

THE IMPORTANCE OF SACRIFICE
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Scripture Reading

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

I was out visiting Saturday and stopped by to see a fellow who I have been talking to about the Lord for about 30 years. He lost his wife and I wanted to stop over and see how he was doing. As I pulled up, I noticed he was cutting grass. I thought, "Well, he is going to be too busy for us to talk to him about anything spiritual ...". But then I said to Gary, "Let's get out and say hello; you never know what that will mean to him." So we got out of the car, and I walked toward him and his lawn mower--but he disappeared into the bushes, so we had to chase after him a bit. Finally he turned his lawn mower off, and I said, "You know, people have been hiding in the bushes for thousands of years when the preacher shows up. It all started in the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve hid from God in the bushes." That was about the extent of our spiritual conversation. We began to talk about everything under the sun when his son came looking for him, and that was it. But the first statement I made was really the crux of the whole matter.. Most of the human race is running from God.

But in Genesis we read:

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou?

Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I [was] naked; and I hid myself.

Genesis 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou [wast] naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

Genesis 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What [is] this [that] thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Now after the Lord dealt with their excuses we read:

Genesis 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Genesis 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

In Genesis 3:21 we read of how God set up the sacrificial system by which men could come out of hiding (and running from God), be able to be clothed and in their right mind, and seek God.

This was the establishment of the sacrificial system.

IT WAS GOD WHO INITIATED THE FIRST SACRIFICE FOR MAN:

It was a picture of the sacrifice that Christ would make for us in years to come.

Genesis 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

God could have taught Adam and Eve how to weave clothing from plants for clothes, but He chose to clothe Adam and Eve with coats of skins for a reason:

The reason was because this was a picture of our need for the righteousness of Christ. Christ became that sacrificial Lamb. We needed an appropriate covering for sin. THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH and SOMEONE HAD TO DIE TO PAY FOR OUR SIN. He died that we might receive our spiritual clothing.

Adam and Eve had a need for clothing and God instituted the sacrificing of animals to provide that clothing and also to be an atonement for their transgression.

In Gen 4 we see how Cain rejected this system and fell under a curse.

Throughout the Old Testament .. we see how men have come to God through appropriate sacrifices:

Noah offered Sacrifices when he came to God.

Abraham offered sacrifices.

Issac offered sacrifices.

Jacob offered Sacrifices

Moses offered sacrifices..

All the judges when they came to God offered sacrifices
All The Kings offered sacrifices
From Adam to Christ, the sacrifices continued.
Christ became the Final Sacrifice.

The Final Great Sacrifice was when Christ gave Himself as a Sacrifice for our sin.

Now in the New Testament, do we no longer need to come to God with an appropriate sacrifice?

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF COMING TO GOD WITH A SACRIFICE?

I. WHY DID GOD ORDAIN THAT WE COME TO HIM THROUGH SACRIFICES?

1. THE SACRIFICES WERE A SPIRITUAL PICTURE OF CHRIST AND HIS SACRIFICE FOR OUR SIN.

All the sacrifices showed the severity and cost of sin...

They also pointed to the future entrance into this world of Christ and pointed to His great sacrifice on the cross..

Christ gave the ultimate Sacrifice for us and all O.T. Sacrifices pointed to His ...

Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Hebrews 10:6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Hebrews 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Hebrews 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law;

Hebrews 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Hebrews 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

Hebrews 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

2. By Coming to God through a proper Sacrifice, we show our repentance and our rejection of sin.

Why do we sin?

Do we not sin because we are looking for some easy path to blessing apart from obeying God?

Do we not sin because we are looking for some benefit or some pleasure?

Moses rejected the riches of Egypt.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Hebrews 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Note how to seek God: He had to make sacrifices..

Why is it that God wills that we come to Him by means of a Sacrifice? Could not God have made it easier?

REASON:

- ** To show us how terrible sin really is
- ** To show us the penalty for sin
- ** To allow us to appreciate the blessings he wants us to experience (we often don't appreciate things that come too easily ...)
- ** To make us more noble:

Proverbs 25:2 [It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter.

We lie because we want to avoid some uncomfortable repercussion for our actions, or we are looking for some benefit we do not rightfully deserve.

We steal, we murder, we lie, we covet. All these sins are because we are not looking to make a sacrifice.

So to sacrifice, to come to God, and to sacrifice to please God shows character and separation to God.

II. CONSIDER WHAT IS THE KEY INGREDIENT TO OUR SACRIFICES TO COME TO GOD

THE KEY INGREDIENT TO OFFER TO GOD A PERFECT ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE: THE SACRIFICE SHOULD BE MOTIVATED BY OBEDIENCE.

God showed through Cain and Abel that not all sacrifices are acceptable to Him. We must sacrifice in obedience to the Word of God.

Genesis 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

Genesis 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Genesis 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel.

Just because we claim to work and labor for the Lord does not mean that our labor will be accepted or our sacrifices accepted. There are a lot of people today who claim to be doing God's work.. Are they?

People who were in that cult in Waco made the ultimate sacrifice, but not for the Lord. Their sacrifice was in vain. Jim Jones asked his followers to make the ultimate sacrifice, but they did not make it for God.

In 1997, 39 Members of the Heavens Gate cult committed mass suicide. Did their sacrifice please God? NO. Our sacrifices must be in obedience to the Lord. They were sincere, but sincerely wrong.

II Timothy 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, [yet] is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

I Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams.

I Samuel 15:23 For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from [being] king.

III. THE SACRIFICES GOD CALLS US TO MAKE ARE ALSO A TEST TO SEE HOW FAR WE WILL GO TO OBEY GOD IN ORDER TO SEEK AND PLEASE HIM..

Usually When we are called to some great work and service, the Lord tests us to see if we will Sacrifice for Him.

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, [here] I [am].

Genesis 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son] Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Genesis 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Genesis 22:4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

A true call of God usually is initiated with a test to see if we will sacrifice on the altar something that we hold close to us.

IV. USUALLY THOSE WHO DO NOT COME TO CHRIST WITH AN APPROPRIATE SACRIFICE DO NOT ENDURE ON THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK..

1. CONSIDER CAIN AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS

Think about this: why did Cain bring of the fruit of the ground rather than one of the sheep?

The reason is simple: it was more convenient for him to do so because he was a tiller of the ground, whereas his brother was a keeper of sheep. So it would have been inconvenient for him to offer a blood sacrifice. He would have had to barter with his brother to obtain a lamb.

2. CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

John 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

John 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], which should betray him,

John 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

John 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

John 12:7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

John 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

It was shortly after this that Judas betrayed the Lord.

John 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Apparently Judas had been skimming off of the top of the offerings for some time and no one knew it--but the Lord knew it. In fact, why did Judas betray the Lord? He gave him up for 30 lousy pieces of silver. Most consider the value of the 30 pieces of silver to be 1/2 of a year's wages. In our country that could be anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

A year's wages is all relative to where you live and what kind of work you do. Is it minimum wage or average yearly wage? These are two different figures which could range from \$9,000 - \$22,000. Maybe that was the sum of money he thought he lost from the sale of the ointment that was poured out at Jesus feet.

3. CONSIDER SOME EXAMPLES I HAVE SEEN THE PAST 30 YEARS

Through the years those who come to the Lord for some benefit they think they are going to receive often do not endure. Maybe they think God is like Santa Claus and they bring their long lost list of things that they need from Him. Jesus reminded that one rich man who said he would follow the Lord anywhere, "The foxes have holes, the birds have nests but the son of man hath no where to lay His head..." The contemporary church seeks to make the people as comfortable as possible--while in the early days of our nation when the pilgrims designed their churches, they purposely made the pews so that it would be hard to fall asleep while sitting in them.

Through the 30 years of my ministry I have seen those who give and sacrifice endure to the end, while those who come thinking they deserve something from God fizzle out. I can think of one dear lady who never complained; she served, gave, cared and loved others till the day the Lord took her. While others who fizzle out come to God thinking He is going to be an easy fix for their financial woes, their domestic woes, and countless other woes that all have come upon them because of their own character flaws. Without exception these do not endure.

LAM 3:39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

4. CONSIDER DAVID AS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART WHO PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT WAS TO OFFER A SACRIFICE TO THE LORD..

II Samuel 24:18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

II Samuel 24:19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

II Samuel 24:21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

II Samuel 24:22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what [seemeth] good unto him: behold, [here be] oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and [other] instruments of the oxen for wood.

II Samuel 24:23 All these [things] did Araunah, [as] a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

II Samuel 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

II Samuel 24:25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

Note how David would not offer to the Lord sacrifices that cost him nothing. Those who come to the Lord--because of what they could get--when the time comes, they no longer can get the gain. They are gone.

Whatever advantage a person comes to the Lord for--when the advantage is gone, that person leaves. Here we have people coming to the Lord with a sacrifice that cost them nothing, and their faith then is worth nothing to them. Not that we are saved by works, but we are saved unto works.

A few months before I was saved my father (who at the time was 47 years old, and I was 21 years old) asked me if I wanted to take over his business, make me the executor of his will, and leave me his business. I said, "Dad, you have plenty of time to think of that." A few months later I got saved. Shortly thereafter I told my dad that I didn't want the business. The reason was I knew that God didn't want me in that business. Later I learned that the Bible was clear that there was a curse on those who were involved in the liquor business.

Joe Kennedy made a fortune being involved in the liquor business--some think even before the prohibition, but especially after the prohibition. All you have to do is look at the Kennedy family to see first hand the divine curse on those who are in that business.

But the Bible says:

Habakkuk 2:15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him], and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Habakkuk 2:16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing [shall be] on thy glory.

I got saved October 20, 1974. On October 20, 1976, my Dad had a diabetic stroke and

died a few weeks later--two years to the date of my salvation. My decision to follow after the Lord at that time cost me a lot of earthly money, but has gained me a lot of heavenly peace.

BUT NO MAN GIVES UP ANYTHING WHICH HE CANNOT KEEP TO OBTAIN THAT WHICH HE COULD NEVER LOSE.

Not only did I sacrifice my carrier in secular music, but I sacrificed my family business to follow the Lord. Now 40 years later I do not regret any of it. I never look at it as to say, "Look at what I gave up." I count it dung--or cow manure.

Those who come to Christ counting the cost (willing to sacrifice) are the ones who endure.

Mark 10:28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Mark 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Probably the only disciple that did not have to sacrifice anything to follow Christ was Judas.

He probably had no business.

He probably had no trade.

He probably sacrificed nothing.

Judas left nothing in this world to follow Christ. In fact he immediately volunteered to be the treasurer of the operation and started skimming money off the top.

For over 30 years I have pastored, and in my experience those who give, those who sacrifice, those who are faithful, never complain. These are the ones who stick to it and follow the Lord through thick and thin. These are the ones who endure **BECAUSE THEY ARE HIS. THEY BRING WITH THEM IN THEIR CHRISTIAN WALK A DESIRE TO SACRIFICE AND COME TO THE LORD WITH THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.**

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name.

Conclusion:

Know--and don't confuse this message to think--that you can buy your way into heaven or work your way to salvation. Also sometimes the sacrifices do not involve money at all. Peter said silver and gold have I none. That is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that when we come to the Lord we need to be willing to obey Him, give him the appropriate service, and the honor due Him. This is a work in the heart. Where your heart is, there will your treasure be. And you will be willing to sacrifice for what you treasure.

Matthew 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

I was talking to someone about the tractor pulls at the Harford Fair and asked about the price of those tractors. Many of them are over \$100,000. How much do they make if they win? I don't even think they have a cash prize for the winner, yet they do it. They invest and sacrifice their time and their machine. For what? A little trophy.

BUT THEIR HEART IS IN IT. AND WHERE YOUR HEART IS, THAT IS WHERE YOUR TREASURE WILL BE.

They will sacrifice for their hobby.
They will be spent for their hobby.

How sad it is that people will sacrifice more for a hobby that is here today and gone tomorrow. But for the Lord, people get funny about doing things or sacrificing for the Lord. They say, "Let other people do it." People who are so spiritually cheap in the area of sacrifice try to get away with the least. Sacrifice and worship go hand in hand.

David said.. I would not dare to offer to the Lord a sacrifice that cost me nothing. That would be an abomination.

INVITATION:

How do you approach God? Do you try to get away with as little sacrifice as possible? Are your sacrifices like Cain's? Are you going to come to God on your terms? Are you out for the benefits only? Consider how this message applies to your life.

**EVENING SERVICE
COMING TO GOD WITH APPROPRIATE SACRIFICES**

I. A Biblical Sacrifice Should Be Nothing Less than our Best:

II Samuel 24:1 And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

II Samuel 24:2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which [was] with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

II Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

II Samuel 24:18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

II Samuel 24:23 All these [things] did Araunah, [as] a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

II Samuel 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: **neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing.** So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master: if then I [be] a father, where [is] mine honour? and if I [be] a master, where [is] my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Malachi 1:7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] contemptible.

Malachi 1:8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

It is not a sacrifice if it is not your best. The Tithes = first money spent. Don't wait until the end of the week. We should give God our best. We get together the first day of the week. We sacrifice the first day for Him.

II. NOW HE ASKS US TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE AND BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Consider what kind of sacrifices we are to make:

1. Sacrifices of Love for the Brethren:

I John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.

I John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels [of compassion] from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

2. *Sacrifices of Service for the Lord:*

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

3. *Sacrifices of Praise:*

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name.

4. *Sacrifice of Giving for the servant of God and spreading of the gospel:*

II Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

II Corinthians 9:8 And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may abound to every good work:

II Corinthians 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

II Corinthians 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for [your] food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

I Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Philippians 4:18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

5. *Sacrifice of service and persecution:*

II Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

II Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:

II Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all

them also that love his appearing.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Conclusion:

Why did Daniel pray three times a day?

Why didn't Daniel pray privately at this occasion?

Why was Daniel willing to die and disobey the command of the King?

Daniel was willing to make the supreme sacrifice to worship his God. How about you?

Illustration: Why is it that God wills that we come to Him by means of a sacrifice? Could not God have made it easier?

The reasons:

- ** To show us how terrible sin really is
- ** To show us the penalty for sin
- ** To allow us to appreciate the blessings He wants us to experience
(We often don't appreciate things that come too easily.)
- ** To make us more noble

Proverbs 25:2 [It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter.

APPLICATION:

What sacrifices has God called you to make for Him?

III. CONSIDER THE SACRIFICES JESUS CHRIST MADE FOR US

HE WAS WORTHY BECAUSE OF HIS SACRIFICES - If God Did not spare His own Son from making sacrifices, what makes us think we will be spared?

The Bible calls Jesus the Lamb of God. This immediately brings to mind a sacrifice.

Revelation 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 5:13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, [be] unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

When we think of a lamb in the Bible, we think of the sacrificial system. Jesus was the Lamb because He offered Himself up as a Sacrifice for our sins.

When we think of the word *sacrifice*, we think of payment ... work ... etc..

The Sacrifice that Jesus made as God's Lamb entitles Him to all the honor and glory that He will receive and is receiving.

NOTE WHAT IT SAYS:

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Jesus as God's Lamb is worthy to receive:

LIST WHAT HONORS HE WILL RECEIVE: LIST WHAT SACRIFICES HE MADE

Power...Dunamos ... strength ... power..

He sacrificed the use of these powers.

Riches

Wisdom

Strength

Honor

Glory

Blessing

IV. HE IS WORTHY OF ALL POWER - Dunamos ... strength ... power ... BECAUSE He sacrificed the use of these powers.

In what ways did He sacrifice in the area of His powers?

Matthew 26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out [his] hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

John 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

John 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power [at all] against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

HOW ELSE DID HE SACRIFICE HIMSELF IN THE AREA OF EXERCISING HIS POWERS ON EARTH? Think of what He could have had, but He did not.

V. HE SACRIFICED HIS RICHES, SO NOW HE IS WORTHY OF ALL RICHES

II Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

What sacrifices did he make in this area of riches?

- 1. He was born in a manger -- BORN IN POVERTY**
- 2. He grew up in Nazareth - the slums of Israel**
- 3. He ministered in poverty**

Matthew 8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air [have] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his] head.

When He was crucified they even robbed Him of His robe and garments.

Matthew 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

It is amazing how valuable clothes are in parts of the world where they do not have walmarts and super stores. They say used clothes is Americas greatest export, JESUS DIED IN POVERTY HE ONLY HAD THE CLOTHES THAT THEY CAST LOTS FOR...

VI. What sacrifices did He make in the area of being an esteemed Man of wisdom?

He was never recognized as a Man of wisdom.

Matthew 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon [is] here.

His wisdom was not understood.

His wisdom was rejected.

WHO REALLY UNDERSTOOD HIS WISDOM? VERY FEW PEOPLE. Not even his disciples.

HE SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE IN PARABLES, AND IN THIS SENSE HE EVEN SACRIFICED THE GLORY OF HIS WISDOM. NEVER WAS HIS WISDOM RECOGNIZED OR UNDERSTOOD---THEY DESPISED HIS WISDOM!!!

You would think He would have been invited to the colleges and universities of His day. You would think that the doctors and professors of this world would have flocked to hear Him speak.

His wisdom was veiled just like His power.

Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Matthew 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Matthew 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Matthew 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Matthew 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Matthew 13:16 But blessed [are] your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Matthew 13:17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous [men] have desired to see [those things] which ye see, and have not seen [them]; and to hear [those things] which ye hear, and have not heard [them].

VII. HE SACRIFICED HIS STRENGTH: He became weak.

ischus, is-khoos'; from a der. of is (force; comp. eschon, a form of 2192); forcefulness (lit. or fig.): -ability, might ([-ily]), power, strength.

----- Dictionary Trace -----

echo, ekh'-o; (includ. an alt. form scheo, skheh'-o; used in certain tenses only); a prim. verb; to hold (used in very various applications, lit. or fig., direct or remote; such as possession, ability, contiguity,

relation or condition):-be (able, X hold, possessed with), accompany, + begin to amend, can (+ -not), X conceive, count, diseased, do, + eat, + enjoy, + fear, following, have, hold, keep, + lack, + go to law, lie, + must needs, + of necessity, + need, next, + recover, + reign, + rest, return, X sick, take for, + tremble, + uncircumcised, use.

To be strong.. is to subdue.. and to force yourself on others..
Did our Lord ever do this? NO.

VII. *Honor Him who was worthy of all honor. Did he receive Honor? No, in fact, the opposite happened. He submitted Himself to humiliation.*

Crown of Thorns
Spit on Him
Mocked Him
Scourged Him
Railed at Him

He sacrificed Himself of His honor.
He suffered humiliation for us.

IX. *He Sacrificed His Glory*

How did He sacrifice His glory?

First, His glory was veiled -

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He took on the form of a servant. A servant receives no honor.

X. *He Sacrificed the Blessings and Praise He Deserved*

How did he sacrifice Himself of the blessings?

The word is EULOGIA.. Eulogy..

Note the meaning of the word

eulogia, yoo-log-ee'-ah; from the same as 2127; fine speaking, i.e. elegance of language; commendation ("eulogy"), i.e. (reverentially) adoration; religiously, benediction; by impl. consecration; by extens. benefit or largess:-blessing (a matter of) bounty (X -tifully), fair speech.

----- Dictionary Trace -----

eulogeo, yoo-log-eh'-o; from a comp. of 2095 and 3056; to speak well of, i.e. (religiously) to bless (thank or invoke a benediction upon, prosper):-bless, praise.

Was he blessed?

Matthew 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,
Matthew 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest [it] in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
Matthew 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking [him], with the scribes and elders, said,
Matthew 27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.
Matthew 27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.
Matthew 27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Conclusion:

WHY IS HE WORTHY? HE IS WORTHY BECAUSE HE WAS GOD'S LAMB. IN THESE AREAS HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF. IN THESE AREAS HE WILL BE HONORED.

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

BECAUSE HE SACRIFICED WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE SUNDAY MORNING

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

I Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

I Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously:

I Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

I Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

I Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;
I Peter 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

I Peter 4:3 For the time past of [our] life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

I Peter 4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with [them] to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of [you]:

I Peter 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

When Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God, there is no greater picture of sacrifice.

When the Bible refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, it is a figure of speech.

A lamb was the specified sacrifice for sins in the Old Testament law.

Christ is worthy of all honor and glory because of His work and sacrifice on the cross.

Now we are commanded to follow his example

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

I. WHY SHOULD WE SACRIFICE

1. Because He sacrificed leaving us an example.

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

2. Because He commanded us to do so.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

3. *We should suffer for Him because one way or another we will suffer.*

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life;

Genesis 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return.

Most people suffer somewhat in this life anyway...

Most of the reason people choose the way of sin .. is to avoid any suffering..

Illust. We lie to avoid some form of suffering ...
 We steal to avoid the suffering of work ...

On and on we go. We think sin will make our life easier—it does not.

I Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

I Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or [as] a thief, or [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

I Peter 4:16 Yet if [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

The thieves that were crucified with Jesus ,,,,,

II. *HOW SHOULD WE SACRIFICE?*

1. *GOD WANTS US TO PRESENT OUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE*

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The sacrifices we make are not just martyrdom.

A living sacrifice speaks of our work and service for Him

God wants us not to passively sacrifice for Him.

2. THE SACRIFICES THAT WE MAKE ARE MUCH LIKE HIS SACRIFICES

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

I Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

I Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously:

A. He did not sin, so if others have a disdain for us, it's because we don't follow sin patterns that sobeit we should willingly suffer

B. Jesus suffered when He did not avenge Himself or revile back when others reviled him. So it is that we often would want to revile back ... we often would want to do certain things, but we do not do them.

C. He suffered by not demanding His rights or exercising His rights.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Philippians 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

Philippians 2:11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

3. WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE THESE SACRIFICES BECAUSE ...

I John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

III. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULTS OF OUR SACRIFICES? WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION TO MAKE THESE SACRIFICES?

1. WE ARE PROMISED A RESURRECTED BODY.

I Corinthians 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

I Corinthians 15:32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

If we only have promise in this life, there is no reason to sacrifice and suffer.

Illust. This is the reason people do not suffer.
This is the reason people avoid suffering.
They do not believe in an afterlife..

Illust. In fact, this is why people advocate euthanasia; this is the reason for abortion. This is why a host of other things ...

THE GOAL OF AN UNSAVED MAN IS TO GET THROUGH LIFE WITH THE LEAST AMOUNT OF SUFFERING AS POSSIBLE. A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THIS IS ABORTIONS.

Sad to say much of the medical procedures they do previous to childbirth is to give parents the option to abort. Looking to see if there is something wrong with the baby and what will they do if there is? Again the idea is that maybe a parent will not want to suffer with a disabled child.

2. We are promised a reward for the things we suffer.

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Why is He worthy? Because of the sacrifices He made..

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Conclusion:

Why then are we so afraid to make sacrifices for our Lord in this life? Is it not because we do not really believe these things?

These things are true Lord help us to meditate on these truths and apply them to our spiritual lives and hearts.