

An Adoring Sacrifice

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[0 : 00] We can turn back to our reading in Leviticus chapter 2. We can read at the beginning of this chapter again, Leviticus chapter 2.

When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it and bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests.

And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. And so on. When you read in the New Testament in 2 Timothy, there's a verse that reminds us that all Scripture is God-breathed.

God has given all of his word to us. And he gives it to us for a purpose. Reminds us in that passage in Timothy as well that it's for our good, for our upbuilding, for all of these things that we seek to find as we turn.

[1 : 10] To God's word. But there are certain passages and maybe books of the Bible that we don't tend to go to as much.

And yet they're still God-breathed. They're given for a purpose, for our good, for our instruction. Which book in the Bible do you find God speaking directly in most?

Which book in the Bible is made up, in the sense of the majority of the book, is made up of God speaking directly? Well, it's this book of Leviticus.

It's a book where you see God speaking directly almost all the way through it. You see it from the very beginning in chapter 1. The first verse says, And so God is speaking directly throughout this book for much of it.

And that says something to us, that this book is important. This book has a lot to say to us. And the very fact that you see it often quoted in the New Testament is a reminder to us of just how important it is as well.

[2 : 25] We'll touch on that a little bit more tomorrow. But when you start, if you've ever tried starting at the beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis, and you say to yourself, I'm going to read all the way through the Bible.

Starting from the Genesis, I'm going to read all the way through. How far do you get? How many of you have tried that, starting to read the Bible? You come to Leviticus, and it's probably the place where most people suddenly find themselves, not losing interest, but finding it just hard to read through.

And very often that's the place where people will give up in that sense of reading all the way through the Bible. Leviticus can be a difficult read in that sense.

What is it saying to us? But it has much to say to us. And even as we think of preparing ourselves to remember the Lord's death, God willing tomorrow in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we look at this chapter this evening, and God willing tomorrow, we'll look at chapter 16 of this book as well.

And we see that it has much to say to us about worship. It has much to say to us about sacrifice, about offering, and what God has done for us.

[3 : 44] And God is speaking to us through his word here. And the first chapters, first five or six or seven chapters in Leviticus, outline for us a sense of worship and offering to God.

And there's five main offerings that you find in these opening chapters. You have the burnt offering, you have the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering.

There's five different offerings that we see in this book. And we're going to look at the second one this evening, this grain offering. Reading through chapter 2, it can sound a little like a cookery class.

This is how you are to prepare this grain offering and offer it up to the Lord. It just seems to be repeating itself in different ways, saying this is the way that you are to cook your grain with oil and

with frankincense, and how it's to be offered up and how it's to be given to the priests and how they are to eat it.

And what is it actually saying to us? What lessons can we take from it? Well, the main application is not that the minister is to be kept in a good supply of pancakes or scones or oat cakes.

[5 : 01] That's not what it's saying. You could take that sense from it, where the priests have to be given an element of what is cooked, that they are to eat that. This is their supply, as it were.

But that's not the main thing that we're taking from it at all. It's much more important than that.

There's much more to it than that. Because what it's actually saying to us, as you see it with all the other offerings that come alongside it, is that this is an important aspect of the people's worship, of their worship towards God.

It's part of their lifestyle. It forms part of their community, that everybody is involved in this, no matter how little or how much grain that you have, that you have something to give to the Lord, that you have some way of approaching the Lord.

Because this is a sacrifice of worship, an offering to God with a sweet aroma you find. So as you look at it, the grain, the ingredients are given to us, the grain, the oil, and the frankincense.

The grain is the offering. The oil is there, as is often seen throughout Scripture. Oil is making it set apart as holy to God.

[6 : 20] And frankincense is what gives it that aroma, that richness as it is baked, as it is cooked on the altar. So all these things come together.

And in that sense, it's that aspect of offering up a full worship to God, that we are offering our best to God.

And there's four things that I want us to take from this grain offering this evening, as we see it in chapter 2. Four aspects of worship that we can take from this, that we can use to help ourselves prepare for the Lord's Supper tomorrow.

To remember what we are doing, to look at it as our relationship with God, that we are preparing ourselves to worship Him aright.

That we have all that we have through the Lord Jesus Christ, as we come to partake in the Lord's Supper.

[7 : 22] Are we worshiping God aright? Are we coming, offering that sweet worship, that sweet aroma to God this evening, in our lives in general, and as we come tomorrow?

Is our worship of God what it should be? And how we see the Lord Jesus Christ come from these verses before us this evening as well.

So the first thing we want to see about our worship is about the sense of remembrance. It's about remembering. The opening verses tell us this, as they're giving them instruction about what is involved in this grain offering.

And you see in verse 2 that it speaks about a memorial portion. A memorial portion. It is offered as a burnt offering, with an aroma pleasing to God, as a memorial portion.

And so what is that saying to us? Well, it's saying that there's a recognition of what God has done. It's a memorial, a remembrance portion.

[8 : 36] Now, it could be applied that there's a remembrance and a thanksgiving for a harvest, but it's much wider than that. It's not just focusing in on one area.

It's focusing in on the people's lives in general. That they have a lot and much to give thanks to God for every practical aspect of their lives.

Not just a spiritual side, but the practical side as well. That we have a memorial offering, a remembrance offering to give to God in our worship.

You remember that the people here, as we're looking at Leviticus, were with Moses as their leader. They were in the wilderness. They were journeying in the wilderness.

A place that was barren, a place that was sparse, and yet they had so much to be thankful for as they journeyed with God, as God provided for them.

[9 : 37] And so this regular grain offering, as the other offerings they all were, they were on a regular basis. Tomorrow we're going to focus on the Day of Atonement, that once-in-a-year sacrifice.

But these other offerings, as we're looking at here, they were ongoing. So there was this continual remembrance of what God has done. And at the heart of remembrance is worship.

And that's what this is about. The grain offering is about worship. About this sweet aroma being offered up to God.

When you look back in the Scriptures, you go to the book of Genesis. Noah was saved by God during the flood. What was the first thing that he did as he came out of the ark?

Well, he offered a sacrifice to God. He offered worship to God. In Genesis 8, 21, it says, When the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man.

[10:48] Noah offered up a sacrifice. And the aroma was pleasing to the Lord. And he gave that great promise. I will never again curse the ground because of man.

What we find is that as we draw near to God in this remembrance, in this memorial, in this offering, a sweet fragrance of worship to God that he blesses, that he is able to bless as our focus is on him. And so this grain offering that seems maybe so simple in many ways, it maybe seems a little out of place here. We could have focused on other offerings, the burnt offering, the sin offering that would seem in many ways more important because they remind us of that sense of forgiveness.

But forgiveness is part of this because the memorial portion, the remembrance of God is remembering deliverance, remembering God's blessings, remembering God's goodness. goodness. And so they offer up this remembrance offering. And when we look at ourselves tonight, when you look at your life, when you look at what God has done for you, do you see the goodness of God tonight?

[12:14] We can come to the Lord's Supper and we can think it's our sins that we are focusing on, our sins that are many as we look at them and we look at them and we know them.

And we thank God for the forgiveness of our sin. But we look too about the goodness of God, the goodness of God, the way God has been with us since we last sat at the Lord's table and give thanks and remember God's goodness.

Frederick Marsh, a Christian writer, he once looked at it in this way, what the Christian sees when he looks back and can give thanks for, the deliverance of the Lord that he has brought, the way the Lord has led, the blessings the Lord has given, the victories the Lord has won, the encouragements the Lord has given.

You know, as you look back in your life tonight, whether it's short term or longer term, looking back over your life, do you not have much to give thanks to God for and to offer up a remembrance offering to God, to remember what he has done.

How do we remember the Lord? Well, that is what we are to do this weekend. What we are doing is to come and partake in what the Lord has done for us, to give a worship that has a rich aroma of thanksgiving to God for the sacrifice that he has made for us, that he gave his life.

[14:05] And that as we sang in Psalm 116, what can we do? What can we give to the Lord for all of his goodness to us? The Psalm says, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. That is worship. That is a worship that has a sweet aroma because it is giving thanks to God, remembering God for all that he has done because Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me.

so our worship is to be one of remembrance. The second thing we see here is it's a worship of giving, of giving to the Lord.

They are bringing their grain offering to the Lord in its various formats. And as you read through the different ways that it is given, it's a reminder that everybody in this community is involved. involved. There may be some that are giving maybe a more expensive grain, a finer grain, a different kind of way of it being prepared, but each and every one is being offered as a sense of giving to the Lord.

[15:25] It's acknowledging God's goodness and the people remembering this by giving to him. And as they do this, they do it by bringing it as a gift.

That is what these offerings are, a tribute, a portion of the goodness of God giving back to him. So when you look at these offerings in the beginning of Leviticus, what would the people have understood by it?

Well, they would have understood that all that they have is from God. Everything that they have, whether it's their cattle, their sheep, their goats, their birds, their grain, everything that they have is from God.

And what they are doing is giving back to God what is his, of giving themselves to the Lord. And so what this grain offering was, was a sense of dedication, a sense of pledging themselves once again to God, ongoing sacrifice in that way.

They showed their commitment to God. And as we come to take part in the Lord's Supper, that is what we are doing as well. We are reminding ourselves that everything that we have is from God.

[16:52] And that we are giving back to him the glory, the worship that is due. Everything that we have, if we have salvation, salvation, it is all because of him.

Not because of anything that we have done, it's all because of him. We come not offering ourselves to him, we come offering ourselves to him. Offering ourselves in that sense of we are dependent on him.

And so here you're seeing that is the sense of giving to God what is already his. And there was a cost in this giving.

Anytime that we see a sacrifice being offered, it is because there is a cost. They are giving part of what they could easily say, well, it's mine.

I don't have to give it. But anything that we have and we see from God, it is his and is about giving back to him. And so we come to give to him because he has given to us.

[18:07] He has given us his son. He has given us salvation. He has given us forgiveness.

Whatever way you're looking at it, it is God who has done and we are to give.

And when they do this, they offer up their best. You see it here, for example, in verse 14, if you offer a grain offering of the first fruits to the Lord, the first fruits were always the best.

You can easily say, well, we'll leave it till the second or the third harvest, the ones that maybe aren't as important. You see it again and again through Scripture where there is a lack of worship, a lack of relationship that is right with God.

It is not the giving of the best, but the giving of the second. In Malachi, in these later books in the Old Testament, you see how they give lame animals and all of these kinds of things.

They are holding back from God. Instead of giving, they are keeping. And if you are doing that, you are robbing God. That is what Malachi says in chapter 3, verse 8.

[19:20] Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, how have I robbed you? In your tithes and your contributions. They were holding back from God.

They weren't giving as they should. Are you holding back from God tonight? Are you keeping back from God what is due to Him?

In that sense of your worship, your best, your service, your life, everything that you have from Him? Are you giving back to Him with that sense of thanksgiving, that sense of rejoicing, that sense of adoration that is due to Him?

We are to be givers, not keepers. We are to give ourselves fully to the Lord, to commit our ways to the Lord, not to hold back from Him.

Holding back, what is due to Him is robbing God. It is disobedience. And so are you coming to give Him what He deserves?

[20:32] Your love, your life, your all. That is how we are to come to the Lord's table, giving to Him what is due.

in 2 Corinthians chapter 9, Paul speaks about that cheerful giver. It is spoken about maybe in a financial way, but everything that we do, every act of worship is to be given in a cheerful way.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. a hilarious giver is the word that is used for cheerful.

It is that sense of just there is joy, there is delight. When you look at that sense of frankincense that was offered up here, that aroma, it made it sweet.

And that is what our giving is to be like, a sweet giving to the Lord, a thanksgiving giving to the Lord. The third thing that we see here in this offering is that it's preserving.

[21:47] It's preserving. In verse 13 we read these words, you shall season all your grain offerings with salt.

You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt. So it's not just an ingredient of salt, there is something more to this.

It's the salt of the covenant with your God. That is not to be missing. Salt is of course a preservative. It is what gives longevity to food.

And the people here in Moses' day would have been quite familiar with that, that salt was able to keep, but only for a time. But what we see here is that behind this offering and all the offerings you could see, is behind it all is that sense of covenant pledge with God.

[22 : 52] That he is the one who provides. That he is the one who preserves his covenant with his people. Because we break it.

We fail in it again and again. And that's the whole reason as you're looking through Leviticus and indeed the Old Testament, when you're seeing the whole offerings and sacrificial system, it's happening all the time.

It's ongoing every day. It's just a part of their everyday life. Because there's never a point where they can say, we've made it.

We've achieved it. We've pleased God. Because they are constantly failing God. Just as we are, just as you are, just as I am, we are constantly failing God.

We sin in thought, word and deed on a daily basis. So we don't just confess our sins once. We have to confess our sin on a daily basis.

[24 : 01] But we are being reminded here that as they are bringing their grain offering, that behind it all is that sense of relationship, that covenant with God.

The salt of the covenant with your God is not to be missing. There is this preserving. And that is what we have ongoing as we look to the Lord's Supper as well.

We take it, we do it in remembrance of Him and we keep doing it until He come. Do this in remembrance of me until I come.

It is preserved for us. It's that relationship, that covenant relationship with God. And when you look forward into the New Testament and when you see Jesus preparing to go to the cross and as He comes to institute the Lord's Supper, when you look at that, what is He doing?

He gives bread and He gives wine. There is grain involved in that. Bread is part of what we take, God willing, tomorrow.

[25 : 18] We are seeing that He is the fulfillment of this grain offering, that He is the fulfillment of this covenant, that He is the one who keeps His people.

He is the one who gives that ultimate sacrifice. We know that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. But our whole life is dependent on God and God, on Christ, and Christ gave His body and His blood for His people, that we might have life through Him.

He gives every provision for us. He preserves His people. He keeps His people because He is in that relationship with His people, a covenant that He will not break.

And so as we come tomorrow, God willing, to remember, it is because it is preserved for us. God willing, a God willing, a covenant that is ongoing.

Do this in remembrance of me. me. The fourth and final thing we see here is the assurance that it gives.

[26 : 42] As the people brought their offerings, what were they looking for? they were looking to please God.

They were looking for their offering, their sacrifice to be acceptable to God. Through the priest, they would bring it and offer it up to God.

And God would bless it if it was brought right. But if they didn't bring the best, if they didn't bring it all, if they brought it in the wrong spirit, with the wrong attitude, then God was not able to bless.

But what they are looking for here is bringing that best of what they have, that God would bless it and give them that assurance that he is with them, that he will not leave them, that he will not turn his back away from them.

And so what you see here is they are bringing this offering, they are bringing it to the priests, the priests are then offering it up to the Lord. And how do we come in worship?

[27 : 59] What are we looking for as we come in worship, as we offer up a right worship to God? What are we looking for? What are we looking for in the Lord's Supper?

What are you looking for in that tomorrow? that sense of assurance, that sense of peace, that sense of being accepted by God.

And how do we find that? Well, it is coming through our priest, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. When you look at, for example, verse 10 here, the priests partook in this grain offering. The rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons.

It is a most holy part of the Lord's food offerings. The priests were approving of what they were given, and then they were offering this, or they'd offered it to God, and they took it themselves. [29 : 05] There's that sense of this offering is acceptable. This offering is right. And when we look at Christ ourselves, we look at Christ and his role of a priest, offering himself up as a sacrifice, as it says, to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God.

That is what he is doing, has done for us. And so where is our assurance found? It's not in what we can bring to God.

It's in giving ourselves to him. It is putting ourselves into his hands to come with Christ in view, looking to him, to bow humbly before him, to worship with that sense of adoration, that we might find assurance of the forgiveness of our sin, of the love of God to us through his Son, Jesus Christ, to have that assurance of knowing the promises of God, the fulfillment of his scriptures to us, that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

when you think of these words in light of where the people were here, they know the love of God because God has remembered them and so they are to remember him.

They know the goodness of God. They are to come and give to him as he has given to us. He gave his Son.

[31 : 22] and they are to look to him. We are to look to him with that sense of thanksgiving that he has remembered us in that way and come believing and then we have that assurance of eternal life from him.

God has been good to us. He is due our thanksgiving. he is due our worship, a worship that is a sacrifice pleasing to him.

And why would we not? When as the hymn writer says, and when I think that God his Son not sparing sent him to die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin.

when Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart. Then shall I bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, my God, how great thou art.

Bow with humble adoration. That is what we are to do, to come with that worship of humility and adoration and dependence on him, saying, not about us, but my God, how great thou art.

[33 : 00] And so may our worship, simple as it may seem, as this grain offering might seem, may our worship be filled with that holiness and that aroma, that richness of thanksgiving to him for all that he has done.

Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we do thank you for your word. We thank you for the way all is God-breathed and how the wonder of you, the way you spoke to your people in the days of Moses, how you gave instruction to them, how you guided them in every aspect of life and worship.

we thank you that that still rings through to us today, that everything that we are to do, everything that we have, everything that we see in our lives, is to bring us to that sense of adoration and worship of you.

We pray, Lord, this evening and for God willing tomorrow, that our worship and all that we do in remembering our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, that it would be acceptable to you, that it would be done in a right spirit, that we would come not looking to ourselves, but looking to Christ, our Lord, our Redeemer.

Hear us in our prayers, fill us with adoration, bless us as your people, and go before us in all things, forgiving our sin, in Jesus' name, Amen.

[34 : 33] Amen. we'll conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 117, the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 117, page 155, the tune is Regent Square, Praise the Lord, all you nations, all you peoples, sing his praise, for his love is great towards his commitment, lasts always, he is faithful now and ever, hallelujah, praise the Lord.

Psalm 117, the Sing Psalms version, to God's praise. praise the Lord, all you nations, all you peoples, sing his praise, for his love is great towards us, his commitment, lasts always, he is faithful now and ever, hallelujah, praise the Lord.

This mercy and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forever more. Amen.