

An Acceptable Sacrifice

by Bob Phillips

Bob Phillips emphasizes the importance of understanding and offering acceptable sacrifices to God, rooted in repentance and aligned with His Word.

Duration: 1:04:13

Scripture: Isaiah 1:11-17, Jeremiah 29:13, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1, Hebrews 10:5-7

Topics: "Repentance", "Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating the kindness, forbearance, and patience of God. He explains that these attributes of God should lead us to a life of repentance. The preacher also highlights the need to avoid living in envy, strife, jealousy, and being enslaved to lust and pleasures. He references 1 Peter chapter two to emphasize that as believers, we are called to be living stones, chosen and precious in the sight of God, and that through the sacrifice of Jesus, we are redeemed from lawlessness and purified for good deeds.

Transcript

Has the Lord been feeding you so far these few days? The Lord's Word just becomes sweeter and sweeter. I like what Jeremiah said about it. He said, I found your words and I ate them.

And said they became my delight and my joy. That's what the Word of God is to me. I like to eat the Word.

It's become a delight and a joy to me. I prayed last night after we got in about what the Lord would have me to share. You come to meetings like this and wish you had a whole week with you.

So much that you want to share. But it did lay something on my heart. The Bible, God spent a lot of time in some books that we probably never read, very little.

Like Leviticus. Trying to teach his people something about an acceptable sacrifice. Most of the book of Leviticus is written just to teach us that very thing.

What kind of sacrifice is acceptable to God? And what type of sacrifice is unacceptable to God? I believe that there needs to be an awakening of the awareness of what God accepts and what He does not accept. And I think it needs to not only be, certainly it has to start and be in the hearts of the preachers. But I believe that God is wanting it conveyed to the hearts of every person who names the name of the Lord with their lips.

Because I really believe and I think I can show it by the word that much of what is done today in the church. Much of what is done in our personal lives are offering up an unacceptable sacrifice to the Lord. And yet we just continue going on day in and day out as if He is accepting that sacrifice.

So that is what I am speaking on this morning is an acceptable sacrifice. I want you to start with me in the New Testament. You probably did not think I knew it was there.

Romans chapter 12. I want to share something with you. I think this is important.

Even though I preach a lot from the prophets. One of the main reasons I do is because that is what God tells me to do. That is a good reason for it, isn't it? But I also have a burden that there be an awakening in what the prophets have to say.

But I do want you to know this. I make sure I made a commitment to the Lord. And I think this is very important.

Especially for preachers. I want to say this to you. Even though I may preach a dozen sermons from the Old Testament.

God has instructed me personally to spend more time reading and studying the New Testament than I do the Old Testament. And often times I don't have time to go to some of those places. But when I find a truth in the Old Testament.

Even though I may not share it here. And I don't do that with every single one. But by the majority of the things.

I then, whether I use it in my message or not. Go to the New Testament to try to validate it and point it out. I know it is there somewhere and I seek to find it there.

When I do that, that gives me a greater understanding of what I'm going to say. Whether I use those scriptures or not. And I want to urge you as pastors.

Preach the prophets. Preach the prophets. But immerse yourself in Jesus.

As Brother David has been talking about. Make sure that you can line up what the prophets say with the New Testament. I know some precious brothers.

They are so hungry they have sought after revelation. The Old Testament came alive to them. They sought the Old Testament.

They study it. But I notice something is happening in their teaching. They are preaching.

They are drifting further and further and further away from the New Testament. And I don't mean in what they are saying. But in the content of what they are saying.

I just felt like I needed to say that. Let's pray a minute. Father, open the word to us.

Lord, teach us the acceptable sacrifice. That is holy and right in your eyes. Lord, make us a people hungry to eat and devour your word.

Make it the joy and delight of our hearts and lives. Lord, I ask for every pastor, every lay person here. Lord, if the enemy is coming against them to rob them of this private time with you.

If the enemy, Lord, has set up a standard against them. That is robbing them of the enjoyment of the word of God. Father, I ask you to break through in their lives.

And destroy that hindrance in the name of Jesus. Lord, bring a hunger for the word of God. Bring a hunger to stand with Him.

And to seek time with Him, Lord. Father, I know if those two things are there. Lord, we will never be without a message from your heart.

Lord, let the word change us this morning. Let us learn what an acceptable sacrifice is. And let us offer it to you with joy.

In Jesus' name, amen. Romans chapter 12. I'm reading this to you.

Two scriptures particularly because. I want you to realize that God has a sacrifice. Sacrifice is not just an Old Testament word.

And it's very important that we understand the sacrifice that God accepts. And what He doesn't accept. Let me just give you one example.

There's a lot of teaching on the tabernacle of David. How many of you have heard something on the tabernacle of David? Just raise your hand. There's been a renewal of teaching.

Particularly in the charismatic circles. Of the tabernacle of David. And all of the emphasis on the tabernacle of David.

Has to do with praise and worship. My friends, I want to tell you something. That is not the teaching of the Bible on the tabernacle of David.

I don't care where you read it. I don't care from what authority it comes from. I'm not going to go into that this morning.

I have some tapes on that. And if you write, I'd be glad to share them with you. But I want you to understand that when God talks about restoring the tabernacle of David.

He's not talking about just restoring praise and worship. He's talking about restoring the heart of David. First.

And out of that heart there will come praise and worship to God. But the reason we miss it is because we're offering up to God sacrifices that are unacceptable. And every teaching I've seen on the tabernacle of David.

They go to Hebrews 13. And we're talking about where to offer to God the sacrifice of praise. I know congregation after congregation after congregation.

Instructing their people. Come on, offer the sacrifice of praise for the David has already mentioned it all over the land. We're being called to intercession.

We're being called to prayer. We get upset because the senators and this may upset some of you. We get upset.

We get upset because prayers taken out of the schools. I'm not saying I'm for prayer being taken out of the schools or those rights being robbed. But my friends, when are we going to get upset about the ungodly that we call to pray? The whole group of men gathered together because they were upset.

They were afraid that they were going to stop having prayer at the Senate. You tell me what good that prayer has done in the last few years. It's an abomination to God.

We get upset as preachers get on a bandwagon and start trying to get all of this and not say one thing about the heart that's necessary to make touch with God. Well, Romans 12, verse 1. It says, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Now, I read that to you because I want you to understand God definitely says that the New Testament believer, not just the Old Testament, there's a sacrifice that God will accept.

There's a sacrifice that God demands to New Testament believers. It's a holy and a living sacrifice. And he says it's acceptable to God.

Well-pleasing to God. There is a sacrifice that is required of you and I that is acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Now, he tells us something about that sacrifice.

He says in verse 2, do not be conformed to this world. That's what the sacrifice is. The sacrifice is a sacrifice that when it's made, will not produce a conforming to the world.

If I'm making an acceptable sacrifice to God, there won't be a conforming to the world or its ways, its character, or its actions, its words, its thoughts. There won't be a conforming to the world, but there will be a renewing and a transforming of myself into the character and nature of Jesus and to the ways of a holy God. Now, you look around you and you tell me what you see.

Do you see the church conforming? I'm talking about the church as a whole. And I realize we call the church things today that God doesn't call the church. But I'm talking about the way we normally use the term.

You see the church taking in more and more of the ways of the world, or do you see more and more conformity to Jesus? I see more of the ways in conforming to the world. Now, that means that these people keep going on to offer up sacrifices, but the sacrifice is not acceptable to God. Are we clear on that? The acceptable sacrifice will produce holiness and godliness.

Now, I want you to look with me at Titus chapter 2. Titus chapter 2. Titus chapter 2. Verse 11. Here the sacrifice is described again. It doesn't use the word sacrifice here, but it's the same thing that we just read in Romans 12.

This is a description of a sacrifice that's acceptable to God. Titus chapter 2 verse 11. For the grace of God has appeared, and that grace brought salvation, bringing salvation to all men.

Now, I want you to see what grace instructs us to do. Grace has instructions, and grace instructs this, instructing us to deny ungodliness, and what kind of desires? Worldly desires. Is that the sacrifice we read about in Romans 12? There's an acceptable sacrifice.

Grace instructs us. The grace of God that brings salvation instructs us about that sacrifice. And that sacrifice will be denying ungodly desires and worldly desires, and we'll be living sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age.

And we'll be looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ, of our great God and Savior, who gave Himself for us. Now, why did Jesus give Himself for us? Now, I want you to see this. See, the only way we can become the holy sacrifice was for Him to give Himself.

And He says that He became a sacrifice. He became a sacrifice. We're to become a sacrifice.

Not for the same purpose, but His sacrifice is what gives us the power to be transformed into His holiness. Now, here's what He says. Jesus, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us.

Now, I want you to see this. From how much? All? Every? That's pretty conclusive. I told somebody that you can look it up in a dictionary.

When it says all, it means all. We try to make it mean something else. Jesus died in order to redeem us from every, every, all lawlessness.

Every single unrighteous deed we're to be delivered from. Then why do I hear so much about how we can be carnal Christians today and go to heaven? Why do I hear the church talking so much about what you can have? Everybody. So often I have people come with the message that I've preached.

I have people come and say, Well, you know nobody can live that. No, I don't know nobody can live it. Everybody's got problems.

I agree with that. But there's a sacrifice that God says He made possible. He died so we could make this sacrifice.

It's the power of that death and the grace that comes that allows us to do it. That He might redeem from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession. Sell us for good deeds.

Now look at chapter 3, verse 3. For we also once were foolish ourselves. Now when the Bible says we once were something, that means we're not to be that way anymore. We once were foolish.

We once were disobedient. We once were deceived. We're not supposed to be deceived anymore.

And look at this. We once were enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, living our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. We're not to live in envy, strife, jealousy.

We're not to live in hate. We're not to live enslaved to lusts and pleasures. We're not to be enslaved.

Well, I want you to turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 2. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 4. Again, he talks about the sacrifice. And he uses the same word, acceptable. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 4. And coming to Him as a living stone, rejected by men but choice and precious in the sight of God.

That's what he calls us. I like that. He says we come to Him as a living stone.

Now, I want you to see, we're going to see this in a moment, rejected by men. I want to show you, when you begin to offer up the sacrifice that's acceptable to God, the one thing you can count on is be rejected

by men. I had someone ask me not too long ago about how do you know, you know, the Bible says we're to separate ourselves.

Come out from among them. And they asked me, they said, well, you know, I'm having difficulty. Do I separate myself from my mom and dad? Do I separate myself from my brothers? My brother and sister, blood brother and sister is not living with the Lord.

They're going to church. Who do I separate myself from? I said, I've never really found that to be a problem. Because I have found that when I live for Jesus and proclaim Him.

And just live righteously and godly. And deny worldly desires, people separate from me. The separation is something the Holy Spirit does.

And when God says in the Bible we're to separate and come out from among them. He means we're to separate from their ways. Come out from among the ways of the world.

And we're to live righteously, sensibly and godly in this world. And then we'll be rejected by those who don't want what we've got. Now, these living stones are going to be rejected by men.

Choice, but in God's sight, they may be rejected by men, but they're choice and precious. I'd rather be choice and precious in His sight than have the approval of man. You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood.

Now, what are we to do? To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. He says it again. There are spiritual sacrifices and they are acceptable to God.

There are also sacrifices that are not acceptable to God. Now, I want you to notice verse 1 of that chapter. I purposely started with verse 4. The only way you're going to be able to walk a life of acceptable sacrifice is to walk a life of repentance before God.

You see, because the one thing that we're taught in the Old Testament over and over and over and the Old Testament is a shadow pointing to the, it's a type, pointing to the reality that we have in Jesus. And for example, in Leviticus 22, I think it's about verse 20 or somewhere like this. It says, whatever has a blemish, anything that has a blemish, he shall not offer it.

It shall not be acceptable to God. That which has a blemish, he cannot offer. And then he goes on to say, I'll not, he said, shall I be, shall not my, you shall not profane my holy name.

But I'll be sanctified among my people, for I am the Lord who sanctifies you. So, with the acceptable sacrifice that we offer, we're going to find that there's going to be a sanctification taking place. That is that separation unto God.

Separating ourselves unto God. If that sacrifice is being made, that will be happening in your life. Now, there'll be something else that's taking place.

You won't just be finding occasions of repentance. You'll be walking a life of repentance. And I want to say this to you.

Now, listen carefully. Repentance is a condition, not an emotion. Repentance is a condition that we live.

It's a way of life. It's not an emotion that we feel because we got convicted. Even when the Holy Spirit moves.

Now, I'm going to say more about that in a moment. But what I want you to see in verse 1, chapter 2, 1 Peter. Therefore, putting aside all malice, all guile, and all hypocrisy, all envy, all slander.

Now, I want you to see that word envy. It's the same word for jealousy. We've read that twice already.

I'm coming to a point. I want you to see something. You see, because we need to see.

We're going to see in a moment how that happens. But every sacrifice that we offer up to God must also be offered on the altar of burnt offerings. It's got to be consumed by fire.

And this is the way that God makes our sacrifices acceptable. Now, we offer them to Him. He makes them acceptable.

Now, notice this. We're going to lay a slide. Now, by the way, when I'm reading from the New American Standard, I add a lot of alls.

I add things that are not in here because it's really what it's saying. So you just follow with me. Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

Now, I want you to see verse 3 because it's very important. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Now, what he's saying is this.

If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, you will be growing in respect to salvation. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, you will be laying aside all malice and guile and hypocrisy. If you are tasting of the kindness of the Lord, you will be laying aside all hypocrisy, all envy, all slander.

And the list is not conclusive. What he's saying is this. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, then you will be laying aside all worldly desires and the unfruitful deeds of darkness.

The lust of the flesh. If you're tasting of the kindness of the Lord. If you're not laying those things aside, you're not tasting of the kindness of the Lord.

Now, let me prove that to you. Turn with me to Romans chapter 2. Romans 2. Romans chapter 2. Verse 4. Or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to what? Repentance. So if you are tasting of the kindness of God, what's it leading you to? A life of repentance.

Now, I want you to understand what he's saying here. He's saying there are people who take lightly the kindness of God. And they don't realize that the kindness of God and the forbearance and patience of God lead you to repentance.

Now, here's what I'm saying. Oftentimes when a message comes forth, it's a hard message dealing with sin. There are people sometimes who struggle.

They go through a process. You know what I'm talking about. There are sins that I struggled with and struggled with and struggled with.

Things that I struggled to break free from. Bondages. But down deep inside, there's always that burning hunger.

And something was happening to me. And this is how you know true repentance is taking place. Because I started watching out for that thing in my life.

Now, I don't know how many times I've had people come to me. Preachers and women, men and women, lay people come to me and say, I've got this lust problem and I just can't shake it. And the first thing that I ask them is, what are you doing about it? Sometimes people want you to lay hands on them and pray for deliverance.

Or pray some kind of a prayer that's going to get rid of lust. Well, Paul says that when you participate in deeds of immorality, and when you participate in things, you sin against your own body. And there's a sin that's taking place in the world against many people's bodies.

And I want to tell you something, if you've had a lust problem, you're not going to get free from it from the place where it doesn't come back to haunt you. You're going to have to stand firm and walk the life of repentance. And the same is that way with many other sins.

What people really want to happen, God just, I'd get rid of this thing if you just kind of remove it from me. I really wouldn't have any effort involved, there'd be no sacrifice on my part. There'd be no offering up to you in my life.

And God let us just take it away and then let me walk. God will not take away one sin in your life so you can re-channel your energies into another sin. That's why sometimes we pray for God to take something away.

It appears like he's got deaf ears. He hears. He's not unconcerned.

But the moment you have a truly repentant heart and begin to offer up an acceptable sacrifice to God, he'll remove that thing from you. He wants it gone worse than we do. But he won't do it if he sees something in your heart that's simply going to put it aside and stop doing it for a while so that you can bend your energy in building up these other areas.

Because he knows that'll come back. Now, are you following me? Now, I want you to see this. I want you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 7. I want to tell you this is an important message for today.

Because we have so many people coming forward with an attitude of repentance. They come to altars. They say, God forgive me.

They weep and cry, but they don't do anything beyond that point. They walk away. They say, well, God, if You did something to me... And then all of a sudden it comes back and they say, it didn't work.

God didn't do anything. Now, I want to tell you something. With some of our altar calls, we're building a whole generation of people that don't know what's happening to them.

A whole generation of people that don't know why God's not taking sin out of their lives. A whole generation of people that are going to come to a point where they no longer come to God anymore and trust Him. Because they don't understand the acceptable sacrifice.

Now, notice this. Verse 10. 2 Corinthians 7. Verse 10.

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation. But the sorrow of the world produces death. Now, what he's simply saying there is that if there's genuine repentance, if there's real repentance, it'll produce life.

See, that's what the Word says. Acts 18 talks about the repentance that leads to life. If it's genuine repentance, if it's God's genuine repentance that He grants, it'll always lead to life.

My friends, we need to understand something. God doesn't accept every act that we call repentance. Because the heart has to be prepared.

That's why when you get up as preachers and you preach sermons that are your words and not the words of God. Just your words. And all you're interested in is just delivering a sermon.

So you look good that day. My, wasn't that a wonderful message the preacher had? When you do that, and even when you have results and people come forward, you're casting damnation on yourself and on them. Because they're coming forward oftentimes with a call to repentance that's not genuine repentance.

And the sacrifice is not acceptable to God. I want to tell you something. The Lord rested my attention.

I don't know when anything has gotten my attention more. The Lord, I was driving in my car. I've been asking Him some things, praying.

And it just hit me. It hit me so hard I had to pull off the side of the road and just weep for a while and spend time with God. Then I drove on.

I went home. And then I shut myself up with the Lord for several hours. And here's what He told me.

I'd been trying so hard. God wanted some people to come. They get victory and some don't.

And it's like all God said to me was this, don't be so quick to sympathize with people who are trying to find me. I'm not hiding. Boy, that shook me.

I knew what He meant. Being so quick to sympathize and people come and they say, I've repented, I've repented, and I've repented, and I've repented, and I've still got this problem. No, you haven't repented.

Repentance leads to life. I'm not blaming those people because we've taught them to come to an altar. And I'm not against altar calls, obviously.

That's not what I'm talking about. We've taught them to come to an altar and just make a lip service. We don't tell them that, but that's what they're doing.

Or they come to an altar for some man to pray for them. I've seen it in the services at night. I sit there and I watch.

And I see some people come when Brother David said the invitation. And I see all the faces. And some of them come and there's genuine brokenness and repentance.

Sometimes, before true repentance is ever granted by God, we've lost that. The Bible says God grants repentance. It's not something we do.

It's something God grants. Now, we repent, but we've left out the other aspect of it. He grants it.

I want to tell you something. He grants it to every heart that really wants it. But God looks at the heart.

He looks at the sacrifice that's being made. Is it going to be a holy sacrifice? Or do they want some lust problem? Do they want some alcohol problem? Do they want some greed problem? Do they want some fear? Do they want something taken away from them? We've got a whole bunch of people coming to get rid of things that are plaguing them, but not making a commitment to walk with a holy and living sacrifice to God. Not to be built up into a spiritual house.

Now, here's what he says. I'm going to get to 2 Corinthians 7. Here's what he says. Sometimes, the heart has to be prepared for repentance before it comes.

Now, anybody that's really sought God that's sitting here, you know exactly what I'm talking about. There's times in your life and in my life when I've cried out to God and said, God, take this thing away. Take this thing away.

Take this thing away. When I had a problem with lust, I don't know how many times I cried to God to take the thing away. I didn't want to walk and disobey.

I wasn't committing adultery, and I wasn't doing those things, but my eyes were running wild. And I cried and cried. And I can remember coming in, laying down on the carpet, weeping.

I wet the carpet with my tears. And that's not an exaggeration. I mean it sincerely.

And God didn't do anything. I couldn't understand. God, why don't you do something? If I'd have got alone with God and got shut up with Him and stayed shut up with Him and had a life of prayer and seeking His face and His Word, He would have done something.

But He saw my heart, and I wanted God to do something, but I wasn't willing to prepare my heart for the repentance. I'm not saying that we've got to go back to the old morning benches, oftentimes where they weep and wail and wait and wait and wait and wait to get the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying that, but I want to tell you something.

It wasn't all bad. It wasn't all bad. They taught people how to come wait on God until their hearts were broken.

We flippantly pray for people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All we've got to do is ask. We don't care if they're repenting or not.

Here comes another statistic, another number. Are you hearing what I'm saying? We'll teach people to prepare their hearts for repentance. That's why the Word is so important.

You can't just go forth the Word once. But if you have a church, the Word is going forth Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. Not your ideas, the Word.

And it's going forth Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. People's hearts are being prepared to repent. Here's what he says if true repentance is there.

Verse 11, For behold, here's what real repentance produces. Behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you. Now, he says it very clear.

If there's a godly sorrow that leads to repentance, it's going to produce something in you. If it's a worldly sorrow, death is going to stay there. Now, is that clear? Is that what he's saying? I say, is that what he's saying? If it's a worldly sorrow, when they get up from that place, the very death they want to get rid of, and I'm talking about the death, the spiritual death, the sin, the very death is going to remain.

But if it's a genuine repentance, when they get up from that place, there's going to be something produced in them. Here's what it is. What vindication of yourselves.

It's a little different than King James. I'm just going to go ahead and read it and then tell you. What vindication of yourselves.

What indignation. What fear. What longing.

What zeal. What avenging or wrong. In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

You know what he's saying? He's saying when there's genuine repentance, and you get up from that place, I want to use lust as an example, and there's genuine repentance, an acceptable sacrifice to God, when you get up from that thing, there's going to be something produced in your heart. There's going to be a watchfulness, first of all, a carefulness. A carefulness.

You're looking for an enemy to try to bring it back. You know, most people get up and say, well, thanks God God's taking care of that in my life. And they walk on the same way as before.

If there's genuine repentance, you say, God, I don't want that thing to come back. I'm going to be shut up with you to keep it from coming back. I will be watching for every move the enemy to try to bring it.

There's going to be a carefulness brought in you. A clearing of yourself. There's going to be an indignation.

I see few people come to the altars today and leave with an indignation about sin. There's going to be a fear of God. And a zeal, a vengeance, a longing.

That word zeal, when he's talking about that, he's saying there's going to be a holy fire in your heart that ascends to God as an acceptable sacrifice. To walk in holiness. Not just to get rid of our problems.

This is what it means to me when Brother David mentioned that Jesus doesn't solve problems. He immerses them in his vastness. That's what happens through repentance.

We're teaching people how to come to Jesus and get rid of their problems. Jesus says, you come to me in repentance. You leave with an indignation over that thing.

If it's granted to you and your heart's right, I'll grant it. You leave with a zeal. There's a longing, a carefulness.

You're watching. Turn with me to 2 Chronicles. I'm going to show you this illustrated in the life of someone.

2 Chronicles chapter 33. 2 Chronicles 33. Now let me just tell you who this is about.

Verse 1. Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. And he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. You know who Manasseh was? You can read about him in Kings.

Manasseh was probably one of the, definitely one, I can't say the most, but one of the most wicked kings ever to rule over God's people. It says that he brought prostitution. He removed all of the precious holy things out of the house of God.

He defied God. He brought temple prostitutes into God's temple. And defied God.

It says that he taught the people. He consulted the mediums and the diviners. He taught the people astrology and fortune telling.

How to worship the stars. He made the people do it. He didn't just instruct them.

He informed them they must do it. He killed the prophets. Tradition tells us, I don't know if it's true, but tradition says that Manasseh gathered together all over the land every prophet he could find.

And he put them in prison, took them out one a day, and slaughtered one prophet a day. And tradition tells us that he's the one that took the prophet Isaiah and put him in a hollow tree and sawed him in half. What is he doing? He's saying, God, don't speak to me.

I'm going to silence the voice of God. And he cried it out. And yet the word says it came over and over and over to Manasseh.

Now, notice what happens. Verse 10. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.

Therefore, the Lord brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks. They bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. And when he was in distress, I tell you, this is the greatest picture of the grace of God I think I've ever seen.

There's never been a more wicked man than this man. Recorded in the Bible. When he was in distress, he entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

And when he prayed to him, he was moved. God was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.

What a picture of God's forgiveness. What a picture. I did a message.

It so moved me. In our little church there in Bayon. And I just entitled it God's Covenant of Forgiveness and Grace.

I'm so moved by what I saw here. What a merciful God. He wanted, you know what that means? You know what that means? I know that every person comes down that aisle.

God has a greater desire for their repentance than that person has. Because his love is greater than our love. My, what a picture of mercy.

But I want you to see another picture here. Not only is it a picture of God's great forgiveness and mercy, it's also a picture of what true repentance does. Here's Manasseh.

Now look what he does. He prayed. Verse 13 we saw.

God was moved and brought him again to Jerusalem. Look what he did. Now after this, he built the outer wall of the city of David.

You know why he built the outer wall of the city of David? Because that's where the enemy came in. He fortified the place where the enemy came in. Now here's a man who genuinely repented.

The first thing he does as soon as he gets back to Jerusalem, he fortifies the wall. He, a man who genuinely repented, he knows where the enemy got in. He knows what that sin does.

He doesn't just get up and say, God, remove it. He goes to the place in his life where the enemy came in. He says, I'm putting a wall there.

And here's what he says. He rebuilt. He built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, the valley, even to the entrance of the fish gate.

He encircled the old fell with it and made it very high. Now look at this. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities.

He not only went to the place where the enemy came back in, began to fortify the wall, he started putting watchmen to look for it. He's ready to do battle. I'll tell you something.

You don't have to worry about a sin coming back. You're ready to do battle with it. So when you get up with a looseness and a carelessness in your heart, just thanking God glibly, like we're offering a sacrifice to him, he doesn't accept that sacrifice.

That's why most people who come to an altar find the same thing right back in their lives. And notice this. Verse 15.

He removed the foreign gods and the idols from the house of the Lord, as well as all the altars. How many of the altars? All the altars. Listen, I know so many men.

I mentioned one to you yesterday about this pastor had a lust problem. And yet he compromised with what he's preaching from the pulpit because of the fear of man. Now, when you get rid of a sin, you don't come just to get rid of lust.

You don't come just to get rid of anger. You don't come just to get rid of fear. You don't come just to get rid of greed or pride.

Oh, I'm so sick of seeing people come to get rid of greed, pride. You come to make a holy sacrifice to God. You offer your entire being up to Him.

You want that thing gone because you want to commune with Him, not because it's a thorn in your side. That's repentance. And that stays.

See, he removed all the idols and the altars. He didn't just repair the wall where the enemy came in. He removed everything he could find in his life that wasn't like God.

That's the indignation that he's talking about. That's the zeal. That's true repentance.

That's what real repentance produces in the heart. Now, look at this. Verse 16, I want to tell you something.

Listen. The Lord showed me this in a couple of people's lives, and it's happened so much. I've seen husbands and wives come forward and repent over some things, get some things, either together or individually, and yet there are things they're allowing their teenager to do in that house.

It's an abomination to God. And I want to tell you something. They may get some temporary freedom, but if they don't deal with the household, it's going to come right back.

I've known preachers who come to get rid of lust. They come to get rid of this. They come to get rid of that.

They go right back to the churches. They don't deal with the sin, just certain sins. They don't deal with the compromises in their own lives.

And it's just a matter of time before the same sins come right back. And then they cry out, what does it take? It takes true repentance that offers up a living and acceptable sacrifice to God. Now, I said that when you're sacrificing to God, a true and living sacrifice is going to be rejected by men.

I want you to look with me in Nahum. Nahum. I tell you, the first place I want you to go is Malachi.

Malachi chapter 1. Malachi chapter 1, verse 1. The oracle or burden of the Lord, the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi, I have loved you, says the Lord, but you say, how hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother, declares the Lord, yet I have loved Jacob. Now, this is an important thing, because you know what? He's going to talk about sacrifices in a moment. I had to repent of this in my own life, because there were times when I'd say, God, I read all about your word that you love me.

I've seen, you know, I'm not to have any sins, not to have dominion over me, yet I cry out to you, and I cry out to you, and I cry out to you, and there are things in my life that doesn't change. And I was doing the briefing that says right here, God's saying I love you, and I said, well, how do you love me, God? I wasn't saying that with my words, but my heart was saying, God, if you really love me, won't you take care of some of these things in my life? How many of you know what I'm talking about? You may not have spoken it, but you thought it in your heart. And you know what God does? You know how he answers their question? He gives them an illustration of Jacob and Esau.

Isn't that interesting? They ask God, how have you loved us? And then God gives them an illustration of Jacob and Esau. How many of you know that sometimes you ask God a question, and he shoots one right back at you? Or he tells you something seemingly unrelated to what you're talking about. You know why he gave them an illustration of Jacob and Esau? He said, I want you to understand, God, how do you love us? He says, Esau, I hated Jacob a lot.

I'm not going to go into the Scriptures, but I want you to understand something. Throughout the Bible is a picture of Esau and Jacob. Esau was the firstborn.

He had the birthright. And everything belonged to him. But you know what he did? He never really thought he'd ever lose that birthright, but he satisfied his flesh and played with the things of God.

And one day he's coming in from a hunting trip, and here's Jacob, and he's hungry. His flesh wants to eat. Now the truth is, with his birthright, and with Jacob that close, he could have gotten food.

That wasn't the problem. But flippantly, he didn't intend to lose his birthright. I know he didn't because he cried and wept over it later.

He really didn't expect to lose it. But flippantly, he said, give me that bowl of red soup, that pottage, and I'll give you my birthright. Jacob asked him for it, and he said, yeah, I'll trade it.

It's a picture of ministers and Christians, lay people, who play with the things of God. And they satisfy their flesh with the things of God. And they don't expect to be rejected.

When it's convenient, they offer a sacrifice, a spiritual sacrifice, they call it, that all it does is satisfy the flesh for that moment. There's no zeal. There's no putting up with the walls.

There's no setting out sentries. I talked to a man, had a terrible lust problem, a dophy problem, and he was going to all kinds of adult movies. And he said, I can't help it.

He said, I've been delivered over and over and over again. I can't help it. I'm just drawn away by it.

He says, I get in the car and I'm just drawn by it. I said, that does not make sense with me, according to the Word of God. Now, I'm not saying a man can't be drawn.

But what didn't make sense with me was this true repentance that was in his life he's talking about. I've repented. I've repented.

I've repented. And yet, when I get in the car, I'm drawn. I'm not saying you don't have to work with a person.

I'm not saying there's got to be some people that maybe need some help. I'm not saying that. But I am saying that genuine repentance comes.

That doesn't happen. Now, that's an encouragement to me in my life. Because, see, I know God's got the mercy He gave Manasseh toward me.

And I also know that if things are not changing in my life, I've just got one thing to do. It's very simple to me. Shut myself up with God and stay on Him and deal with Him until He prepares my heart, grants repentance, and then it will be gone.

That's an encouragement to me. But I know my heart sometimes has to be prepared. I don't try to offer up a sacrifice to God simply by coming to an altar.

I may come to an altar. But I prepare my heart. I prepare my heart.

Now, please understand me. Sometimes a person can come to an altar before they've prepared their heart. They come with the conviction of God.

But what they need to understand is that altar call didn't change things. The sacrifice they made to God there changes things. Are you with me? Alright, now listen.

Jacob wants the birthright. Now, Jacob was a deceiver. He certainly can't look at his life and see something exemplary.

But you know what happens? There's some telling things here. In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, in the twelfth chapter, and I don't want you to turn there, but in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, God gives His account of what Esau did. And you know what He says? He said Esau, that immoral and godless man, sold his birthright.

Are you with me? I don't want you turning to Hebrews 12, because I'm not going to be there long. God says in Hebrews 12 that Esau sold his birthright. Do you know what Esau says in Genesis? He said, Jacob stole my birthright.

Now, God sees it one way. Esau sees it another way. Esau thinks something is stolen from him.

God says, you didn't have it stolen from you. You gave it away. God looks at the heart, and sometimes we cry out to God, God, how do you love me? He says, you gave it away.

It wasn't stolen from you. You haven't been deprived of anything. You're just like an Esau.

You gave it away. I've had Him speak that to my heart. Jacob, on the other hand, if you read Genesis, I think it's chapter 32, Jacob didn't have everything right, but one day he crashed over the Jabbok and he wrestled with an angel.

I believe he was God. He wrestled with God all night long. And I'm not going to go into that chapter either, but you'll see he's got three things.

First thing, God did for him. He gave him a blessing. He got a new blessing.

And then the second thing God gave for him, he was disabled. His thigh was out of socket. His strength was gone.

Genuine repentance was taking place. But he's grabbed ahold of God. See, there's a zeal.

There's a zeal. And he's grabbing ahold of God. And God gives him a blessing.

He said, I'll not let go of you until you bless me. Now, he wasn't wanting riches and honor. He was wanting God.

And he says, I'll not let go of you until you bless me. God gave him a new blessing. You know what he did to him then? He turned around and he gave him a new name.

No longer will you be called Jacob, but Israel. That's not all he got. When he got the new name, he got a new vision of God.

Because he said, now see God face to face. You see, that's what real repentance will give you. When you definitely get without strength to carry on and indulge that lust and that sin.

You come to God like that. Like Manasseh. You're determined.

You're not going to let go until you're blessed. You're going to put up the walls. You're going to destroy not just that area, but every altar.

I'm convinced, I'm going to say it again, that's why most people don't walk in victory. They just want to get rid of one thing. And they don't deal with the other things that are there.

Men, you can't have a lust problem, get rid of the lust problem, go home and treat your wife like dirt. Lust is going to come right back. But when genuine repentance comes, God gives you that blessing, that new name, and most of all, you get to see God.

Now, that's what happened to Jacob. That's the difference between Jacob and Esau. Now let's go on down.

As a matter of fact, I have to show you this. Please Mark Malachi. I just put something there.

Mark Malachi. And I want you to go to Obadiah. Obadiah is the easiest book in the Bible to find.

Here's what you do. You close your Bible, and you look for the whitest pages you can find. On the edges.

That's Obadiah. They're the ones that are white, they haven't been yellowed from use. Obadiah, right after Amos.

Right before Jonah. Verse 1. Obadiah, verse 1. The vision of Obadiah. Verse 3. Here's what he says.

The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock. Now, who is the cleft of the rock? Jesus is our cleft of the rock. He's talking to God's people, by the way.

You who live in the clefts of the rock, in the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, who will bring me down to earth? Now, that's exactly the way Esau was. You see, he wanted some things. He wanted his flesh satisfied.

He let the lust of the moment to satisfy his flesh. He even had to play with God to do it. With the things of God.

Even though he sinned, he planned on going to church the next Sunday. He said, who will bring me down? He's not saying it with his lips, but in his heart, he really doesn't expect to fall. Let me tell you something.

There's a lot of people like that. They sin, but they don't expect really to fall. I could spend two hours taking you through scriptures to show you that.

Over and over again. Look at verse 6. Oh, how Esau will be ransacked. Searched out.

His hidden treasures searched out. All the men allied with you. That means everybody that's going to have an Esau heart will send you forth to the border and the men at peace with you will deceive you and overpower you.

They eat your bread. They'll set an ambush for you. There's no understanding in him.

A man like Esau does not have any spiritual understanding. Been stolen from him. Matthew 13 verse 19 says Again, don't turn there.

Matthew 13 verse 19 says that immediately Satan comes and he steals the Word and they have no understanding. That means they're open to deception. See, that's why they can say in their heart I'm not going to come down.

Are you understanding me? That's why they make the statement. But the Word of righteousness is being stolen from their heart. They have no spiritual understanding.

They can't perceive anything. That's why they'll tell you I'm not coming down. That's why you'll have Brother came to me last night and he said he's grieved because he went to a funeral and hear about this.

I've seen this story enacted a hundred times or more. Nobody goes to hell at funerals. Everybody goes to heaven.

Young boy he told me about died drunk and the preacher said nah, this boy came two weeks ago two months ago to altar in our church and I said do you need to repent of something? Do you need to accept the Lord in your life? He says no, I did that back when I was eight or nine years old. I just I don't know what he wanted. And the preacher stands there and said you know, I have no doubt that this young boy is in heaven.

I said how can you be so blind? When there are scriptures I can show you just black and white to the contrast. How can you be so blind? Because you have an Esau's heart. With an Esau's heart there's no spiritual understanding and you build up even with sin in your life I can't be brought down.

Well the same thing applies to preachers who go into the pulpit Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. Not spending time with God. Not shut up with God.

And think their ministries are going to go on forever with the blessing. It's an Esau's heart. Well not only is he going to destroy us but it gets worse.

Now look at this.

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