

January 6, 2014

A Living and Holy Sacrifice

Romans 12:1 (NASB), ***“Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship.”***

Mondays are one of my favorite days of the week. Many of you will think I’m crazy as you read this but there is a reason for my supposed madness. You see on Monday’s I get to have chapel time with our preschoolers at Eagles Nest Preschool and with our K-7 students at Calvary Baptist School. In my short time here at Calvary Baptist Church I have come to treasure my chapel time on Mondays. This morning in the preschool chapel we learned about the “good Samaritan” and we learned that as Christ followers it is important to be kind to everyone even those that we might not especially get along with. This is a very practical application of what it means to be a Christ follower and being a Christ follower should change how we live our lives and how we relate to all of those around us.

Over the next several weeks we are going to be looking at Romans 12-13 and we will consider what the life of a Christ follower really looks like. In Romans 12:1 Paul reminds us his readers that the life of a Christ follower is a life of ***“sacrifice.”***

In the first part of verse 12 Paul says, ***“Therefore I urge you, brethren...”*** The word ***“therefore”*** is translated to mean “beseech, urge, exhort.” Paul is exhorting his Christian brothers and sisters to live lives of sacrifice. Ephesians 4:1 says, ***“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have been called...”*** 1 Peter 2:11 says, ***“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”***

Paul continues ***“by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice...”*** The word ***“by”*** is translated to mean “on account of.” So on the account of God’s great and immeasurable ***“mercies”*** which is translated to mean “compassion,” we are to totally surrender our lives to Him. The word ***“present”*** that is used here means “to place beside or be at someone’s disposal.” 1 Corinthians 6:20 reminds us, ***“For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”***

This verse flies in the face of what I like to refer to as ***“casual Christianity.”*** Much of what passes for evangelical Christianity today is very casual in nature. We like to come to church (if we don’t have anything else planned) and hear soothing and gentle words that ***“tickle”*** our ears, but we by no means want any real commitment and certainly not any ***“sacrifice.”*** But ***“a living sacrifice”*** is indeed what we are to offer our Lord and Savior. Romans 6:13 says, ***“do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*** Romans 6:16 further explains, ***“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”***

Paul concludes verse 1 with the explanation that this offering of ourselves is ***“acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship.”*** John MacArthur writes in his commentary on Romans,

“In light of all the spiritual riches believers enjoy solely as a fruit of God’s mercies, it logically follows that they owe God their highest form of service.”

We worship God when we serve God; worship is not just the time on Sunday mornings before the pastor gets up and speaks. If we are truly Christ followers we will offer our lives our bodies in complete and total service to Him. That is the baseline for the Christ follower and all other activities and behaviors should stem from this understanding.

As we embark on a New Year I want to challenge each of us to live a life of *“holy sacrifice”* to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The starting point of this is to have a relationship with Him and that is only possible when we repent of our sins and believe in Him. If you have not yet done this I encourage you to do just that.