

Lesson 6: Sacrifice

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Preacher: Pastor Shane Eccles

[0:00] All right, so tonight I want to continue in our lessons on discipleship. We're calling it the Ministry of Reconciliation. And so we continue tonight our discipleship series.

And in our last lesson, we learn that disciples of Jesus Christ love their neighbors. And our scriptures that we are focused on are the two greatest commandments, which we've read many times and will read again tonight just to catch us back up.

It's found in Matthew chapter 22, verse 35 through 40. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, all of thy soul, and all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And then we learned from that, though, that all the specific things about loving God.

So we broke that down in another lesson about loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and where that leads us and where it all comes together.

[1:08] And where it comes together in that first great commandment is that we're led to our salvation experience. When you love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind, you're going to study his word more. You're going to go to church more.

You're going to hear the preaching more. You're going to want to apply the things that you hear to your life. You're going to want to please God because you love him with all your heart, soul, and mind. So we learn how all these things come together and that it leads us ultimately to a salvation experience.

And that's where a lot of Christians stop there. They find their salvation. They find repentance, baptism in Jesus' name. They get the Holy Ghost. And then they find themselves being good participants in church, coming to church regularly, paying their tithes and offerings, sitting in the pews.

And that's how they pretty much live the rest of their Christian lives. But there's two parts here that we're talking about. And we've already been talking about the second commandment.

And that's verse 39. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And on those two parts, there's love thy neighbor as thyself. It inherently means that we're going to love ourselves.

[2:23] So we learn that we're the temple of God. We should take care of ourselves. That's where holiness comes from. And then loving others is what we talked about last time, loving others.

And that's witnessing evangelism, being concerned about others like Christ was concerned about the world, the sins of the world, that he would make that sacrifice of himself for the sins of people to give us a chance to be reconciled back to God.

And so if we truly have the spirit of God in us, then we would have the same motivations and things like that. And so that's where the spirit is going to lead us to other people, to save people, because it's not really about us anymore.

Our salvation is secure and securing others' salvation. We learned that. And so, but the second commandment also, when you put holiness together and you put evangelism together and witnessing together and being concerned about others, when you put these things together, it leads to something.

Just like the first commandment leads to salvation, the second commandment leads to sacrifice. It leads to sacrifice. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, we are led to understand sacrifice and are willing to sacrifice.

[3:47] So, you know, let's just pray together real quick for this word. Lord Jesus, I thank you for your word. I thank you, God, for the word that you've given us so far.

God, in these discipleship series, I pray, Lord, that people that would listen, hear the words today, and also would hear these lessons in the future, would get something from it, Lord.

God, and we would be brought closer to you and that they would leave changed and, God, that their lives would be abundantly changed and manifested in a glorious way for your kingdom.

And, God, I pray, Lord, that you be with us tonight. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So, our God, through Jesus Christ, is a God of sacrifice.

We're talking about sacrifice tonight. And to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must live a life of sacrifice as well. Because our God showed us sacrifice by coming off the throne, putting on flesh, allowed himself to be sacrificed.

[4:53] He's the greatest example of that. We've talked about this many times. And so, while we're in this current state in our natural birth, carrying with us flesh and blood, we have choices in how we want to use and spend our life.

We get to make decisions on our own, how we want to spend our time, how we want to live our life. We have these choices. And we can be born again and receive the spirit of Jesus Christ in us, which would be pulling us and tugging us and leading us to do the things that he would have us do. But, at the end of the day, we still can resist that. And we can still make the decisions to live life however we want. So, we can follow after his purposes or we can carry on as we were when we were naturally born and pursue the things that we would naturally want to pursue.

Okay. But, in John 1, verse 12, it says, But as many as received him, so those that received him, the salvation, the experience, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

So, if you have the Holy Ghost, you have the power to become a child of God. Even to them that believe in his name. So, the people of the name of Jesus have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

[6:05] They have the power to become the sons of God. Okay. In verse 13, Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So, the will. Having the will of God. It goes along with that. When we get the Holy Ghost, he's also given us his will. We can, if we listen and we commune with God, and we have our spiritual disciplines like we should, and we're praying, and we're reading the word of God, it's going to speak to us, the spirit inside of us.

If we have the Holy Ghost, it's going to speak to us, and it's going to draw us to things. It's going to lead and guide us to things. But we can very easily just turn that voice off, and we can make our ears, our spiritual ears, numb to that voice, and we can ignore it, and we can still lead a life however we want.

We can still do that. But here it's saying that if we're to be the sons of God, then we have to recognize we're not born of the flesh anymore. Remember, we're born again of the spirit, and so we're not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh.

But if you're still following after the will of the flesh, then you're not born of God. So, we have to understand that. So, those that receive him are born again, not of blood and not of flesh, or the will of the natural man, but of the spirit to do his will, advancing the kingdom of their father.

[7:27] But still yet, that choice remains, even after your new birth experience. The choice still remains, and the choice to be a disciple of Jesus Christ or not. And so, there's a choice to live your life for the cause of Christ, or for the cause of flesh.

That's basically what it boils down to. Even in the Old Testament, we find that God's chosen people, that ones that were, Abraham was called out of a land of idol worshiping, promised a great nation. Isaac, you know, the miracle child. The nation came from that. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel, separated for a purpose, for God's purpose, God's chosen people.

And it gets to the point where Joshua's having to tell his, gather everyone together, in Joshua chapter 24, verse 15, and he's having to gather everyone together, because people were not wanting to follow after God.

But he makes the proclamation, choose you this day whom you will serve, but for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord. And so, we all, even still today, from that time in the Old Testament, even to today, we're now the spiritual children of Abraham.

[8:35] We're called out to be separate from the world, and out of idol worshiping, and flesh chasing, and all this stuff. And we have the spirit of Christ in us, leading us and guiding us.

And we still today have to make the choice, are we going to serve God or not? For me and my house, are we going to serve the Lord? But that question still remains. And so, in the Old Testament, God didn't force them to serve him.

They still had that choice to make. And he has always, and will always bring us to a point of decision. We're making decisions all the time, and that word decision is kind of interesting, because it indicates a cutting off, or a cutting away.

Incision, decision, that root of that word is talking about cutting. And that's exactly what you're doing when you make a decision about something. You're cutting off all other options and paths.

When you make a decision to do this or to do that, what you're doing is you're cutting off other options and paths. You've decided to go this way. You've decided to do this thing and not these things. And so, you're making a decision.

[9:41] And so, are we going to pursue the desires we are born into the flesh with, or are we going to sacrifice the desires of our flesh and provide life to the desires of the Spirit?

That's what the question is. And that's the sacrifice that we're talking about. The Bible teaches that we are to be a living sacrifice. God fulfilled his purpose in the body of man.

That man wasn't just a man, but was the fullness of Godhead bodily. Colossians 2, 8, 9. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Verse 9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We're talking about Jesus. In Jesus was all of God. He was fully man and fully God. And as we know from our previous lessons, God is a Spirit.

And through putting on the flesh of Jesus Christ, he offered his body and his eternal Spirit as a sacrifice. And that is the fullness of the Godhead, the Spirit and the body, which is Jesus Christ.

[10:47] The Spirit of God, the body of the man Christ Jesus together, okay, as the fullness of God. And through the shedding of his own blood, it was God's blood. See, God's a Spirit.

He had to have a body, though. He had to have flesh. And that's how when he became Jesus, he was fully God and fully man. And that blood of his, that was the blood of God.

And God made everlasting life available to all that would come to him and live a life of sacrifice, like he was a sacrifice. And so to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, by definition, to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must follow him by also experiencing a sacrifice of a cross.

If you're not sacrificing something, if you're not, if your life isn't a life lived of sacrifice, then you're not a disciple of Jesus Christ, by definition. And in Luke 9 and 23, it said, and he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, talking about the flesh, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

We've heard this many times already. And verse 24, and whosoever will save his life shall lose it, talking about the flesh. If you don't want to crucify the flesh, if you don't want to sacrifice your will, that fleshly will, if you don't want to do that, you want to save that, you're going to ultimately lose it.

[12:06] But whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. Okay? And so the thing that we have to understand, and we're, you know, you're going to see people walking around everywhere right now with ashes on their head in the shape of a cross because it's Lent.

Okay? And it means that it's 40 days until the Good Friday, the Passover. Okay? It's 40 days until then.

And so everyone's practicing Lent, and they're putting these ash crosses on their heads, you know, from the Catholic Church and other denominations that participate in that. And it's about giving up something.

It's about sacrificing something. And, you know, I like coffee, so I'm not going to drink coffee anymore. And they think that's a sacrifice that God will accept as, you know, some glorious thing. He died on a cross, but you're giving up coffee.

So that's great. You know, I don't think it really compares. Okay? I appreciate any type of sacrifice to God if you want to fast or whatever. But, you know, fasting is biblical, but giving up coffee is not a fast.

[13:11] I'm sorry. I don't care how much you love coffee. I don't care how much you love chocolate or whatever it is that you say you want to give up. But that's not what biblical fasting is.

Okay? That's just making yourself feel better, but it's not helping you really in any way spiritually.

Okay? It might help your mindset about something or make you feel better about how you're living for God, but it's not really helping you in a spiritual way. But I'm talking about real sacrifice.

That's what God wants from us is real sacrifice, just like he gave and he expects from us to pick up our cross daily and deny ourselves daily and follow him daily.

It's a daily decision that we have to make. Okay? And so that cross that they're putting on their heads and walking around pretending like they're giving up something spectacular for God, you know, that cross is still an instrument of death.

The cross that killed the man Christ Jesus and ultimately caused him to be put in a tomb so he could be raised in the third day.

[14:15] But the instrument of death was the cross. It was an instrument of death. It killed Jesus and that's what allowed the sacrifice. And when it comes to a cross, there's no halfway with a cross.

You don't get put on a cross and then come off the cross alive. You don't come off the cross wounded or injured later. It's always an instrument of death.

There's no halfway sacrifice when it comes with a cross involved. Okay? And so Romans chapter 12, verse 1, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Okay? So there's no halfway with a cross. We can't have one foot in the church and one foot in the world and try to get the best benefits from what we feel like the world can provide us and get the best benefits and make ourselves feel better about going to church or halfway living for God.

There's no halfway living for God. You're either living for God or you're not. You can't have one foot in the world and one foot in the church and think you're going to make it and be okay. Your life's going to be in turmoil.

[15:30] It's going to be a mess all the time because the Bible, Jesus said, I'd rather you be hot or cold. If you're lukewarm, I'm going to spew you out. I mean, you can take that as a principle that either go one way or go the other, but don't try to be in the middle.

Don't try to be in between because it's just, you're just going to be worse off anyway. And so I'm not trying to encourage anyone just to go off into the world, obviously, but you might as, if you're not going to live for God, you might as well stop pretending and your life will probably be better for it. But then that life is really going to be short-lived at some point as we're all going to realize and then what? Okay, so it's better to live for God. And so, but here he's saying, by the mercies of God, present our bodies a living sacrifice that's holy, acceptable unto God.

See, most Christian, Christian denominations they're trying to convince you to accept God. Accept God as your personal Savior.

Accept Jesus as your personal Savior. Trying to convince you, you know, it's better to live for God. You need to accept God in your life. You know, that's not what it, it's God that needs to accept us.

[16:48] It's not us that needs to accept God. And we're to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. It's God that needs to accept us, not us that needs to accept God, in which the Bible says is our reasonable service.

And so, but this whole thing of being a living sacrifice, I appreciate that because that means that God's not asking us to go be hung on a cross because he wants us to be a living sacrifice.

So, I appreciate that. So, it's fortunate for us that God's not asking us to die in the literal sense.

He's, but he's asking us to deny our will and to deny our life pursuits that we would want potentially to do and pick up his will and pursue his purposes.

It's come to me that I could in my professional work, I could take a job that I would be making substantially more money and it would be a really cool job.

I can go and be a part of a really cool thing that's going to be happening over the next few years and that is we have the Olympics coming to California or to the United States.

[18:08] I think it's in California from what I understand but the World Cup is also coming which is like the World Super Bowl. It's the most popular sport and they're using all these stadiums and things for all these events and they're trying to find security directors from all over to come and they're already preparing security things for the World Cup that's coming and the Super Bowl is going to be here as well and so there's a lot going on and opportunities that I could if I was just if I didn't care about reaching Houston and I mean there's no way I could move to Southern California for a couple years just to chase more money and a job or whatever because I have a mission.

I feel like I'm burdened with a mission here to reach this city and so that's kind of an example that I could think of where I have to deny what maybe my flesh would have wanted my life pursuits that would gain me higher influence in the security industry give me look really nice on my resume increase my wages by double you know possibly or whatever those are enticing things to people in the world that sounds like a lot of fun let's go be security help with the security efforts at the World Cup you know what an experience that would possibly be but that's not even an option or consideration it can't be it's because there's I have a mission and a purpose in the kingdom of God that trumps that and so that's what it's talking about that's an example I guess but there's many different things I could use as an example of being a living sacrifice denying our flesh denying the pursuits of life and preferring and desiring more the pursuits of the kingdom of God and so I thank God for every preacher that who's ever convicted me over all the years who's ever convicted me of the things that I had done wrong in my life as a teenager as a young child even as a young adult whatever it is all the things that I've done wrong sitting and hearing preaching sitting and hearing the word of God preached and and I don't I don't despise preachers I don't despise those that have convicted me I thank God for them because it's it's moved me to want to sacrifice my fleshly human will and pursue the things of God it's what's got me here today and I hope it's what carries me through all the other enticements that may come in my life and all my 44 years of life I haven't found anything better to live for than to do what we're doing right now to try to build the kingdom of God in whatever way we can Houston's a small little town big deal right why not go to a bigger town there's there's bigger cities with 100 plus thousand people all around we could pick one and go anywhere in the country and have this is where

I feel God's called us to be and so we're here doesn't every every city needs a truth preaching church and so I'm just here to do the will of God and that's what I hope for the rest of my life and that never changes and I would never be persuaded and drawn to the things of the world or the pursuits of my own personal desires and things and I would only pursue the kingdom of God whatever God wants me to do I haven't found anything better to live for than to do the will of God and anything he wants me to do I want to do that I don't care if it brings me more money or not or less money or what it doesn't matter to me and so hopefully I can keep that hopefully I can keep that because there will always be times and things that come that could entice me away or draw me away like I'm talking about this job opportunity that could entice me away and I want to always be strong enough in my spiritual disciplines and be right with God and be following after spirit enough to be able to say no and not even have to even hesitate about it and that's sacrifice that's what we're talking about because one we're living a holy life and we're concerned about other people if we lost holiness remember love your neighbor as yourself this is what leads us to this life of sacrifice if we don't love ourselves if we don't care about being holy to God if we don't care about holiness and pleasing

God and being a temple to God that is pleasing to God we don't care about those things and we don't care about the loss and we're not driven and motivated by the people around us all day every day that are lost and dying and could go to hell if they're not saved if we don't see the soul in them and understand the tragedies that are happening spiritually and we're not concerned about those things we'll never lead a life of sacrifice because we won't be moved by those things and we need to be moved by those things 1 Peter 2 and 5 he also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ so in the Old Testament God gave Moses that plan for the tabernacle and in the tabernacle there were seven pieces of furniture designed for specific purposes two of the seven pieces of furniture were specifically for sacrifice one was for sacrificing flesh which was the brazen altar and the other was for spiritual sacrifices and it was called the golden altar of incense okay we're supposed to be spiritual houses holy priesthood offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God so there's a sacrificing of the flesh and there's a sacrificing of the spirit okay and there's a brazen altar and there's a golden altar of incense and the brazen altar was for the flesh sacrifice and the altar of incense was for the spiritual sacrifice and so we have these clues to what the spiritual sacrifice is because the altar of incense was for prayer and for worship and

[24 : 24] King David realized this as did all other priests as well in Psalms 141 and 2 says let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense and the lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice and the apostle Paul said we should pray without ceasing so this can be seen as a call for daily prayer and daily spiritual sacrifice on the altar of incense prayer is greatly important not only to the relationship building process with our God and Savior Jesus Christ but also accomplishing his will if

we're not praying how are we going to really hear his will how are we if we're not meditating on the spirit that's in us and communing with God's spirit within us how are we going to know what it is that he's drawing us to or wanting us to do so we have to have prayer and so what is sacrifice we're talking about sacrifice what is sacrifice really a sacrifice provides life in exchange for their own the man

Christ Jesus was the sacrifice that provided redemption to us that are called and might receive him in his promises of eternal life so sacrifice provides life in exchange for their own Hebrews 9 and 14 for much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God and for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that we were under the first testament that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance for where a testament is there must also of necessity be the death of the testator and what this means is God did this through love as mentioned in the most popular scripture in the Bible God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son no wonder the greatest commandment in the second that is like unto it pertains to love the whole discipleship series is based on those scriptures love God with all your heart soul and mind love your neighbor as yourself the two greatest commandments pertains to love

Ephesians 5 and 2 and walk in love as Christ also had loved us and have given himself for us offering an offering and a sacrifice to God for sweet smelling savior remember from our last lesson the royal law the second commandment Jesus spoke of was to love your neighbors as yourself it leads to a life of sacrifice it leads to a life of sacrifice the evidence that we love our neighbor as Jesus demands is seen in the same example that he gave us on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice so when we carry our cross and we sacrifice our pursuits and our desires and life we're demonstrating the same way that that Jesus demonstrated his love and how he revealed his love that's how we reveal our love is by choosing to carry our cross and to reveal the love of God to others Jesus didn't bear his cross for himself Jesus experienced his cross for us and when we love God with all of our heart soul and mind and love our neighbors as ourself the cross that we bear as disciples of Jesus

Christ it's also for the sake of others it's not just for our sakes only it's for the advancement of his kingdom and his purposes and his purpose is to seek and save those that are lost and so we can't be focused on our own life and saving others at the same time that doesn't work and so we have to sacrifice our own life in order to save others we have to fully invest and fully place ourselves in the kingdom of God to pursue his mission and seeking to save others that's what the discipleship the disciples cross is the discipleship is falling after Christ picking up your cross and following him that's the disciples cross it's the sacrifice of your own pursuits in life a sacrifice to save others Jesus plainly speaks about sacrifice and that it is a commandment but also is the way that his joy would remain in us and that it would be full the context of this teaching is right after Jesus speaks about the comforter and would come unto them speaking of the Holy Ghost after his departure when he would be glorified that he was going to send his spirit to dwell in us the Holy Ghost his spirit the spirit of Christ and it's also right before his ultimate display of love as a sacrifice on the cross in which he laid down his life on that cross for us to have the opportunity to find salvation so how can we have the thing necessary for eternal life and keep it for ourselves how can we possess it how can we know it how can we understand this what's necessary for eternal life and then just hold on to it and not look around and share it with our family that's not saved or our neighbors that aren't saved how can we how could we do that that would seem so cold to me

James 2 and 14 what doth it profit my brethren though a man say he hath faith and have not worse can faith save him if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food and one of you saying to them go in peace be warmed and filled notwithstanding you actually give them those things which are needful to the body what does it profit them so the example is if if someone's naked and hungry and we just say we're gonna pray for you go in peace and be filled and warmed in Jesus name but we don't actually give them some clothes to put on and cover their nakedness or some food to fill their hunger then what James is teaching faith without works is dead like yes we need the faith we should pray God bless you but at the same time there needs to be some works that we're doing to bless them and so to be a disciple of Jesus

[30:54] Christ we have to sacrifice daily our time our resources even our influence that we could gain to reach our neighbors with the truth that provides them the things which are needful for their

eternal life we can't just come sit on a pew we can't and just pray for the lost we actually have to go to where they are that's what we're gonna be doing in a couple weeks here on a Saturday we will be doing that we'll continue to do that as a church Matthew 14 verse 17 through 21 as I'm closing and they say unto him we have here but five loaves and two fishes he said bring them hither to me and he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass and he took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven he blessed and break and gave the loaves to his disciples and disciples to the multitude and they did all eat and were filled and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full and they that had eaten were about five thousand men beside women and children this is a miracle we understand this is the miracle feeding of five thousand with just a handful of bread and a couple of fish and no matter how much or how little we think we have to offer compared to five thousand hungry men not counting the women and children five loaves and a couple fish isn't really a lot so no matter how much we think we have to offer the kingdom of God it's enough

God will take what he'll make up the difference he'll make up the difference he will multiply it like he did that those loaves and fishes let's all stand with not much Jesus fed the hungry crowd through that blessing and the efforts of his disciples notice he blessed God blessed Jesus God robed in flesh is the one that blessed the food and break it apart and gave it to his disciples and his disciples took it to the multitude and it's still the same today that's how it's done we receive a portion his spirit and then we are to go and save reach others and help draw them to the kingdom of God and in doing so our sacrifices won't just benefit it's not just benefiting us but we're helping save other people and it builds up the entire church body and so when one disciple offers their five loaves and two fishes it multiplies through

God's hands and feeds the multitude amen Lord Jesus I thank you for your word today God I pray Lord that you help us understand it