to show you God's interested in this one.

And it's in the Psalms. I'll take you back there. We're done in Exodus and Leviticus. So find the Psalms. We're going to go from the Psalms to Hebrews and be finished. Psalm 50 and then Psalm 107.

Those two spots in the Psalms. 50 and 107. I want to show you that these offerings to God they're more important than blood.

[35 : 47] They're more important than animals. To see a person voluntarily come before Him to thank Him. To praise Him.

It's worship. It's done at the altar. In chapter 50 I'll start in verse number 9. I will take no bullock out of thy house.

Not interested. Nor he goats out of thy foals. For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

If I were hungry I'd not tell thee. For the world is mine in the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Implied answer is no. That's not what he's after.

Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High and call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.

[36 : 47] Look at verse 23. Whoso offereth praise glorifyeth me. God wants thanksgiving.

He wants praise. He wants you to come and bow at the altar and offer him voluntarily not because any preacher's twisting your arm or making you feel bad but because your heart is open to God.

He wants to see it come out. Look at chapter 107 and again these two things praise and thanksgiving. In verse 21 107, 21 and 22 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness for his wonderful works to the children of men and let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Oh that we would praise the Lord that we would shut our lives off and look to him and just consider what he has done and that we praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to you and me.

That thanksgiving would start to be offered from these lips to heaven at the altar. Look at the last place Hebrews and it's chapter 13. Hebrews chapter 13.

[38 : 09] This is a practice that needs to be learned. It needs to be instilled as a part of your Christian life. It needs to be something that's continual.

It should never cease. It should never get old to you. Coming before the altar to offer your thanksgiving and your praise to the one who gave his son for you.

Hebrews 13 and I'll just read verse number 15 in the context of Jesus Christ offering himself sanctifying us through his blood. Verse 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks unto to his name.

The praise the thanks the praise and the thanks it's nothing but worship. It ought to come out of you but it's a spiritual sacrifice that is well pleasing to the Lord.

Now I've never been keen on preachers manipulating an invitation. That's what I feel like it is. You can feel it when it happens to where they preach a message and they give an invitation and nobody responds and instead of just letting it be letting whatever happens happens they start to twist your arm and say maybe somebody here just needs to come and thank God for saving them.

[39 : 34] When's the last time you did that? They start to like the whole thing shifts to how can I get somebody to come forward then I'll feel satisfied that I preached a good message. And I just don't like that and I don't that's just the way it is okay so I can't help but say it.

Trying to get a response. I don't ever want to twist your arm. I don't want that to be it shouldn't come from here. The persuasion the conviction shouldn't come from here. It should come from here.

It should come from the voice should come from inside. When the word of God goes forth when the truth is being broadcast it's the Lord inside that grabs it and stamps it on your heart and says that's you.

That's for you. Now I want you to respond to that. When that happens inside that's when you move. That's when you respond and come and kneel at the altar.

Sometimes God just he pricks your heart he softens that heart that heart that starts to get hard and pride and cold toward things of God or just feels I've known all this all my life I'm better than that those guys need to repent but I'm good and sometimes God just comes in and just like the Bible says the word of God is like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces and sometimes he just does that work on your heart to where it just starts to melt and the eyes are just get broke open with tears and you didn't come in bawling like a baby but all of a sudden you can't hold it in because the Lord is just stirring in you of showing you what you were and reminding you of the day you got saved and how you broke and how you opened up and how you had joy and this isn't for every Sunday or every day of the week but sometimes God does that to you he just just impresses on you and it's like there's nothing you can do but move and get low and just bow and shed the tears of thanksgiving and praise him and renew again that fellowship and that that attitude of worship that you once felt when you were newly born again and understood what it was to have your sins forgiven

[41 : 51] I promise you I'm not trying to twist I'm not trying to set the stage for a big invitation I don't even want you to come forward I'm just trying to get you to remember and to see how God works and that he gave us an altar here at this church to use when he speaks when he touches your heart when it's his work happening in this place don't you dare sit there and ignore him get to the altar it might be he just needs to receive again from you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and a sacrifice of praise so where is this altar where there's two of them I think there's one right here at this church this isn't a very special thing it's two steps it's two big steps here and it's really not an easy place for some people to get that low and to get back up depending on your age and your condition I understand that the old days they'd have what they call a mourner's bench where they'd take kind of like a pew and flip it around and put it at the front they'd have some pews up here where you could come and people could pray and could cry and could call on the Lord and some churches have things built differently this is what we have here but it's what's designated here it may not be as proper as others but it's what we would call the altar a place where you can come and kneel you can kneel in your pew you can just pray in your heart but there's something special about getting before the altar

I can't say what it is it's probably mostly just putting your flesh down and saying you are not going to tell me what to do God's going to tell me what to do and when you respond there's a bit of humility that has to happen it may be a big bit but when it happens it doesn't matter once you get down and you start praying you don't care you don't care who's watching you don't care who's singing you don't care who's talking it's just that thing opens up between you and God it's at the altar he said make me an altar it's an important piece it's an important part of Bible Baptist Church that the altar gets used that it stays hot that when God deals with you you respond it's your duty to get to the altar when God speaks to you and then the second altar is your personal one it's not necessarily a specific place but it's a place in your heart where you offer sacrifices to God where you get things fixed up when they need to get fixed up when you get things out of your hands when he deals with you about it if God deals with you here in a service the altar's right here absolutely no question about it if God deals with you in your private life wherever that would be then that's the place to deal with it years ago about I don't know 10 or 15 years ago

I was sitting by a piano and I was just playing around tinkering kind of came up with a little tune and I just kind of there's some people in our church at the time that were writing some songs and I just thought yeah maybe I'll try to do that and it was a dumb idea at first like I'm going to just write a song it doesn't work like that but I did get a little tune and so over the next couple weeks I just thought if I was going to write a song what would I write a song about and I thought what's the most to me where I was was remembering what God did for me and in a couple different places I was stages if you want to call it in life and so I wrote a song and I called it The Altar and it's not never got caught on to the Christian music's top 10 it didn't go anywhere nobody's singing this song but it was something it was like a testimony okay it was just me writing about what the Lord had done in my life and about two different altars one altar that I wrote about I didn't describe it but it was a bedside laying a prostrate across this bedside half on the bed just weeping without saying anything because I was just done running this road

I was at my wits end I was given up and I was bound before the Lord seeking reconciliation with Him it was my own personal altar where I got my life right with Him sometime later I was in a church service and I just I was I knew what God had called me to as far as ministry and I'd never surrendered I was fighting it fighting it fighting it and so finally that day I had preacher preached I have no idea what but I went forward to the altar at the church the other altar and I surrendered my life to the Lord and said not holding anything back from you ever again not turning back from this and by the grace of God still on that road by His mercy so I'm looking back on these altars as I was imagining them in my life and I wrote a song and I'll just read you the words I surely won't sing it to you but the words say this as I bow before the throne of grace I know He's seen all that I've done

I have no words to speak and these tears are real I'm ashamed of what I have become this is not how I want to live this life it's become much harder since I strayed my cup is full and I want no more I give up it all ends here today then His mercy flowed His grace was poured my contrite heart has been restored repentance found its sweet reward the mercy given me by Christ my Lord and then sometime later the second stanza says as I bow before the throne again I must thank Him for all that He has done how He picked me up and carried me away from what my life once was oh I'll not forget His patience and I'll always praise Him for His grace but if there's one thing that I'll not outlive it's the mercy

[47 : 52] He gave to me that day so as long as I have breath and days I'm enlisted in this fight of faith since what I deserve I will never face I'll live my life for His mercy's sake that doesn't mean much to you but that's that's some moments where I met God at an altar and I gave some things up and I offered some things to Him just a personal testimony and I'm trying to just be an example of the believers before you and however God deals with your heart there's two altars there's one right here that's available and usable when the Lord deals you make commitments many have made commitments at altars like this memories have been made they've gone on to serve God and give their lives to Him the other is up to you a place in your heart where you keep yourself in line where you don't get too far away where you're quick to confess your sins in closing remember that

God put the altar in this place He built that altar He said I want that altar to be this size in this place and I want you to keep it hot so don't ignore what God is calling you to have in your life when God speaks get to the altar you respond it's not hard it's not complicated you just get to the altar and bow it might wound your pride a little bit but what good thing has your pride done for you anyway I think it's good for God to wound your pride in this place so that you get to the altar and find fellowship with Him Christian learn to use the altar don't pretend you're above it because you're not but rather stay close to that altar it's more important than you believe you need to receive this this morning you need to learn this not only in your personal life but in this church as God works and seeks to deal with you let's keep this altar hot let's not be ashamed to use it there's blessing in using it and there's fellowship and restoration and sometimes it's thanksgiving so let's use the altar when God calls

Father as we dismiss and we go on our way we're grateful that you teach us things that we don't otherwise consider things we would probably abstain from and ignore because we're carnal and we're scared and we're full of pride and so Lord break us of that pride teach us how to respond to your word teach us how to use the altar as it's something that you prescribed for the Christian life Lord I pray that each one here would learn to confess their sins would learn to do it quickly and not be ashamed and not not be afraid but realize you're a God ready to pardon thank you so so much for being ready to pardon and forgive and to remove the iniquities remembering that our Savior Jesus Christ paid for them in full help us Father to have our doctrine correct to understand what truth is and to not be misled or confused by some other teaching or some verse that doesn't have application help us to be strong rooted and grounded in the faith and then to practice it when needed as the Lord deals with hearts in this place

I'm not going to ask anything of you this morning but I am going to put forward that you take serious the message that when it's time to use the altar whether it's in your personal life or whether it's here in this church don't you tell God no because that's how the best way I can say it is that's what you're doing is the Spirit of God moves and you're grieving Him when you say no I won't go no I won't get it right has God ever done you wrong has He ever tried to lead you in the wrong way if His voice comes to your pew He's trying to help you He's trying to grow you and I know I know sometimes it's hard it's hard to say yes to God sometimes you're afraid sometimes you're filled with pride but it's a work of God you need to believe Him and you need to trust Him this altar is for you to use when needed let's have a song here before we take off do you have one baby