

The Sacrifice That Is Pleasing to God

by Duncan Campbell

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart as the sacrifice that is pleasing to God, and how this leads to transformation, identification, and New Testament holiness.

Duration: 57:03

Scripture: Genesis 32:24, Exodus 34:6, Psalm 145:9, Jeremiah 2:23, Matthew 7:2, Matthew 22:37, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Topics: "Sacrifice"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the concept of God's second chance. He highlights that after death, there is no second chance, but in life, God gives us the opportunity to change and transform. The speaker refers to the story of Jacob and how God met him on his journey, symbolizing God's pursuit of us. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and facing one's past mistakes, as it leads to a deeper understanding of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Transcript

The minister in the parish church was appealing for funds to support a certain foreign mission. And he made a very effective appeal. On going home, he told the old aunt, she was over 80 years of age, she's in fact lying on her deathbed, he told of the appeal that the minister had made that morning.

She's listening, and then she spoke and said, Willie, shortly before my husband died, he put some money in the post office savings bank, just to give me a decent burial, just to give me a decent burial. Now, Willie, I want you to go to the post office tomorrow, and lift every penny of it, and hand it over to the minister, and you can give me a proper burial. Now, I never think of that, dear old woman, and her sacrifice.

Lift it all, and bury me as a pauper. That is the spirit of self-sacrifice. You will find our reading this evening in the book of Genesis, and we shall read part of chapter 32, and reading from verse 24.

And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me alone, let me go, for the day breaketh.

And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou doest ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Penuel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

In our Gaelic Bible it says, My life is saved. And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel ate not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Amen. And God will add his blessing. Will you turn with me now to the book of Psalms, and to Psalm 51.

Psalm 51, and we shall read three verses from verse 15. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it.

Thou delightest not in bound offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. O God, thou wilt not despise.

You will find the words of my text in verse 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. O God, thou wilt not despise.

Might I say that the burden that God has placed upon my heart for this meeting is a message on the sacrifice that is pleasing to God. The sacrifice that is pleasing to God. I know that we frequently sing, break me and make me and mold me.

Oh, we can sing that lustily. But I sometimes wonder how many of us who sing that chorus are prepared to be broken bread and poured out wine. It might be helpful if we just ask ourselves now, getting down and into reality and forever away from mere sentiment, am I prepared, am I willing to be broken bread this evening and poured out wine? I believe that the Lord has led me today to direct your attention to an Old Testament character in the process of breaking.

I refer, of course, to Jacob in the process of breaking. But in a breaking that made him the man that he became. What he became.

A prince that prevailed. Because there came a moment in his life when God broke him. When God broke him.

Now you remember the story. Those of you who remember it well will remember that the one absorbing thought in the mind of Jacob at this time was his meeting with Esau. I don't think it occurred to him at all that there was a far greater need.

A meeting with God. But still did he believe that there could be any connection between the two meetings. That his meeting with God would be the best preparation for his meeting with the problem that confronted him.

His meeting with his brother, with his 400 men. Now I believe that we are gathered here this evening. And I would like to believe that we are here to meet with God.

I'm sure some of you have met with him already in this evening service. I believe that the presence of God, the sense of his nearness is very, very marked in this meeting. And there are those here who are desirous above everything else to meet with God.

Brother do you believe in a God that can be met? I've asked that question already. And I ask it again at the risk of repetition. One of the Puritans by the name of John Owen had a saying that he frequently brought before his congregation.

A question. Is your saviour an imaginary saviour? Is he just an imaginary saviour? If he is, you'll be quite satisfied with an imaginary experience of him. But I do not believe, in fact I cannot believe that we are here this evening to worship an imaginary God.

My dear people, God is here. And God is here to speak with us. I now see Jacob there.

And I read that he was left alone. He had sent his family and all his possessions over the brook Jabbok. But for some reason he himself remains on the other side.

And oh, my dear people, he is alone. It would be helpful this evening if men and women in this meeting were so caught up and alone with God that they wouldn't hear a single word from this platform. My, I tell you, that would mean something.

I've always said that something definitely happens when a man gets alone with God. When my wife used to sing, she had, and still has, a lovely voice. She loved to sing at my meetings that lovely solo that we frequently hear in Scotland.

Alone with God. Oh, blessed retreat. Alone with God and in Him hidden to find in Him communion sweet.

You dear soloists, do you know that hymn? If not, try and get it. It's a lovely solo with a wonderful message. Well, Jacob is left alone.

And you will remember that something wonderful happened. Oh, something happened that touched him as he was never touched before. But I want you to note what he said.

There wrestled a man with him. Now, I know that it is sometimes read as though Jacob wrestled with a man. And from it we derive the lesson on prevailing prayer.

But I want to say this evening, this is to mistake the whole point of the story. It's to miss the vital message that is central in this story. There wrestled a man with him.

The wrestling did not begin with Jacob. The wrestling began with the man who came into grips with him. And I believe that the wrestling by the man was an endeavor on the part of God to break down Jacob's opposition and bring him to an end of himself.

You see, what is happening here is God conquering the self-life of Jacob. Do you believe that? God touched the hollow of his thigh. And now, no longer able to wrestle, Jacob begins to cling.

And this is where the lesson on prevailing prayer comes in. You see, from cunning to clinging, from resisting to resting, Jacob is in the right place. But oh, at what a cost! Oh, let me say again, that judgment begins in the house of God.

Judgment begins in the midst of God's people. You remember, it was at that moment that Jacob is made to face himself. And I say, face himself with honesty and with sincerity.

A voice speaks. What is your name? What is your name? And I believe at that moment his past came before him. And he saw himself a deceiver and a twister and a liar.

I tell you, dear people, when God comes, He makes revelations. There is a verse in the book of Jeremiah, See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done. And I believe that in this meeting, men and women are called upon by God to just have a look at the way in the valley.

Perhaps I could suggest that at your last camp meeting here, looking back over the way, conscious of your failure, realizing that you fail God, you responded to the appeal. And perhaps you came out to the altar, or to some altar. And you perhaps gave, like Hezekiah of old, you gave to your life the propulsion of a sacred vow.

And perhaps you said with Hezekiah, I found it in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel. But brother, as you look back over that dusty road in the valley, on the higher heights I trust of clearer vision, what is it that you see? Oh, let us face it. Jacob is there.

Oh, I say, he is looking back and he is made conscious of what he did to his brother. You are looking back now. And what is it that you are seeing? I believe you are seeing moments that give birth to great resolutions.

And perhaps you sang, I surrender all, all to Jesus I surrender, I surrender all. But what is God seeing? Yes, along that road you see places where you failed Him, where you allowed yourself to be lured by the lesser loyalty. And you left in the lumber of forgotten things the vows that you made.

Is that true? Oh, is that true? Listen, my brother, the God to whom you vowed will meet you. He will meet you. Oh, may it not happen that you meet Him with your broken vow.

See thy way in the valley. Know what thou hast done. Jacob knows.

Oh, Jacob knows what he did. And you know tonight where you failed God, where you failed to take a stand for Jesus, when your stand would have saved a soul from hell. Oh, my dear people, let's think of it.

Let's think of it. Oh, the many today, the many today who yielded and are yielding to the lure of the lesser. There was a time when they believed in holiness, in separation, refusing to conform to the world.

Where are they today? They have lost the kin edge of their spirituality. Oh, they have lost it. And they are not greatly concerned about those around them that are perishing.

Oh, we heard that tonight already. My dear people, we need vision. And I believe that vision comes when we find ourselves in the process of breaking.

Evan Roberts prayed again and again. I quoted this already. Oh, God, bend us.

Oh, God, bend us. He just meant, Oh, God, break us. Coming back to the story, might I direct your attention to several thoughts suggested.

First of all, the place of brokenness is the place of transformation. This is where we see, oh, to me, this is where we see the greatness of God's mercy. God meeting with them again.

This, to me, is the gospel of a second chance. Do you believe in it? The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. I believe in God's second chance here, not over the river.

Not after death. There is no second chance there. As a tree falleth, so shall it lie.

As death finds you, so will judgment. No second chance. But, bless God, there is a second chance here.

Indeed, I can say that I wouldn't be here this evening if God didn't give me a second chance. God is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. How suggestive are the words of verse 1, And Jacob went on his way, and the angel of the Lord met him.

Isn't that wonderful? God is after him. God is tracking him down. And that is precisely what God is doing with some of you here this evening.

Oh, He is tracking you down. He is getting you right in the place that He was anxious and is anxious to get you. Now, I would say that this meeting with Jacob speaks to me of that communication of power for the transformation of life which is at the very heart of the gospel.

In effect, what is the angel saying to Jacob? Jacob, get right with God. Get right with God, and the peril you fear will be averted. But, Jacob, Jacob, this will mean the entire reconstruction of your life.

And that, brother or sister, is what you've got to face if God is going to meet you tonight. You will leave this campground never to be the same again. It will mean the entire reconstruction of your life.

And it will be noticed in the church. It will be noticed in the community, and the children will notice it in the home. Oh, I repeat that.

There will be a difference. There ought to be a difference. And if there isn't a difference, please don't talk about the blessing at the camp.

My dear people, let me say again, we need to get out from mere sentiment into the grips of reality. And that is reality. Far too much of mere sentiment and emotional talking.

We are living in serious and in desperate days. And God expects His people to stand by Him with honesty and with sincerity and a God-imparted determination. Do you know that? I fully agree with Oswald Chambers in a statement that he made that very often concentration is greater than consecration.

And I think I understand what he meant. Oh, for men with spiritual backbone, determination, all we will sing in will not turn back. My, that was a wonderful chorus during the revival.

It was the only English chorus that they knew and they sang. It was brought to them from Glasgow by a member of the tent hall in that city. A fully possessed heart and mind to do the will of God.

Now, my dear friend, again may I ask, are you there alone with God? Oh, blessed retreat! Alone with God and in Him hidden, to find in Him communion sweet. Tell me, as you think of Jesus just now, as the thought of God is coursing through your mind, can you speak of communion sweet? Jesus is real to me. And oh, I love Him.

That is the language of the soul, alone with God. But you will notice further that the place of brokenness is also the place of identification. Notice the new man has a new mark of identification upon him.

He halts. He halts. Something visible now that was never there before.

A mark of identification. Was it not Dr. MacIntyre, the late Dr. MacIntyre of the BTI in Glasgow, who in his book *On the Cross* makes this statement, If we are saved and sanctified through the atoning death of Jesus on the cross, there must be in our life something to answer to that great fact. A mark of identification.

In the case of Jacob, the fact was in his inability to wrestle because of what had happened. And now he could only cling. Brother, sister, is that mark of identification on you? Oh, let us face it.

Yes, I profess to be saved. Is there a mark indicating that? You profess to have had an experience of sanctification? Tell me. What is it in your life that indicates that? Is it obvious in your dress, sister? Is it? Oh, my dear people, I was telling someone today about remarks made by an English evangelist last winter.

He was in the midst of the movings of God. It was not revival, but it could be termed a successful mission. And one night he is counseling a young woman.

And through his counseling, she professed faith in Jesus Christ. And then she turned to the evangelist and said, Now that I have accepted Jesus as my Savior, I do not suppose you will have any objections to me wearing my miniskirt. The dear man looked at her and said, Sister, I have no objections whatsoever if you have decided to be just a mini-Christian.

Have you got that? Has it sunk down? My dear people, there are far too many mini-Christians in the country today whose standard is worldly. But let me say this, they are not God's Christians. Not God's Christians.

They are not New Testament Christians if they are just mini-Christians. I say that, dear people, that there ought to be and there must be. Tell me, you men in business, what is the evidence, what is the mark of identification in your transactions? Oh, let's face it, when you are called upon, as they are in Britain at any rate, to fill certain forms relative to tax, farmers relative to subsidy for cattle and for ground, what, brother, is the mark of identification when you sit down to fill in that form? Is it honesty? Is it honesty and sincerity, though it may lose you a fair amount of money? Men and women, we may hide much from others, but, brother, you cannot hide that from God.

You cannot hide it from God. The mark of identification. I was in Ireland three years ago addressing a convention of the Christian Workers' Union, and I happened to make a statement that I made, I think, here already, that Calvary will not cover what you've got to uncover.

Do you believe that? He that hideth his sin, he that covereth his sin, shall not prosper. Oh, write it clearly and largely across the records. A farmer was listening to me, and when I made that statement, he rose and walked out of the meeting.

And I said to myself, well, you've done it again. You've said something that has offended that man. I didn't know then that he was a farmer.

But it kept coming back to me that he did not agree with me. He wasn't in the meeting the following day, nor the day following. But on the third day, he came back.

And after the service, he came to me and said, you would be surprised at me leaving the service in the middle of your address. I said, yes, I was a bit surprised. Well, he said, I'll tell you why.

When you made that statement that Calvary will not cover what you've got to uncover, a little dog began to bark. A little dog began to bark. Well, I said, I didn't hear a dog barking, and I don't think anybody else in the church heard a dog barking.

Oh, he says, but I heard a puppy barking at the ear of my guilty soul. And then he told a story. He says, when I was a boy, I stole a valuable puppy.

I got five pounds for it, but no one in the community knew what had happened to this valuable puppy. But I knew. I sold it to a farmer across the border and got five pounds for it.

Some years passed, and a Fletcher, a Nevanses by the name of Fletcher, came to the district. And through his preaching, I was led to profess faith in Jesus Christ. No thought of the puppy.

Years passed, and I became an elder in the Presbyterian church. That is forty years ago. Forty-one years, to be correct.

And I was never troubled until that meeting, when the puppy began to bark at the ear of my soul. And I was so disturbed that I left the meeting, took my car, and made for the farm from which I stole the puppy. The farmer was dead, but his son was operating the farm.

I told my story, how I stole the puppy. And then I paid for it with the interest of forty-one years. I then went across the border to the farm to whom I sold the puppy.

The farmer was dead, and the farm was not being worked, but a daughter was a teacher in a local school, and I went to her and told her the story that I who sold the puppy in heaven's sight was a thief. And that man told his story, told it again and again in the church and in the parish. And men and women discovered a mark that cried aloud, this is a man that fears God.

Here is a man that believes in reality. The mark of identification. And I want to ask again, is that mark in evidence in your life? Perhaps you are professing holiness.

Oh, my dear people, it is easy to make a profession. Easy to make a profession. But oh, give me the mark.

Give me the evidence. And the evidence is New Testament holiness. That cries aloud separation.

And that speaks of passion and burden in a cry for revival. Oh, brother, have you got this mark? The mark of identification. Jacob, oh, his broken.

And I believe that the recurring consciousness of that hour would be the realization that there came a moment when God conquered him. When God conquered him. Here again may I quote from a hymn by an Edinburgh poet.

My heart is weak and poor until it master finds. It has no spring of action sure. It varies with the wind.

It cannot freely move till thou hast brought its chains. Enslave it with thy matchless love. And deathless it remains.

A hymn, a poem by George Matheson. Written in Edinburgh. Suggesting the experience through which Jacob had passed.

By me, God, with cords of love to the altar. Oh, brother, is that your cry? And surely this suggests something else. As he passed over Peniel, we read that the sun rose upon him.

The sun rose upon him. Is that not what we ought to expect? Might that not suggest a new light upon his way? Jacob, the supplanter, preferred to walk in the twilight because there was something in his life that would not stand the light of day. Oh, brother, is there something in your life that will not stand the light of the searching beam of God's presence? Something that you know will not stand the light that searches every avenue of my personality.

But oh, see Jacob now. Now he walks in the full blaze of the noonday sun with nothing to hide. Nothing to hide.

Oh, brother, I believe that there will be men and women leaving this camp meeting with nothing to hide. Oh, you came to the camp somewhat afraid. Afraid to walk in the full blaze because of something in your life that would not stand before the blaze of God's searching presence.

But would I say today you met with him. Yesterday you met with him. And God has dealt with that something.

And tonight you feel that you can walk in the noonday sun. Well, I believe that Jacob is there now a prince with God. Surely this speaks to me, it certainly speaks of the recovering power of the precious blood of Jesus from which there streams the light of atonement made, the light of purity assured, and the light of sins forever dealt with and forgiven.

My dear people, that to me is the supreme lesson that we have here. We had a very remarkable minister in the highlands, a great Gaelic scholar and Gaelic preacher. That dear minister, while in this parish, before he became chaplain to Queen Victoria and resident in Glasgow as minister of that great church, the barony, he wrote a hymn that you will find in many hymn books today.

Courage, brother, do not stumble. Though thy path be darkest night, there's a star to guide the humble. Trust in God and do the right.

Perish policy and cunning, perish all that fears the light. Whither losing, whither winning, trust in God and do the right. I believe that he is there giving expression to the truth that I am anxious to get across to you this evening.

In the light, the mark of identification gloriously visible. Oh, perish policy and cunning. Here you have it in Jacob.

Perish all that fears the light. Doth you leave this campground? Oh, may this be your prayer. Perish all that will not stand the light of God's searching presence.

It comes to my mind just now, words spoken by the great apostle. I could not see, he said, for the glory of that light. He is giving his testimony.

I could not see for the glory of that light. What did he mean? Oh, there were things in his life. There were habits.

There were many things. But he cannot see them now for the glory of this light. Things that were dear to him before his conversion.

Oh, he could not see them now for the glory of this light. Oh, I wonder how many will be able to see that this evening. As you linger in the presence of God, as you gaze back over the way in the valley, and as you see places and incidents that grieve your spirit this evening.

Oh, will you be able to see? I cannot see them for the glory of this light. I believe, dear people, that that could happen. And I make bold to say that it is happening.

And happening in this meeting. I believe, dear people, that God has been speaking. I believe that you have ears to listen.

And hearts to desire honesty and sincerity. Oh, God, meet me as you met with Jacob. Speak to me as you spoke to Jacob.

And help me from now onward to walk in the full blaze of your searching beam with nothing between. With nothing between. My dear people, you can get there tonight.

You can get there tonight. And if you fail to get there, you are fighting against God. And assisting the devil to hinder his purposes in the realm of revival.

I mentioned, I think, more than once, the blessing that my own dear young daughter was to me and is to me today. I owe more to her than to any person living. I am going to quote to you verses of a poem that was used by God to send her to Nepal as a missionary with the Regions Beyond Missionary Union.

She is now a sister in her final year in the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, training as a nurse. And now taking an extra year for a certain medal that is given by the Royal in Edinburgh to those who complete the full and extra year. While there, she sent me this poem telling me how God had called her to the mission field.

And this is what I read. I want you to listen. Upon the sandy shore, an empty shell.

Beyond the shell, infinity of sea. O Saviour, I am like that empty shell. Thou art the sea to me.

A sweeping wave rides up the shore. And lo, each dim recess the coiled shell within is searched, is filled, is filled to overflow by water's crystalline. Not to the shell is any glory then.

All glory give we to the glorious sea. And not to me be any glory when thou overflow'st me. Sweep over me, thy shell, as low I lie.

I yield me to the purpose of thy will. Sweep up, O conquering wave. And purify, and with thy fullness fill.

I wonder if that is your prayer this evening. May I repeat the last verse again. And I would say this.

I am not asking a demonstration. A whole congregation standing. You know that that disturbs me, dear people.

It disturbs me. But is there is a person here. Young, middle age, or old.

Who from the heart can say this. Now listen. Sweep over me.

Sweep over me. Thy shell, as low I lie. As low I lie.

I yield me to the purpose of thy will. Sweep up, O conquering wave. And purify, and with thy fullness fill.

If you are saying tonight, God I want you to sweep over me. As I now yield to the purpose of thy will. Sweep up, O God, sweep up and purify.

And let thy fullness fill. If you can say that from the depth of your heart. And only the man that can say it, only the woman can say it.

Will you stand to your feet now. I face the question now. Can it be true God.

That those who are standing in this meeting. Really and honestly. Believe and acknowledge.

What I said.

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