

Spiritual Sacrifices That Are Acceptable to God

by Brian Long

True worship is about giving to God something that's of worth, not about getting, and it's only acceptable when we come to Him with reverence and godly fear.

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Scripture: 1 Peter 2:4

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Description

Brian Long emphasizes the significance of offering spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God, as outlined in 1 Peter 2. He explains that true worship involves coming to God with a heart of worth-ship, where believers, as a holy priesthood, are called to present their lives as living sacrifices through Jesus Christ. Long highlights the importance of unity within the body of Christ and the necessity of offering praise and thanksgiving, even in difficult circumstances, as a reflection of genuine worship. He urges the congregation to examine their motives for worship and to ensure that their offerings are pleasing to God, ultimately leading to a deeper relationship with Him.

Transcript

1 Peter chapter 2, spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. Spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. There are many spiritual sacrifices that aren't acceptable to God, or many sacrifices I should say.

But there are spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. And we're going to look at that today in 1 Peter chapter 2. Our text begins in verse 4. We're just going to read two verses. Coming to Him, that is to Christ, coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your living Word. I thank You, Father, for Your life-giving Spirit.

I thank You, Father, for the Holy Spirit, for the anointing of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for Your presence here this morning. Thank You for meeting us in this place, this house of worship.

Thank You for drawing near to us, O Lord, as we draw near to You. Thank You for Your mercy that endures forever, Your faithfulness that is higher than the skies, Your love that is boundless and

never-ending. Thank You, Jesus, for Your holy blood that cleanses us from all sin, that opens the veil, tears the veil, and opens the way for us to come into Your presence and be reconciled to You, O God, like our sister shared with us at the communion table.

What a blessing it is to be reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Father.

Thank You, Lord. Father, we praise You this morning. We ask that Your Word would go forth with grace and power, that You would change us and transform us this morning for the glory of Your name, that You would teach us what acceptable worship is, Lord, true worship of You, O God, and that we would become the true worshipers that You are seeking for, those who worship You in spirit and in truth.

In Jesus' name, amen. Now, a couple of weeks ago, we looked at this text, and we focused especially on how God has called us to be a holy priesthood, that all of us who are in Christ make up one body, and we make up a priesthood of believers, one church, one spiritual house, one holy priesthood. Here, He gives the calling, if you will, the duty of a priesthood under the New Covenant.

In verse 5, He says that it is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The New Living Translation says it this way, You are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. What's more, you are His holy priest.

Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. That has just really been on my heart for many weeks now. Is what I'm doing pleasing to God? When we come together on Sunday morning, and what we do, does it please God? In everything, in everything you do, go about your day.

Is it pleasing to God? And last night at prayer meeting, Stacy was sitting over here next to me, and she said something to the effect of, but does it please God? And there it was again, the Lord confirming that. Is it acceptable to God? Does it please God? There is a worship that pleases God, and there is a kind of worship that doesn't please God. There is a kind of worship that is acceptable to God, and there is another kind of worship that is not acceptable to God.

And here, as a priesthood of believers, we are called to worship God acceptably. We are called to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ. The English word worship is actually a contraction of an old English word that comes from the word worship, or worth-ship.

Worth-ship. When we worship God, it's bringing to God something that's of worth. Not that God needs anything, because He doesn't.

But to worship God is to bring Him something that's of worth. Something that's of worth to us to give to Him because of who He is. Worth-ship.

Is your worship of God worth-ship? Are you bringing to Him something that's of worth? I love this song we sing so often here, that Matt Redmond wrote, The Heart of Worship. Listen carefully to the words. And by the way, he wrote this when his pastor sensed that they were getting off course in worship.

And he said, for the next few Sundays, we're going to do things different. And he didn't allow them to have instruments and all these things. Now, we're called to glorify the Lord with instruments, but he could sense there was some flesh coming in here.

So he shut all that down. And Matt Redmond, as I remember his testimony, the best I remember it, he said he was a little bit upset about that. And he was upset with the pastor.

But it was during that time that he began to seek the face of God. And all these things, these outer things were just, you know, they slipped away. They were faded away.

He really entered in to what it was to truly worship God. And that's when he penned these words that we sing so often. Listen.

When the music fades, and all is stripped away, and I simply come, longing just to bring something that's of worth. What is worship? Worth-ship. Longing just to bring something that's of worth, that will bless your heart.

I'll bring you more than a song, for a song in itself is not what you have required. You search much deeper within, through the way things appear. You're looking into my heart.

I'm coming back to the heart of worship. And it's all about who? You, Jesus. It's all about you, Jesus.

I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing that I've made it, when it's all about you. It's all about you, Jesus. Listen to this.

King of endless worth. No one could express how much you deserve. Though I'm weak and poor, all I have is yours.

Every single breath. When you came to worship this morning, my brother and my sister, did you come to give, or did you come to get? Did you come to give something that's of worth to God, or something to get? Do you know how many times I hear, well, I didn't get anything out of that. Well, I came, but I didn't get anything out of that message.

I don't get anything out of that song. I don't get anything out of that. Is that why you come? That you've not come to worship.

Those who come to worship God and come to worship Him in spirit and in truth, come to give. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus? Paul said, remember the words of the Lord Jesus? Acts 20, 35. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

When Abraham went up on the Mount Sinai with his son Isaac to worship God, did he come to give or to get? He came to give what was most precious to him. When Mary brought her alabaster box to Jesus, did she come to give or to get? She came to give. When David built an altar of worship to the Lord, did he come to give or to get? Worship always comes to give.

And yes, you will get. You will receive. The Lord never lets His people go away empty when they come to Him.

You will receive. But our motive for coming should not be to get, but to give. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Worship always gives, just like love always gives. Love gives. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. The proof of His love was that He gave His life. The proof of God's love for us is that He gave His Son.

The proof of your love for God is that you will give Him your obedience. You will give Him your worship. You will give Him all that is within you, every single breath, as Matt Redmond said, because He is a King of endless worth.

That is worship, coming to give, coming to give. Look at 1 Chronicles 16. Look at this in the Scripture.

1 Chronicles 16, beginning in verse 25. And we could, by the way, read almost all of this chapter. This is a song of thanksgiving by David.

It is really a song of praise and worship. But I want you to notice how many times he refers to giving, giving to the Lord, something that is of worth. That is worship.

That is offering up spiritual sacrifice that is acceptable to God. 1 Chronicles 16, beginning in verse 25. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised.

He is also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols. But the Lord made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before Him. Strength and gladness are in His place. Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples.

Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples. Give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due His name.

Bring an offering and come before Him. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Do you see it, brothers and sisters? What is worship? Bringing to the Lord.

Giving to the Lord glory and strength. Giving to the Lord glory due His name. Verse 30, tremble before Him.

All the earth. The world also is firmly established. It shall not be moved.

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad. And let them say among the nations, The Lord reigns. Let the sea roar in all its fullness.

Let the field rejoice in all that is in it. Let the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the Lord. For He is coming to judge the earth.

O give thanks to the Lord. There it is again. Give Him something.

Give Him thanks for He is good. For His mercy endures forever. And say, Save us, O God, our salvation.

Gather us together and deliver us from the Gentiles. To give thanks to Your holy name. To triumph in Your praise.

Blessed be the God of Israel. From everlasting to everlasting. And all the people said, Amen.

And praised the Lord. That's worship. Coming to give God something.

Coming to give Him something that's of worth. Coming to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable and pleasing to Him. Now under the Old Covenant, all those Old Testament saints used to bring sacrifices to God in worship.

The priests would bring sacrifices of bulls or goats or sheep or their first fruits. But under the New Covenant, you know, some people think, well, we're not under the Old Covenant, so we don't bring God anything. He's the same God.

The same God of the Old Covenant is the same God of the New Covenant. It's just a different covenant. And the Old Covenant, whereas God takes no pleasure in bulls and goats and sheep, He has no desire for any of that.

But He still has a desire for offerings and sacrifices that are to come from His people. But these are spiritual sacrifices. Spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And this morning, I want to remind you of some of those spiritual sacrifices that we as Christians are to bring to God in worship. And some of them we are to bring to God every single day. Spiritual sacrifices that are pleasing to Him, that are acceptable to Him.

What are they? I want you to turn to 1 Kings 18. And I want us to learn from a man, a prophet, named Elijah. And we're going to see how he is a type, even of the New Testament, of that which we bring to God that is acceptable to Him in worship.

1 Kings 18. And most of you know the story here. Elijah calls everybody together on Mount Carmel.

He issues a challenge. He says, How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him. But if Baal, then follow him.

The people answered not a word. Elijah said, How about this? The God who answers by fire, He is God. The people said, That's a good idea.

The God who answers by fire surely must be God. So the prophets of Baal made their offering, their sacrifice. They called on their God for hours, from morning all the way up into the evening.

They called upon their God and no one answered. Even though they made a sacrifice, even though they cut themselves, even though they prayed and called out, no fire from heaven. And then here comes the man of God.

And here comes true worship. And here comes offering up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. And we know it's acceptable to God and we know it's pleasing to God because of the result.

Fire came down from heaven. The Lord answered by fire and you and I learn to worship God acceptably and offer up to Him spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to Him. You also will know the fire of God in your life.

The fire of the Holy Spirit. Now what are they? Well, verse 30 says in 1 Kings 18, Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. So all the people came near to him.

And it says, He repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. He repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And I want to say to you, brothers and sisters, the altar of the Lord today in much of the

so-called Church of Jesus Christ has been broken down.

The altar of worship has been broken down and it needs to be repaired. Maybe it's been broken down in your life. It is worship that is not pleasing to God.

And we need to repair the altar of the Lord. We need to return to true worship that is acceptable to God. So much of it doesn't please God.

It may please the people. And that's what many churches are trying to do today. Please the people.

Somebody shared with me a magazine that came out in Bartlesville this week of all the churches. And you know what? At almost every single church, I can't say every one because I didn't read it in detail, but just skimming through all those churches, you know how many times I found the name Jesus Christ? Zero. You know how many times I read we want people to feel comfortable over and over and over again.

We want people to feel comfortable. We want people to feel comfortable. We want people to come to a place where they feel comfortable.

The people may be pleased. I want to know, is God pleased? The rock band on stage may be pleased. But is God pleased? The celebrity pastor may be pleased with the results.

But is God pleased? There is a worship that is acceptable to God. And there is a worship that is not acceptable to God. And not every large church, am I saying, is offering up unacceptable worship.

It really doesn't make any difference between the size of the church. The issue is that of the heart. The issue is that of, is there true worship? Those who are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

What is unacceptable worship? Well, Isaiah chapter 1. Isaiah chapter 1. The Lord says, beginning in verse 10, Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? Says the Lord.

I have had enough of burnt offerings, of rams, and of the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats. I think today, the Lord would say in many circles, I've had enough of your songs.

I've had enough of your showmanship. I've had enough of your so-called talents. I've had enough of it because it's not focused upon Christ.

When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand? To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices? Incense is an abomination to Me. The new moons, the Sabbath, the callings of assemblies. I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They are a trouble to Me. I am weary of bearing them.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

Why is it unacceptable worship? Because in your heart, there is sin. You're regarding iniquity. Your hands are full of blood.

You bite and devour one another. You're staying up at night, the night before you come to worship, watching trash on the internet or on the TV. This is unacceptable to God.

Coming before God with dirty hands and impure hearts and filthy minds and impure motives and guile and showmanship. God says, I wish you would shut the door. It's not acceptable.

It's not true worship. The altar has been broken down and there needs to be an Elijah who will repair it and call God's people back to true worship. And that which that which offers God what is true and the first fruits.

I'm reminded of Malachi chapter 1. Listen to the word of the Lord here. He says in verse 6. A son honors his father and a servant his master. If then I am the father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my reverence? Where is my fear, says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise my name? Yet you say, in what way have we despised your name? Can I tell you, brothers and sisters? God makes this very clear in Hebrews chapter 12 at the end of the chapter.

There is one kind of worship that is acceptable to God. He says, our God is a consuming fire. He says, let us worship Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

When you come into the house of God and there's no more fear of the Lord. When you come to the communion table and there's no more fear of the Lord, your worship is not acceptable to God. It is like a stench in His nostrils where there is no fear of God, no honor of His name, no trembling at His Word.

And in many, many, many, the fear of the Lord has been lost. Acceptable worship is that those who worship God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. When you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? When you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor.

Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably, says the Lord? They were bringing to God their leftovers. They were bringing to God the blind goat, the diseased lamb, whatever nobody else wanted. And God says, try doing that.

Try going to your employer 30 minutes late. Try going to your job or to your school and giving half-hearted service. Is it acceptable? It's not acceptable worship, brothers and sisters.

Let us not forget who He is. Let us not forget He is the King of endless worth. And He is a consuming fire.

And when you come into His presence to worship Him, let's be sure it's acceptable worship. Otherwise, God says, I wish you would shut the door. He says in verse 10, rather, who is there even among you who would shut the doors? Who would shut the doors so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from your hands.

For from the rising of the sun even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles. In every place incense shall be offered to My name and a pure offering for My name shall be great among the nations says the Lord of hosts. But you profaned it.

He says at the end of verse 14, My name is to be feared among the nations for I am a great King. I am a great King, God says. So we see clearly there is a worship that is not acceptable to God.

It's not acceptable to God. What is worship that is acceptable to God? The first spiritual worship the first spiritual sacrifice we must bring and that must cover every other spiritual sacrifice is the precious blood of

Jesus Christ. If you notice in our text He says we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And anything that we do that is not through Jesus Christ is unacceptable. The first spiritual sacrifice we bring to God in worship, in prayer, anytime we approach God is the blood of Jesus Christ. What is one of the first things that Elijah did when he repaired the altar? The Bible says in 1 Kings 18 verse 33 He put the wood in order.

He put the wood in order. What is that wood today? Two pieces. Two beams.

One is vertical the other is horizontal. He put the cross in order. And we must put the cross in order.

One brother told me a week or two ago he was talking about a church that removed the cross that was hanging up on the wall. They removed the cross for this reason. It was offensive to some.

They removed the cross from the preaching and from the pulpit long before they removed it from the wall. Paul said just the opposite. I will glory in the cross.

God forbid that I should boast save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ. Let the devil hear it loud and clear.

The blood that washes away my sins. The blood that cleanses me. By His stripes I am healed.

Let the enemy hear that. Let the world hear that. Let it be offensive.

That is our hope, brothers and sisters. And it is the only way to draw near to God and to come to Him and come into His presence. It's the blood of Jesus.

Now we offer this spiritual sacrifice to God. Not in that we are sacrificing Christ afresh. Not that.

What we do is we offer up our faith in the blood every day. Our faith in the blood. If you come to God in worship and your eyes are upon yourself.

Well, did I have a good week or a bad week? Am I worthy or unworthy to come into His presence? The only way to be made worthy is to look to the blood. Look to the cross where Jesus died for my sins. Now I can come.

Look to the cross whereby I've been reconciled to God through His Son. Now I can come. And the only sacrifice that is acceptable to God has to be washed in the blood.

Even our tears of repentance have to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Every part of us. The cross, the wood has to be set in order.

The holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus. That's true worship. When it's washed in His blood.

When our sin is dealt with at the cross of Jesus Christ. What else did Elijah do? Look at verse 30. Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me.

So all the people came near to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the word of the

Lord had come, saying, Israel shall be your name. Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord.

Now, at this time, Israel had been divided. Israel in the north. Judah is now in the south.

Two kingdoms totally divided. Twelve tribes of Israel. They're all scattered abroad.

Elijah picked up how many stones to repair this altar? Twelve. How many tribes in Israel? Twelve. Do you know what God is saying? If this is going to be a place of worship, an altar of worship, then there will be no division in my house.

There will be no disunity. I want all the living stones together. And so Elijah the prophet brings all the stones together, the Scripture says, to build this altar of the Lord.

And this is a spiritual sacrifice that is pleasing to God. How do I know that from the New Testament? Hebrews 13. It's so beautiful how clear God is to us in His Word about this.

Hebrews 13 and verse 16. He says, But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. To do good to who? First and foremost, to your brothers and sisters.

To share with who? First and foremost, your brothers and sisters. Some translations say to communicate. To do good and communicate.

Let us not forget to do this. Why? Because with that kind of sacrifice, God is well pleased. With unity of heart and mind in the church, God is well pleased.

Remember, we're not called a priest or the priest under the new covenant, but a priesthood, like a brotherhood. Unity in the house of God pleases the heart of God. One indivisible priesthood.

1 Corinthians chapter 12, beginning in verse 12. This is what the priesthood of believers looks like. Paul refers to it here as a body.

For as the body is how many? One and has many members. But all the members of that one body being many are one body. So also is Christ.

For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact, the body is not one member, but many.

And then he goes on to say, Can the foot say to the hand, I don't have need of you, or I'm not of the body? Can the eye say to the hand, I don't have any need of you? One body, God says. And this is what pleases God. Now let me, I'll parrot something I heard from another pastor that I'll never forget.

It was such a tremendous illustration. But he said, Have you ever hit your thumb with a hammer? Think about that. What happened when you, I mean you hit it so hard it turned black and was black for six months.

What did you do? Though I wasn't there, I can tell you exactly what you did. The first thing you did when you hit your thumb with that hammer is you grabbed it. The next thing you did was you put it in your mouth.

Whether we admit it or not. The next thing we do, we do a little dance. Right? And what is the body doing? The knees have nothing to do with the thumb, do they? Well, they do when it gets hurt.

This is the beautiful picture of the body of Christ. Unity in the body. One member is hurt.

And he says, look in this, verse 26, If one member suffers, how many of the members suffer with it? All the members suffer with it. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. One member, the thumbnail has been injured and immediately the rest of the body goes into action.

The hand grabs it. When one member in the church is hurting, what should we do? Embrace them. Embrace them.

Put them in our mouth? No, but that's the next thing. My mouth wants to go to action. Oh, give this thumb some relief.

Even the mouth goes to work because one member is hurting. And the knees, you don't have to do that dance, do you? You do if your thumb's hurting. I don't know why, but God made it that way.

Even the knees and the feet and the legs go to action because one member is hurting. And what happens when one member, what happens when you, when you bite into a homemade piece of chocolate cake, all the members rejoice in the body. When one member suffers, they all suffer.

When one member hurts, they all hurt. When one member is rejoicing and is honored, the rest of them are not jealous. They're praising God.

They're praising God that this member, maybe if it's an unseemly, uncomely member, but it's receiving honor and they all rejoice. This is what pleases God. This kind of sharing, this kind of communicating, this kind of doing good, this kind of unity is a spiritual sacrifice that pleases God.

He smiles upon it. It blesses His heart. Last night at prayer meeting, we broke out into singing onward Christian soldiers marching as to war with the cross of Jesus going on before Christ the royal master leads against the foe forward into battle.

See His banners go. Did you know the third verse? Listen to the third verse. Like a mighty army moves the church of God.

Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided. All one body we.

One in hope and doctrine. One in charity. That's what pleases God.

The second verse of that hymn says at the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee. On then Christian soldiers on to victory. Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise.

Brothers, lift your voices. Loud your anthems raise. Which brings me to the next spiritual sacrifice that we are to offer up to God every day that is so pleasing to Him.

You know what it is? The sacrifice of praise. The sacrifice of praise. Hebrews chapter 13 again.

God doesn't hide these things from us. He made it so clear. If you love someone, you want to know what blesses their heart, right? What can I give them? What can I give my King that will bless His heart? What can I bring to Him that's of worth? He doesn't hide it from us.

He says to us, bring me unity. Bring me love for one another. Bring me unity in the home and in the marriage and in the church.

This is a spiritual sacrifice that pleases the heart of God. What else? Hebrews 13 verse 15. Therefore by Him, Christ, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

Praise to God is a spiritual sacrifice that is acceptable to Him that we as a priesthood are to always continually be offering up to God. He made it so very clear to us. Now, in Elijah's case, it says in 1 Kings 18.33, Elijah does something.

He repaired this altar. He put the wood in order. And it says in verse 33, He said, Fill four water pots with water.

Pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. Then He said, Do it a second time. And they did it a second time.

And He said, Do it a third time. And they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar.

And He also filled the trench with water. And here's what God said to me. Just as that sacrifice was saturated in water and the first time wasn't good enough, Elijah said, Do it again.

And it wasn't good enough, so He said, Do it again. Just as that was saturated in water and they poured out the water on the sacrifice and the trenches filled up with water, so your life and mine should be saturated with praise and thanksgiving to our God. Continually pouring out, pouring out praise, thanksgiving, pouring out praise, thanksgiving, pouring out praise and thanksgiving all the time, because God is worthy.

And it doesn't matter if my circumstances are bad or my circumstances are good, Jesus is King. He is worthy of praise. If I'm well or if I'm sick, Jesus is King.

He is worthy of praise. If the cupboard's empty or if the cupboard's full, Jesus is King. He is worthy of praise.

Pour out the water pots and may we as a church be made up of members. This priesthood be saturated with hearts full of gratitude and praise to God and thanksgiving, because here's what happens if you're not full of praise. You will be full of complaining.

You will be full of murmuring. If out of your mouth is not continually coming praise and thanksgiving, then out of your mouth is coming. I can tell you, though I'm not with you 24-7, I can tell you what's coming out of your mouth if you are not continually offering up praise and thanksgiving to God.

It is murmuring. It is complaining. It is every other foul thing out of the tongue.

There's something about this sacrifice of praise that is so acceptable and so pleasing to God. And especially those who, like Job, can be going through the trial of their life and say, though He yet slay me, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him and praise Him and glorify His name because He's worthy. God inhabits the praises of His people.

And so this is a spiritual sacrifice that is pleasing and acceptable to Him. I want you just to see the connection in Scripture. Psalm 42.

Psalm 42. David knew this. He knew this secret.

His circumstances were not good right now. He was in much distress. But here's what he says in verse 3. My tears have been my food day and night while they continually say to me, Where is your God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me.

What did Elijah do? Poured out the water pots and do it again and do it again. When I remember these things, David says, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude.

I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise. With the multitude that kept the pilgrim feast. You see in verse 4, what is it that he's pouring out of his soul? It's joy.

It's praise. He made the choice to rejoice. Verse 5. Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.

You see, why is it called a sacrifice of praise? Because you don't always feel like praising God. It's then that we need to praise God even more, all the more. A sacrifice that is acceptable to Him.

When the church stops praising, they start arguing and complaining. May it never be. One more thing here I want you to see in verse 33 that Elijah did.

In verse 33, it says he put the wood in order and he cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. Now that's important. That's important.

Why not just put the whole bull on the altar? God was very specific in Leviticus when He commanded the way the offerings were to be made. He said cut the bull in pieces. Offer it piece by piece.

This is essential. Why is that so important? In the Old Testament, it was the bull that God required. In the New Testament, it is a body that God wants.

Specifically, your body. Your body and my body. And that's why Paul the Apostle says in Romans 12, verse 1, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Look at this Scripture with me. Hebrews 10, verse 5. Hebrews 10, verse 5. This is speaking of Jesus. It says, Therefore, when He came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body, a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, you had no pleasure. Then I said, Behold, I have come. In the volume of the book, it is written of me to do your will, O God.

Do you hear what Jesus is saying? You don't want a bull. You want My body. And not My body just on the day that He went to the cross at Calvary.

But Jesus Christ offered up His body to the Father to obey the Father and do the will of the Father every single day of His life here on earth. Every single day. When I must needs go to Samaria, it would be a lot easier not to go that way, but you've given Me a body.

I will go that way. My body is for you. In the wilderness when He's tempted by the devil and He's hungry, His stomach must have been writhing in pain.

Forty days without eating. Oh yes, but Father, You've given Me a body and that body is to be yielded to You. I will not eat when the devil tells Me to eat.

I will eat when You tell Me to eat. When He sat down and set a child upon His knee, a body You've prepared for Me. And this body is even for little children.

Listen to that, mothers. Listen to that, mothers and dads. When little children are drawing, drawing, drawing from you and you're depleted because you're pouring out, pouring out, pouring out.

A body. A body You've prepared for Me. And that body is to be broken and poured out for the glory of God and the sake of children and the sake of others.

And when He went to the cross and this body was to be slapped, it was to be punched, the hair of His beard was to be pulled out, this body was to be bruised, broken, ripped apart, whipped, crucified, and nailed to a cross. It was Jesus saying, a body You've prepared for Me. And I've come to do Your will, O God.

I've come to obey You, God, in this body. And that is the sacrifice that is pleasing to God. Not a bull, but a body.

Again, Paul says, because of the mercies of God. I beg You, I beseech You, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present Your bodies as a living sacrifice. Now, it's pretty easy to say, Lord, I give You my body.

It's easy to say, Lord, I surrender all. And we sing, I surrender all. But you don't really know that you've surrendered all until you take your body piece by piece.

It's, Lord, I give You my eyes as a living sacrifice. These eyes that have been used by the devil, these eyes that have been used to sin all my life, I now give them to You, Jesus. Let me see what You see.

Let me look upon what You look upon and only what You would look upon. These ears that used to listen to trash, I give them to You, Jesus, piece by piece, as a living sacrifice. May my ears be in tune with Your voice and reject every other voice.

This tongue that was once used to cause so much damage and to tell lies and to hurt people and to gossip and to speak evil and to backbite, I now give You this tongue as a living sacrifice. These hands and all they do, these feet and where they go, this heart and all its motives, this mind and all its thoughts. Then you will know, brothers and sisters, if every piece is on the altar of God.

And what happens when every piece is on the altar of God? Then the fire of God falls. And only then. And if there were one piece, say there was part of this tenderloin of this bull I'm going to save for myself, would the fire of God fall upon that tenderloin? Not if it's not on the altar of God.

And that part of your life that you want to hang on to for yourself will never know the fire of God. You never know. You want the anointing of the Holy Spirit that you see in that brother and that sister, but you don't want to pay the price.

It costs something. It costs something. It's not a sacrifice if it doesn't cost anything.

It costs something. Every part of you surrendered to God. And the devil and the flesh says, not everything.

My children? God says your children. Money? Your money. Time? Your time.

My body? Every piece of it. But what a sacrifice. And here's what I want to say.

Sacrifice? Sacrifice? When the King of glory left heaven to come to a sin-cursed earth and He comes straight to you and He extends His arms just for you and He came to seek and to save you and to reconcile you to His Father so that you have every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, it's like a beggar with two copper coins and his tin cup and the King comes and says, give me your cup and I'll give you all in my kingdom. I want you to sit at my table. I want you to eat with me.

I want you to come into a relationship. I want you to be in my family. And He says all two coins? I have to give up all two coins? I want to say, brothers and sisters, reject the lie of the devil.

Trinkets is all the world can offer you. Trinkets! Trash! Rubbish! Paul says it's all rubbish compared to knowing Jesus. The surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus.

Let me lose everything if I must, but never lose Him. And never lose this relationship of knowing Him and knowing His heart. It's not a sacrifice, is it really? It's called a sacrifice because it does cost, but I wonder what it costs not to, surrender all.

Keith Daniels said, what you dedicate... I remember this when I was a young Christian hearing him preach. What you dedicate, God will consecrate. Because for so many years, I tried to make myself holy.

Make myself holy. And here's how it happened to me. I was up in the mountains on a Saturday preparing to preach for Sunday.

And I was walking around and my Bible was open. And I was in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. And here I am reading and studying. And I read this.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful who also will do it.

And I'm not being mystical. At that time, that moment, a beautiful butterfly landed on the page. This is how God speaks to His children.

And I was mesmerized by the beauty in the butterfly's wings. I just was stunned. Just looking at all the colors and the perfection.

And why did he just land on my Bible? And I looked up and there were butterflies all around me. There must have been a nest of them all around me. And the Spirit of God said so clearly, Brian, who made the butterfly beautiful? You did, Lord.

Who will make you holy? You will, Lord. Faithful is He who calls you who also will do it. And He does it when you surrender.

His fire falls upon a man or a woman who surrenders every part of their body on the altar of God in worship to God. What you dedicate, God will consecrate. What you dedicate, God will consecrate.

I close with one final Scripture. David in 2 Samuel 24-24. He was called to build an altar to the Lord.

He had sinned against God. He had disobeyed the Lord by numbering the people, taking a census. He was never supposed to do that.

He did it. He sinned against God. He confessed his sin.

He repented. But he needed to build an altar to the Lord. And so he goes to Aaronah.

And Aaronah says in essence, he says, why are you here? He says, to buy the threshing floor and the oxen. I need to build an altar to the Lord. And Aaronah says, no, you can have it.

I give you the oxen. I give you this threshing floor. And listen to the words of a man of God who knew what is acceptable to God.

2 Samuel 24-24, the king, that's David, said to Aaronah, no, but I will surely buy it from you for a price. Nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing. David knew the secret.

If it doesn't cost me, it's not worship. It's not sacrifice. I will not offer to the Lord my God of that which does cost me nothing.

I must buy it from you. And so he bought it from him. And he paid the price as it is.

Brothers and sisters, salvation is free. It's a free gift from God. To be a disciple of Christ will cost you.

You must take up your cross and you must die. And you must surrender every part of your body and everything in your life that is not pleasing to God, you must repent of it and you must forsake it. And if you think it's such a big cost, remember the beggar with the little few coins in his cup.

And remember the king of endless worth who loves you more than you understand and who extends his arms of mercy to you and says, come, sit at my table and come follow me. Would you stand with me please? I want you to bow your heads with me and I want to ask you a few questions. And then I want to have a time of worship and responding to God.

If you would please come stand. Please bow your heads with me and close your eyes. I want you to answer these questions in your heart.

Is God pleased with your worship of Him today? When will you lay every piece of you on the altar for Jesus? No personal ambitions, hopes, or plans, but all for Jesus. Will you bring Him something of worth that is pleasing to God that will bless His heart? Will you begin right now to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God every day because He's worthy? Thanksgiving and praise. Will you reconcile with your brother, your sister, your parents, your husband, your wife, anyone that you need to reconcile with before you ever come to the altar? We heard that already today at the communion table through Linda.

Would you be free from your burden of sin? Will you turn from your sin to the precious blood of Christ today for the forgiveness and cleansing of your sins? If you are willing, Jesus can and will make you clean. And what you dedicate to Him, He will consecrate for you. Father, I pray that this very day Your words would be hid in our heart and no one would be allowed to snatch them away.

I pray, Father, that You would raise up one mighty army here today who has come to a resolve and become resolute in saying, All for Jesus. All for Jesus. All to Jesus I surrender every part of me.

All my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions, my plans, all for the King of endless worth. Would You bring us into a place of true worship? Of worshiping You in spirit and in truth? Father, would You bring us to this place that Your fire may fall upon us, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that we may, Lord God, for Your glory, do exploits for You. And we can only do it by being filled with Your Holy Spirit.

May we speak Your messages, Lord, and proclaim them. May we lay hands on the sick and heal them. May we speak to the weary soul and encourage them.

May we speak to the unbeliever and the sinner and call them as ministers of reconciliation to come to You for salvation. Would You take this body of Christ and would You purify us through and through. And would You raise up a people, Lord, who are all for You.

No holding back. No holding back and no turning back. And no compromise.

But absolute surrender to You. We love You, Jesus. And all it takes, Lord, is for You to open our eyes to behold Your beauty and Your glory and Your love for us and Your endless worth.

And how could we not surrender all? Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, and my all. We praise You, Jesus. And I pray, God, that the praises will start and they will be poured out like water before Your face, O God.

And that praise of stream and thanksgiving, that river, it will become a river that never ceases to flow. That Your people will praise You day and night and fear You because You are God and You are a great King and there is no other. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Please respond to the Lord only as He leads you to. O Lord, let us test ourselves and find out if Christ has even been born and birthed in us. Or if we've been stuck in religiosity.

We've been stuck in religion. We've been stuck in the ways of men, doctrines of men. We've been stuck, Father.

Have we been stuck in this mindset of some Jesus we don't even know who has never come personally to us? O mighty God, may it not be so, and if it be so for some, that they would fall and offer it all upon the altar. Mighty God, may it begin with me and my home. What business do I have going to an altar? What business do I have going to the communion table when I am in awe with someone? Mighty God, do a work in us, Father.

May we leave not talking all the idle things of this world. May we leave with a passion and praise for You. May we have this all the days of our lives, all week long, Father.

In the quietness of night before we go to bed. In the quietness of the morning before we arise and go to work. Father, we need a fire sent from Heaven down upon us.

There can be no more rote Christianity. It can't be about just a Sunday or a Wednesday or a Saturday or any other day. It has to be about You every moment of the day, Almighty God.

If we have not been convicted of sin in a while, Father, that is a good check that we are in danger of not knowing You. Father, convict me today of my sin and my great need to repent. Return to You to offer up every part of me upon Your altar.

Oh, Mighty God, would You come and speak to us this day. May the power of Your Spirit come inside us to such a degree that it leaves no stone unturned and no sin hidden behind a wickedly deceiving heart. Father, we ask this in You, Jesus.

In Your Son's name, Amen.

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