

Live Your Life with True Purpose: How to Change Your Life God's Way

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[0 : 00] I figure sometimes it's going to be a long sermon when I see how many pages I've written down in my notes but I've learnt how to fix that I just make the font smaller.

But no, let's just pray shall we. Lord we thank you for your word as we come to it and encourage our hearts we pray. Lord encourage each one. We thank you Lord for your working in every heart. Lord for our gifts receive them. Lord for our hearts, may our hearts be open unto your word that it can make that eternal difference. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Now some films start off with a warning and this sermon probably should start with a warning.

Warning. This message contains Bible truth. It may upset some people.

It may tread on toes. It may be confronting. It may be offending. You may encounter life altering spiritual truth that changes your way of thinking.

[0 : 56] We've already heard about that. The word of God is a way of disturbing us, doesn't it, from our status quo and unsettling us from our complacency. And this verse says it all.

It's one we I'm sure are familiar with. It's really a pivotal verse in the word of God. Romans 12 verse 1. Let's say it together, shall we? I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Some thoughts about being a living sacrifice today. I put to you that it involves surrender. And here's a picture of a World War II German soldier surrendering.

Someone who formerly attended this church asked me one day, and they'd been reading an old classic, and they got convicted. It was a book called Absolute Surrender. And this book emphasizes the need for believers to surrender themselves completely to God's will and power.

And this woman asked of me, she said, do I have to have full surrender to God? I just can't achieve it. She was worried that she wasn't saved or that somehow she'd lost her salvation.

[2 : 12] I said, no, we're saved by faith through grace, not of works. Of course, we know that essentially we don't need to do anything to be saved. The sad reality, though, is that many who are born-again Christians are not fully surrendered to God.

They're not living sacrifices. So I want to urge you that way this morning, without it becoming a burdensome thing or an impossible thing. It's like we talked about on our Wednesday night Bible studies lately when we started the book of Colossians together.

And Colossians 1 verse 2, Paul addresses the readers, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.

One commentator puts it, the saved are all saints, though not necessarily saintly. Now, people have the saying, oh, I'm no saint.

But actually, if you believe in Jesus, you are a saint. The Bible declares everyone who believes is a saint. The word means holy one. God declares you holy when you're saved. Every saved person is called a saint, made a saint by God.

[3 : 21] Not by some human, made a saint by God. By grace through faith. All are saints, but not all can be called truly faithful brethren. I put to you that's a fact.

The fact that it's a shame, though, isn't it? That we would settle for that kind of Christianity. I'm saved, but I'm not going to be one of the faithful brethren. It's a kind of half-hearted Christianity. Yeah, you're saved. You're on your way to heaven. But I'm not a faithful brethren. Better that we aspire to be such. That we aspire to be a disciple, a living sacrifice.

One who takes up their cross daily. Who follows the Lord. A living sacrifice is about surrender. We're called to forsake some things. The world and its ways. To give up some things.

To stand up for some things. We're called to surrender our will. Our desires. Our ambitions to God's will. Acknowledging his mercy and grace. Also, a living sacrifice is said to be holy.

[4 : 24] What does that mean? Set apart. Set apart. A sacrifice is consecrated. Holy. Acceptable. There's one man that I know who has a lot of Bible knowledge.

And he was an active Christian in another church down the road. And then something somehow upset him and he dropped out. And he has joined now the ranks of the churchless.

He's now a do-nothing Christian. And I happened to be out for a meal at a local hotel. And I saw him standing at the bar. Booze in hand. And we talked. And I reached out to him.

It seems that that's his fellowship now. He's saved. Yes, I believe he is saved. I think so. He's trusted Christ. But something's gone wrong.

Something's gone wrong. Friends, believers today, Christians are called to live holy. Righteous lives. To reflect God's character. To truly that.

[5 : 20] So we're meant to fellowship. We're meant to plant ourselves in a good church. We're meant to avoid all appearance of evil. We're called to be holy. Be holy as I am holy, he says. We're meant to walk right.

That we live a life of honour unto our Lord. A life marked by integrity and purity. Holy. It means set apart. There should be a difference there. The sacrifice speaks of the altar.

Things burn up on the altar. It's good for us to be in the fire. The cross can burn up there. And people will see the gold. Now be encouraged today. You might say, I'm feeling like I'm not measuring up.

Look, trust in the Lord. He'll help you. He'll help you in the walk side. Once you're saved, then the sanctification is the next stages. It's the next phase of your life. God will help you with that.

As you let him. We read about how God's people are called to be like a sweet smelling savor unto the Lord. As they would burn the sacrifice, there'd be this aroma. It reads of our Lord.

[6 : 15] Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us. And hath given himself as an offering for us. As a sacrifice to God. For a sweet smelling savor. The Lord wants our lives to be like that.

That God will smell. There's something coming. There's something good out of our life. Our lives can be an offering. Our lives can be a sacrifice of praise. We can be a holy offering. Set apart.

Set apart for the praise of our God. As we put something on the altar. I know Brother Peter was talking about some. He brought an offering this morning. He had a box full of some birds.

And he was joking with me that he was going to make that his offering today. But he'd given it to Trent. Rather some birds. Some quails. So you can imagine what it would have been like in the temple days. That had brought an offering.

It would have been a bird. It would have been a lamb. Or an oxen. It would have been something to lay on the altar. And what a picture that is. And that offering had to be burned up.

[7 : 11] And produce a savour. A smell. It would have been like a barbecue. Wouldn't it? And the Lord wants our lives to be like that. People. And the sacrifice involves our mind. As Brother Peter shared.

Be not conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. So presenting our bodies.

That means our mind too. God doesn't switch off our mind. He wants your mind engaged. As a living sacrifice. May we renew our minds. Through the word of God. Through his spirit.

Let's resist conforming to the worldly values and patterns. Rather find God's way. Discern his will. And let God transform our thinking. Our thought patterns. To be that people.

Surrendered. Set apart. And another one is. To be a living sacrifice. It means to serve. Now this. I almost got a picture of Brother Ling Tung.

[8 : 04] He was serving at Moses' wedding. And he had his bow tie on. He looked so good. I thought. He always looks dashing. Brother Ling Tung. But he's a servant. He loves to serve.

He just. He could have just gone along to that wedding. And sat around the table. And just enjoyed the refreshments. And the entertainment. But no. He put the towel around his arm. Figuratively. And he put his bow tie on.

And he just. Played the part. What a servant. What a servant. What a picture of a servant. And that's what being a sacrifice is like. Isn't it? That we're serving. That we're glad to serve.

Servanthood. Sacrifice.

It speaks of servanthood. It speaks of lordship. And we yield ourselves. Because this. This is the reasonable service. It's the reasonable service. To present your bodies. As a living sacrifice. Holy. Acceptable unto God. This is your reasonable service. And this sacrifice. That we are. A sacrifice. Of ourselves. Is a sacrifice. Of. You could consider.

[9 : 01] A sacrifice of your time. You could be doing something else today. You could be doing something else right now. But you're giving of your time. Of your substance. We're giving of our sweat. Our blood. Our tears.

It's a pouring out of ourselves. At his feet. That's the reasonable thing. To be a servant. We're just doing what he says. After all. It's the right thing to do. And where would we rather be? I'd rather be in the courts of the Lord.

Than a thousand days somewhere else. You know. This is the right thing to do. We served him. And we can say. As we've served him. That we've done that. Which was our duty to do. If we could just have the heart of a servant.

Like is pictured in Luke 17. Of some. It says. That they said. So likewise ye. When you've done all these things. Which you've commanded you. Say we are unprofitable servants.

We've done that. Which was our duty to do. It's the right thing to do. It's really our duty. It's reasonable. It's fitting. It's the least that we can do. And when we think of servanthood.

[9 : 58] Who's the ultimate servant? Our Lord. Isn't it? He sets that absolute example. We see his humility. His selflessness. And as believers. We're called to serve.

We're called to seek out opportunities. To just do what you can. Do what you can. There's an example of that. In Mark 14. Where the Lord came to Simon the leper's house.

At Bethany. And a woman came with an alabaster box. Of ointment. Of spikenard. Very precious. And it says. She break the box. And poured it on his head. And he says.

She had done. What she could. She had done what she could. She's come beforehand. To anoint my body. To the burying. And then in the context of Mark 14. Others criticised her.

Oh what's this? Why this waste of ointment? It didn't seem much. This simple act of worship. But it was costly. In fact. But more so. She gave of her heart. And brothers.

[10 : 51] Sisters. Men. Women. You can be like this woman. She have done. What she could. Some would look on your service. And say. What a waste. Why are you wasting your time? Those that go out Saturday morning.

Why are you wasting your time? Telling never dying souls. Of their need of a saviour. On a Saturday morning. You could be kicking back. And watching the footy. You could be enjoying. A quiet lie in. You could be relaxing. And enjoying a restful day. How well do we serve? How is our being a servant going? I get asked sometimes. For a reference.

And for some people. It's easy for me. To write a reference. In fact. There's some people. I've said to them. If you ever want a reference. I've said this to our brother here. If you ever want a reference. Just let me know.

Because I'll write you. A really good one. I'll gladly write one for you. I can honestly write about some people. They are a willing worker. Nothing is too much trouble for them. They gladly volunteer their time.

[11 : 47] Volunteer their time. And you can depend on them. They're consistently there at church fellowship. Morning, night. Wednesday night. They're giving. They're giving of their substance. They're giving of their time.

Then there are others who ask me for a reference. And I'm scratching for what to say. What can I honestly say? They've been associated with this church for X number of years.

If I was honest. I would have to say. They come now and again. They come most. Well sometimes. Sunday mornings. They've undertaken studies to start a career.

They've built up a wealth. And a livelihood. But they've never attended the Bible study of the church. They've invested in this and that. But they don't appear to be committed in their giving to the church. They're missing.

What is a living sacrifice to do? I'd love to be able to write a glowing reference for you. That you are a servant. That you've done what you could.

[12 : 44] You've done what you could. Not doing more than you need to do. Not doing out of a works based kind of idea. But you're doing what you could. Because you're wanting to do the right. You're wanting to give your life to God.

You're wanting to serve. You're wanting to serve God. You were created for service. You were saved for service. Unto good works. You are his workmanship. Created unto good works. He's got something for you to do.

You're gifted for that. For that service. And really you're commanded to serve. It's what is your duty to do. Service shows who your Lord is, doesn't it? You belong to Christ.

And your church family needs your service. When you do contribute, you're helping one another. And serving others is a way to serve God. Why should you serve?

Because you owe everything to Christ. Because service makes life meaningful. You will be held accountable for your service. Because your service will be rewarded. It will be acknowledged.

[13:41] You are a living sacrifice. A living sacrifice serves in the church. Another thing about a living sacrifice is there's a submission. We're presenting your bodies.

There's a command here. It's a verse that is a command. Will we submit to this command? I want to present my body. I want to submit to God to present my body as an offering, to be a sacrifice.

A sacrifice is an offering. We put self to death when we give ourselves to Christ. Are we too busy with our own agenda to be a living sacrifice? Let's be honest today.

Or do we have the motto, I live for Christ? To live is Christ. As we read 1 John 3, hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us.

We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren. Submission. So what example are we setting for the next generation? Because our children are watching us too. Do we bring our family to church?

[14:38] Do our family say, yeah, we come to church every chance we can come to church.

Because we want to set the example for our children. When they're older, they'll do the same as we do. Now it's been said that what we do, our children will tend to do less so.

So if we attend less, our children will attend less so. Are we setting the example for our children?

The Bible calls us to yield our members as instruments of righteousness.

Friends, it says, Romans 6, Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Your members, your body is designed, it's fashioned, it's made to be an instrument of righteousness unto God. So I urge you today to sacrifice.

Now people would be familiar with this kind of tongue-in-cheek example. It says down the small writing there, The chicken was involved, the pig was committed.

[15:42] So let me explain. Bacon and eggs, some of you have heard this. The chicken lays her eggs, but the pig lays down his life to be on the dinner table.

Now once upon a time, a pig and a chicken were looking for work. They came upon a church sign which was advertising this breakfast and was going to be held in a few days. And at the bottom of the sign of the menu was given these words, Help needed to serve breakfast with ham and eggs.

Apply for job here. The chicken turned to the pig and said, See, this is an ideal place for me to work. I just give them my eggs and I will be well fed. Yes, said the pig, but yours is only a contribution.

Mine is a sacrifice. Now sacrifice, it costs us something, doesn't it? Sacrifice costs us something, something valuable. Another example from the word is Mark 12, where we see the Lord was watching as people were giving and the rich cast in much, it says, Mark 12, 41.

And then it came a certain widow. A certain widow came, a poor widow, and she threw in two mites which make a farthing. So it's these tiny little coins, two little tiny coins.

[16:54] And he called unto him his disciples and said unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow have cast more in than all they which cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in out of their abundance, but she of her want, of her little, did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

A little is much when God is in it. The widow gave out of her poverty. A sacrifice isn't a sacrifice until it costs you something. There are others who gave their gifts out of their wealth, out of their plenty, but she gave out of her poverty.

She put in all that she had to live on. She was not only poor, she was a widow. She put in all that she had to live so she could bless someone else. What about you and me, counting the cost?

Think of the cost. Are we bacon or eggs? You know, has following Jesus cost us anything? I mean, in Australia, let's be honest. Of your time, how much time do you give?

How much time would you fellowship? Midweek, Sunday? How much time praying, studying God's word? What about money? Offering, giving to the poor, giving to missions?

[18:07] What of comfort? Have we ever suffered any persecution? Are we willing to give our lives? That's real. In some countries, when they get baptised, that's their death warrant.

You get baptised and that's it, you're finished. You're apostatised from the religion of the country and you're as good as dead when you get baptised in some countries.

What have we given up of comfort, honestly? Maybe we've lost out because, in our careers perhaps, because of God's calling, people know that we're a Christian and they're biased against us because we're a fair-dinkum Christian.

Have we suffered misunderstandings in our families? Sacrifice. Sacrifice is a choice that we make. Giving our leftovers to God is not a sacrifice. We reap what we sow, don't we?

It's a choice. What you become tomorrow depends on what you choose today. An athlete chooses to discipline themselves to win the prize. They discipline their body. A soldier chooses to risk his life for his own country.

[19:08] A farmer chooses to work hard to bring in the good harvest. The success comes from the sacrifice. And while others are enjoying themselves, some have chosen to spend their time on eternal things, on whatever it takes, to give God their best.

When we think of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the animals presented were dead sacrifices. But for you and me, he wants living sacrifices. He wants your energy.

He wants your vitality. He wants you, while you're alive, to serve him. Some people think, I'll wait till I retire. I'll wait till this or that. And it's too late. Don't.

Don't make that mistake, young man, young woman. Don't make that mistake that you're going to put off to some unknown time in the future.

Now is the time. Now is the time. We know the word of God says, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which you have of God. It's in you.

[20:12] And you're not your own. You're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. We are his. And he will use us as he sees fit. But we are his, aren't we?

We are his. And he will use us as he sees fit. He's got full ownership rights to do with us as he pleases. May we bring our master honour. Are we willing to suffer injury?

To suffer reproach? Are we willing even to take time to fellowship? Are we willing to be persecuted? If so, we are in good company. The heroes of Hebrews 11, we see of some others it tells they hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some they laid down their necks. Are we willing to suffer hurt? Present your bodies. Some would shy away from sacrifice. Sacrifice. Oh, that's a painful word.

That's costly. I want cheap. I want easy. I want comfort. Convenience. I want a pain-free Christianity. A living sacrifice.

[21:18] A living sacrifice doesn't struggle, doesn't resist. A living sacrifice doesn't whinge, doesn't doubt, doesn't get offended. Let me break it down for you. A living sacrifice. Present your bodies.

Your mind. What you read. What you watch. Your ears. Your eyes. Your tongue. Is it life-giving words? Our sacrifice is to be holy.

Set apart. The Lord wants you and me to be living sacrifices. Totally sold out. That's what it means. I'm saying those words and I'm thinking I'm not there yet.

A living sacrifice. A living sacrifice loves the Master's will. Trust the Father. We think of Isaac going up the hill carrying the wood as a picture of Christ carrying the wooden cross as he went up the hill and he says Father, where's the sacrifice?

He carried the wood. Presenting your bodies is like that, isn't it? Speaks of the whole of you. Of your life. My car, my family, my home.

[22:20] It all belongs to God. What does the word say? Obey God. Resist the devil. Not the other way around. Some submit to the devil and resist God.

Friends, are we a living sacrifice? Truly. Take up your cross. The cross that you're going to die on. That's the picture of it. That's the reality of it.

Follow Jesus. Spend and be spent. Crucify the flesh. As a living sacrifice, it means that I place everything that I am and that I have on the altar. God is not that important to some people and it shows.

How much are you willing to sacrifice for Christ? Numbers of people have made a sacrifice by giving of their time, virtually working for nothing for this church. They believe in the vision, the mission.

Some people give up their time to clean, to serve. I'd name them but I don't want to take away their reward in heaven. Some people have taken the time to practice when we had a choir, to practice for the choir, to rehearse items.

[23 : 21] Some people who work in the children's church and the youth ministries, they give up their time and their resources freely. Why? Because they believe. They believe in the vision. They believe in being a living sacrifice.

It's not just mouthing the words. How much of a sacrifice are you willing to make? A sacrifice is a surrender of something, a full dedication. A sacrifice, a living sacrifice is a voluntary sacrifice, like Isaac, carrying the word.

He carried the word to the very point of his execution but God gave mercy. A living sacrifice is completely available.

We sacrifice our comfort to please God. Think of, there's many challenging verses and I don't mean to labour or really be a downer on you here today but these are things we can all aspire to, these verses.

We think of how we can sacrifice. As Paul tells, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[24 : 33] Are we willing to die? To be as it were nailed to the cross? To be as it were crucified with Christ? Are we ready to accept persecution? For some of you it might be hard for you to say I'm a born again Christian because your family is going to say well you've joined those nutsy people that believe in the Bible.

Are you prepared to count the cost? To count everything else as loss? A living sacrifice? Are we there yet? It tells us self-sacrifice, making a sacrifice for the kingdom, God's kingdom.

Making a sacrifice to help others. If we are a living sacrifice we don't say that's too much. When God says do this, oh that's too much, that's too hard. only so far and no further.

Oh that's taking me out of my comfort zone. I beseech you, I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present, present your bodies a living sacrifice.

A living sacrifice will not say that's too hard for me to do. That's going to take too much of my time. Oh I might actually have to get more committed than I already am. The sacrifice gives fully.

[25 : 40] There's no reservation, there's no holding back, there's no push back, we must be like Isaac. Lay it all, lay it all, lay yourself on the altar. There's no excuse to hold back.

Shyness is no excuse. You might say oh I'm too shy, oh I could never do this or that. God can do it in you, despite you.

Busyness is no excuse. You know it's been said ask a busy man because they're the ones who'll get on with it. I don't think, I don't think we're too busy.

Really, honestly, I don't think we're too busy. It's no excuse. Give him the highest place. Be willing, be a willing sacrifice. A sacrifice has no rights of its own.

Are we willing to sacrifice our own treasures, our self-made plans, our idols? Are we willing to yield our best, our time, our convenience, our comforts?

[26 : 39] What are we willing to lay down on the altar? Our hearts, our minds, our lives? If I'm preaching this in some communist land, if I was preaching this in North Korea, if I was preaching this in North Korea, this would be real.

But I'm preaching to you Aussies here today. And I'm an Aussie, effectively. And friends, what do Aussies really know? What do Aussies really know about sacrifice?

Sacrifice means surrender, a letting go. Be not conformed. Are we willing to let go of selfish desires, of all the obstructions, of all the hindrances, of all our egos, all of our excuses?

I'm too shy. No. It doesn't cut it with God. It doesn't cut it with God. Because he will strengthen you. He will enable you. Are you ready to be a living sacrifice?

Will we accept the trials and the tests? Will our faith go through the fire and come forth as gold?

Use your life wisely. I put to you today, yield to God.

[27 : 48] It's the reasonable service. Our worship, our devotion to God. Make the sacrifice. Say, yes, Lord, I'm willing to lay myself on the altar.

Full surrender, yeah, I'm probably not there yet, but I want to be. I want to be more surrendered. I want to be more surrendered. Set apart, holy, oh, I've got some work God's got to do yet in me, but I want to be, I want to be set apart, I want to be holy, acceptable.

Servant, hood, yeah, it's our reasonable service, I know that I should. The submission, yes, Lord, we're at his disposal. Friends, lay yourself on the altar.

God will do the work, he'll send the fire, he'll do the work, he'll burn up the dross and you'll come forth as gold. You can be yielded, you can be laid down on the altar. You know, there's some people here today making that profession of their faith through baptism, there's others that might be contemplating that.

Look, even at this stage, there's still time. If you say, yes, I do believe, I'll jump in. Now come down the pool and just jump in, alright?

[29 : 02] And obviously I'll test out your faith, we want to make sure you're not just, you know, because you can jump in the water and you'll just get wet. It's not going to do anything, alright? You can sprinkle the water, you can splash the water, you can pour the water, you can dunk in the water, but the H2O is going to do nothing.

It's your faith, it's Christ, it's Christ in you. I believe, if you believe you can be baptised, there's no holding back, we can be laid down on the altar. May we truly aspire to be that living sacrifice today. Give of our time, our love, our choices, our actions, our priorities, lay down our lives, if it be. North Korea, how does that sound? How would you like a mission trip to North Korea?

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we're not saved by our works, we know if we're honest, truly, we've got some work to do.

I know I have to be that living sacrifice, Lord, that for you to have more of your way with me, that you would have that sway with me, that I can be more like you, our Lord, that we can lay our all on the altar of sacrifice, as it were, Lord, that we can truly have that heart that says, Lord, here I am.

[30 : 20] I'm laying my life down. I want to die daily, I want to die to self, I want to be crucified with Christ. I know that the reality is those living sacrifices keep getting off the altar and doing their own thing.

Lord, I don't want to be like that. Work in us, Lord, we pray, by your Holy Spirit that we can do your will, that perfect, acceptable, that perfect will of God.

In Jesus' name, Amen.