

Giving Your All

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a holy life, presenting our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, and being used of God by being right with Him and not grieving the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 41:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 9:50, Romans 3:23, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:30, Colossians 3:2

Topics: "Absolute Surrender"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being spiritually aware and not allowing the world to dull our minds. He urges believers to constantly pray and be stewards of what they hear and see in church. The preacher explains that presenting our bodies to God is not about continuous rededication, but rather a once and for all decision that controls our future. He encourages believers to stop living with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom, and instead focus on Jesus and follow Him wholeheartedly.

Transcript

Open up your Bibles to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12, verse 1. Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I come before you in the name of your Son. Father, you would think that I would grow more in holiness and be more confident.

But as each day goes by, I am aware that if Christ had not stood in my law place and had not carried away wrath that should have been appointed unto me, I would be consumed in your presence. Father, I would pray that at the end of my days, men would only know this. You are a faithful God who saves sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

Father, we need thee every hour, and we need you to help us. We don't even know what we should be, and in what we know to be, we find a law in ourselves that there is such a struggle to become that thing. But what is impossible for men is possible for God.

And that you who begin a good work will finish it, and that the Holy Spirit has been given to us, and that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Lord, this evening, grant us mercy. Grant us mercy.

In Jesus' name, amen. In verse 1, Paul, even though he is an apostle and not a pastor, is speaking as a pastor. There are some of us who are not pastors, but at the same time, we do have a deep love for God's people, and when we look out over God's people, we look at them almost with a pastoral love.

If a man is called into the ministry, he will also be given a calling to love the bride of Christ, to weep over her, to guard her jealously and zealously. As Christ, the captain of our salvation, laid down his life for the bride, so men of God, if they are men of God, have a special relationship with the church. They love her.

And as the church sometimes, we might could say, breaks the heart of the one who saved her, so when preachers and like-hearted men look out over the congregation, sometimes their heart can be broken. And so they do what Paul does here. He says, therefore, I urge you, brethren.

Preaching is not just about theology. It's not just about getting all the facts straight. It's not just learning what salvation is about.

It's not just understanding the true doctrine of the church or conversion and all these other things. How many times have I sat down in the pastor's office and we've battered this back and forth, that it's truth, yes, it's foundational, it is so important, but it is not the end. It is the means to an end.

And what is that end? That you and I might lay down our lives as living and holy sacrifices. That as the bride of Christ, we would love Him. That we would love Him.

And that love is not expressed just in emotion or songs or statements made about the heart. But that love is keeping His commands. To live in this world as a pure and an unspotted people.

Not stained by the filth of this age. I would rather have a group of people who could not dot every I and cross every T with regard to all the deep things of God, if they simply lived in a childlike faith with the fear of the Lord and purity. And this is Paul's heart.

He says, therefore, I urge you, brethren. Paul, once I would like to crawl into the mind and heart of that man. He constantly spoke of how his relationship with the bride, he wanted, he desired with all his heart to present her to Christ.

He's speaking almost as one standing outside of the bride, saying the only thing I want to do is present this bride to Christ. It's like a father who looks down at his daughter from the time she is first laid in his hands. And with such love that almost terrifies him.

And with a broken heart, he seems to be able to look into the future. Every day, quickly, in a moment. And his great prayer is this.

Oh, that she might be pure. That one day I might put her hand in the hand of a godly man. That she might be godly and pure and innocent and childlike until that day.

That's Paul's heart here. That's the heart of our elders here. That's the heart of our staff.

It's not just to be right, but it's to be for him. And he says, therefore, I urge you, brethren. Just because we are Christians does not mean that we are beyond the need of encouragement.

Beyond the need of urging. Beyond the need of even pushing. Beyond the need of even rebuking and exhorting and all the other things.

Sometimes I look at, and when I use the word church, I'm using it biblically. I do not believe that most people gathered on Sunday morning that that represents the church. The church is a group of truly converted people.

But even when I look at my own life. And even when I look at Christians. That bear fruit as Christians and hear some of the things that come out of their mouths.

And some of the ways in which they live. I realize there is such a need for exhorting brothers to holiness. Michael Card wrote a poem a long time ago or a while back.

And it says it's about the prophet. Now, I'm not a prophet, but I am a preacher. And the words go like this.

I am the prophet and I smolder and burn. I scream and cry and wonder why you never seem to learn. To hear with your own ears and with your own eyes to see.

I am the prophet. Won't you listen to me? And the point that he was talking about here was the anguish of the prophet. Who looked at God's people and said.

Why do you have to be told about holiness? Why must you be still shown what is right and wrong? Hear with your own ears and with your own eyes. See and discern the right way. Reject that which is not holy.

And serve and follow that which is of God. Have discernment in yourselves. As the apostles wrote, have salt in yourselves.

Be holy. He says, I urge you brethren, by the mercies of God. This is one of the most important statements in all exhortation.

Paul will have absolutely nothing to do with legalism. He is not saying do this in order to earn a right standing before God. He is not saying do this so that you will be acceptable to him.

He is saying do this because of the mercies of God. That have already been manifested in your life. What is he talking about? He is talking about the first eleven chapters of the book of Romans.

First three chapters spent on doing nothing but condemning every man on the face of the earth. Shutting up every man so that they have no hope in themselves. Showing them the radical depravity of their own heart and mind.

And then he comes bursting forth as the sun after a night of terror. He comes bursting forth. Daylight breaks everywhere.

And he says, it is Christ and Christ alone who died for you. Place your faith in him. Throw yourself upon him.

Cling to him as the only beam that floats in the water after the shipwreck. Throw yourself upon Christ. And then he comes off with great and exceeding promises.

That if he loved you when you hated him, how much does he love you now? And then he tells you that although there will be conflicts. And although there will be troubles and struggles with the flesh. Behold, he

has overcome.

It seems that he concludes chapter eight of the book of Romans with Israel. Behold your God. He has done marvelous and wonderful things for you.

And then he goes on in 9, 10 and 11. And he explains the faithfulness of a covenant keeping God. Who fulfills every promise he ever made.

And then he says, based on all this. Based on this. Based on this.

I urge you. My wife commented when we were going to a restaurant. She said, you know, he was right on that one thing.

Boy, he was right today. And I said, what was that? It's not about getting your marriage fixed. It's not about getting your finances fixed.

It's about Christ dying for the souls of men. Salvation is about salvation. And that's the whole point here, church.

No one needs to build a fire under you. No one needs to be there constantly admonishing you and encouraging you. No one needs to watch after you.

If in your heart you have this one thing. He shed his blood for my soul. This is the controlling truth of my life.

I always say Christians stand between two days. It is the day Christ hung before all men and the day when all men will stand before Christ. That is our motivation.

That is why the hymn writer can say, though none go with me, still I will follow. You say, well, I lack motivation. You lack a vision of the cross.

I lack motivation. You lack a vision of the face of Jesus Christ where the grace of God comes shining forth. I lack.

You lack nothing except to lift your head and look. Before you walk into this congregation. Before you walk into this service.

You need to be so aware that even though you are a believer. The world can dull your mind. And it can put scales on your eyes.

And it can so fill you with preoccupation. You hear words that scribes and kings and others gave their life to hear and did not hear. But you can sit there as cold as a stone.

You need to constantly be praying. Oh God, I am a steward of what I am going to hear. And what I am going to see this Sunday evening.

This Sunday morning. This Wednesday night. Oh, there are people out there even today that would climb mountains.

And face a thousand deaths to be privy to the truths that are common in this place. He goes, therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to do what? To present your bodies. To present your bodies.

This text has been taken out of context so often. The idea of rededication after rededication. That is not what this means.

It is not speaking about a continuous rededicating of your life. It is about a once and for all decision that controls your future. How long will you limp between two opinions? If God is God.

Serve Him. How long will you limp between two opinions? If the world will one day be consumed as by fire. If the only one who remains and endures forever is He that doeth the will of God.

Then stop limping between two decisions. Stop living with one foot in the world and one foot supposedly in the kingdom. Stop being enamored and distracted by all in this world that glitters but has no value.

And turn your eyes toward Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And then put your feet on the ground and run in that direction.

Follow Him. Now he says here, present your bodies. I've often wondered that.

Present your bodies. What is he speaking about? I think he's cutting through all the superficial cliches that so cover up our ungodliness today. I'm not only amazed at what the Bible says about the past.

I'm not only amazed what the Bible says about the future. But it seems to me that times that when the apostle or one of the prophets were writing. It seemed like he almost looked into our day and saw us.

And gives us warnings based upon what he has seen. We're so filled today with this romantic, emotional idea of give Jesus your heart. He doesn't want your heart.

It doesn't say here give Jesus your heart. It says give Him your body. I hear people say all the time, well, you can't judge me.

You don't know what's in my heart. I don't have to know what's in your heart. Because I can tell what's in your heart by what your body does.

Your heart is the seat of your emotions. It's the seat of your will. It's the seat of everything you are.

It is you. So I can tell that heart of yours by the direction of your eyes. Jesus said that if your eye being evil.

I can tell what's in your heart by the things in this world that enamor you and distract you that are important to you. I can tell what's in your heart by the things you listen to and you let come into that body of yours. I can tell what's in your heart because the heart is revealed by what's on the tongue of man.

I can tell what's in your heart by the way your hands are used. By your service. You say, oh, I serve the Lord.

Do you serve the Lord in the context of a biblical local church? Remember one of the great preachers in Southern Baptist Convention years ago. A lady came up to him and said, pastor, I want to sing in the choir. And he said, well, are you a member of the church? She said, I'm a member of the great universal church, the great invisible church.

And he said, then go sing in the great invisible choir. What are you doing with these hands of yours? There is no reward for riding someone's coattail. There is no reward for being in a church that seeks to be used

by God to bring him glory.

Unless you are an active participant with the brothers. What are your hands doing? We only have one life and it is fleeting so quickly. Our bodies break down.

Our strength wanes. Don't you understand? And some people, some believers that I know, they live a constant lie of one day. Everything is going to be right so I can start serving the Lord.

My uncle, who's now gone on to be with the Lord, one of the wisest thing he told me was this. Paul, if you wait until everything is right to begin to minister, you will never minister. And maybe many things in your life aren't right because you're out of the will of God, because you're not serving with those hands of yours.

And I can tell what's in your heart by the direction of your feet. Follow me, he said. Follow me.

There's no such thing as a child of God that doesn't follow the Son of God. Sheep follow the shepherd. They hear his voice and they know it and they follow him.

And I will go this much farther. They are irresistibly drawn to follow him. Not by some coercion or manipulation, but they have caught a glimpse of the heavenly vision.

They see how beautiful he is and their heart has been so transformed and so changed. They must follow him or die. They must.

So he says, present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Living. Dead works, dead religion is no good.

It is not pleasing to God. Even this sort of middle age, speaking of terms of human history, kind of this Catholic idea of martyrdom and self-humiliation and serving the Lord, that has nothing to do with him. He wants no service that's done grudgingly.

He needs no service that's done grudgingly. He could wipe this world out and he would have countless millions more glorious, the smallest among them, more glorious than ourselves to serve him every moment. He does not want grudging service.

He doesn't want the attitude, well, I guess I need to get in there and do something. That's like telling your wife, I guess I need to get in there and give you a kiss. He says he wants a living sacrifice.

Now, what is that? Many commentators take this to mean full of zeal and life. Joyfully, joyfully, full of life, full of willingness. It's not that you have to push them into the task.

You have to hold them back. There have been so many men in my life that I've disciplined in Peru. So many that were wise and smart and theologically correct and everything, and I would have nothing to do with any of them because I constantly had to be there coddling them like little children, motivating them and so on and so forth.

Give me the rascal who's like a bull in the China shop because I can always put a bit in his mouth and turn him to the direction he ought to go. Do you have zeal? Would someone look at you and say his love of the house of the Lord literally consumes him? Would they say that about you? That your zeal for these people consumes you? There are men in this church that have yet to rise up that could be glorious tools in the hands of God. Men, your zeal must consume you and your zeal must be for the house of God, the people of God and the God of His people.

What a privilege is laid before you! This is the greatest time in human history to serve the Lord. Oh, to whom much is given, much is required. It's to be a living sacrifice, but not only living as in zealous, but I believe that the idea here, and some commentators, the older guys seem to hit it squarely on the head, a spirit animated sacrifice.

Not a bunch of dead, rotten bones. Don't you realize this truth about yourself? If indeed Christ is in you, that you have been literally resurrected from the dead. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus, recreated in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness.

Don't you see that my God has done great things for you? He's raised you from the dead. He's taken off your grave clothes. He's dressed you in the righteousness of His own Son.

He's made you alive. But, as the world was created by the spoken word, the same world must be sustained. If God were to pull back from this world, even though it is the creation from the word of His mouth, it would disintegrate without His sustaining power.

In the same way, thus you have been made alive by a spoken word. Lazarus, come forth. And you have been made alive, but your life, the power of animation in you depends upon a continual sustaining work of the Spirit of Almighty God.

You must breathe the Holy Spirit. Your heart must beat with the Holy Spirit. You must understand.

You know. You know science, don't you? The world must be sustained by the power of God or it would disintegrate. So you, who have been raised from the dead, God must constantly sustain you and constantly give you life.

He doesn't speak a word and leave you alone any more than a branch grows out of a vine and then is left to itself. He is the vine. You are the branches.

You must be intimately in communion with Him, constantly drawing strength from Him. And this is the reason why you must be holy. Sometimes, I told the pastor, he says, if the Lord laid anything on your heart, and I said, well, connect the dots.

I have gone through preaching. Not in this church. I'm an itinerant preacher.

I haven't been here much. But I am so amazed that I can pour my heart out in a pulpit, talking to people about holiness and godliness and not grieving the Holy Spirit, only to walk out in the foyer and hear people talk about they can't wait until Tuesday or Thursday or this day or that day because their favorite television show full of adultery and pornography and everything else is coming on and they can't wait to see it because the guy is just so good looking. Connect the dots, church.

A man, a woman, who does not take holiness seriously, who does not take sin seriously, is like a hospital patient hooked up to a life support system who is struggling to break the bonds on their bed so they can rip the cord out of the wall. One time, an old violinist was playing in Europe, his last concert, and when he finished, a young man walked up to him and said, Sir, I would give my life to play like you. And the old man looked at that young boy and said, He said, Son, I have given my life to play like me.

I hear people all the time that say, Oh, I wish God would use me. Tozer said, If a man gets right with God, God will literally wear him out. What you've got to understand is that men used of God, they are not men

being used of God.

They are Christ living in a man. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. And you can't grieve the Holy Spirit and expect God to enliven and empower you.

Men down through the ages that have been mightily used of God, they were so different at times, even in their theology, even in their prayer life. I know one man who every morning at four gets up and prays four hours a day and God uses him so mightily. I know another man God uses even in a more mighty way and at 8 o'clock in the morning, he stumbles down to breakfast.

Completely different men. But the one thing that they seemed to be concerned about was not offending the Holy Spirit of God. Several years ago, years and years ago, when I was a boy, I was struggling and Leonard Ravenhill sent me a track.

And the track on it was Others Can. You Cannot. And what it was saying, it said, other Christians may even have certain freedoms to go places, to see things, to participate in things, but young man, if you want the power of God on your life, you cannot.

You cannot. I want more of God. Well, let me give you the easy formula.

You have to have less of the world. We're at lunch today and Pam said, Jesus said it wasn't the hearers of the Word, but the doers of the Word. That's what Jesus said.

It's not to hear all these great truths and revel them. It's to connect the dots. To say, how then shall we live in the great question of Francis Schaeffer? How shall I live? Some of you, your greatest concern ought to be going home and smashing idols and turning off that television set and stop looking at things that are unclean and stop participating in conversations that are wrong.

You need to be a holy people. Don't you know that if we were the most ragged, tagged, pitiful bunch of people on the face of the earth, but if we had the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us, God could use this church. But with all our glory and all our buildings and all our stuff, it's worthless if we're not holy.

It's worthless. A holy people. Holy sacrifice.

To separate. To separate. I want more of God.

I want more of God. Well, then get rid of this. Go down through your life.

What you speak. What you see. What you hear.

And compare it to the Word of God. And if it does not conform, how radical should you be? If your right hand offend thee, cut it off. And if your right eye offend thee, pluck it out.

Pluck it out. Now, I want to tell you something. I'm not saying this because a conference is coming up and we need to kind of get especially holy so God will use us.

God doesn't play that kind of game. I'm saying this because you're the bride of Jesus Christ. And we are called to be a holy people, a beautiful people, a childlike people, a people innocent.

Innocent. Men, some of you, how can you have godly thoughts? How can you offer a holy sacrifice? By the conversations you entertain. By the things you'll watch on television.

How can you be godly? Do you know what it's like to be filled with the Spirit of God? Do you know what it's like to drink from that fountain? You say, well, Brother Paul, it's not too bad. Well, I'll tell you what. Let me get a glass of water and put one drop of a sewer in it and let you drink it.

It doesn't have to be too bad to be bad. To be a holy people. And he says, a living and holy sacrifice.

Who ever heard of such a thing? A living and holy sacrifice. How is it that we can look at the world and totally turn our back on it and offer our life to Him? How? Because of what He's done for us? Yes, of course. But because also we believe God's Word.

That he who finds his life will lose it. And he who loses his life for my sake will find it. Roger Wheel is an acquaintance of mine from London, England.

As a matter of fact, he listens to Brother Jeff, so he might be listening. I don't know if this is being on the computer or anything, but Roger said one time he was talking to Martin Lloyd-Jones and he mentioned, he said, that Robert Murray McShane, very famous young man who died early, said, oh, he was the man. And Martin Lloyd-Jones said, no, no, no.

Burns was the man. Burns was the man who came and preached for Robert Murray McShane. Great revival broke out and absolutely everything.

He could have been one of the greatest preachers in all of Europe. He lost his life forever in China. He went to China and was never heard of again.

What could drive a man to do that? It is belief. Do you believe? Let me ask you a question. Would your neighbor point to you and say that man definitely believes that the world in all its glitter is passing away and a new light is shining and Christ is coming and eternity is the thing to live for.

Would your neighbor look at you and say that? Would they point to someone who says that is the most joyous, sacrificial person I've ever met in my life? You say, how can that happen? Power of the Holy Spirit enlivening. But how can I know such power? Faith in God's Word and separating yourself from everything that grieves the Holy Spirit. We would have a revival in this church if all of us took the mandates of Scripture seriously and started comparing our lives to Scripture and smashing idols and turning our eyes away from unclean things.

The Holy Spirit is referred to not as a bull or to have the tough skin of a crocodile. The Holy Spirit is a dove so easily offended. And he goes on and he says, a holy sacrifice acceptable to God.

Acceptable to God. Oh my God. Listen.

Acceptable to God. Listen to that. You say, well, what's the big deal? What's the big deal? This is impossible.

That's what the big deal is. It's impossible. Men can't do anything acceptable to God.

But you're no longer mere men. You are children of God. To think that you and I can actually do something acceptable to God is overwhelming.

It's overwhelming to think that you and I can actually do something like give a glass of water in the name of a disciple and not lose our reward. Not lose our reward? It's amazing that we would have any reward.

God is something, isn't He? He elected you before the foundation of the earth.

He predetermined good works that you would walk in. He gave you grace without which it would be impossible to accomplish any of it. But by His grace, you accomplish things and then you get to glory and He rewards you as though you did it.

Dear people, for the sake of Christ, for the sake of Christ, shun chapter verse 2. I don't have time to get into this evening. But shun wickedness. You'd be surprised what it takes, how little it takes to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

How much good preaching is wiped away by one ungodly conversation. How much prayer is nullified by a quick glance at a wrong TV program. You see, the glory of the theology that you have learned has painfully particular application.

As a matter of fact, the more you know, the more responsible you are. But oh, this is not a grudging thing. Why is it such a hard thing to leave the offscouring of this world to feast upon the beauties of Christ? I use this illustration.

Sometimes you'll go to a man's house who hasn't been in church for years, and you begin to tell him, sir, you need to come back to Christ. You need to walk with the Lord. You need to come back into fellowship.

And the man will be very polite. He'll let you sit down. He'll offer you tea.

Just a very, very humble man it seems. And everything you say, he says, you're right, Pastor. I just need to do it.

You're right, Pastor. I just need to do the right thing. Well, Pastor, I'm going to see about this and I'm just going to try because you're right and I just need to do the right thing.

The pastor is talking to a lost man. What that man is basically saying is this. You're right, Pastor.

I must leave off and put away all the wicked things I love in order to do all the righteous things I hate in order to go to heaven. But that's not you. Believer, I'm not looking into your heart as a prophet.

I know what I struggle with. I know what I struggle with. And I know that the world has its pull.

And I know that I can let down my guard. And I know that I have and can grieve the Holy Spirit. But I know this, to the degree that I believe that God has separated me and to the degree that I separate myself.

Now, listen to that language. God has separated me. Yes, indeed, He has if you're a believer.

But the same God who separated you calls you to separate yourself. Some of you tonight need to make a decision to separate yourself so that you can enter into sweet communion with God and you can become a servant of the Most High God. Someone asked me one time, they said, Brother Paul, how come you never went to the Holy Land? And I said, the Holy Land is every place I bow my knee.

The point I was trying to make to that man was this. If you are a Christian, even the pots and pans in your house are holy. And you are not to live for yourself because you have been bought with a price.

And you are to live for Him. Some of you young men ought to have in your mind only one thing. How can I squander my life for the sake of Jesus Christ? You say, yes, go to the mission field.

Yes, that's the easy part. Now let's talk about the real hard part and that is living for Jesus Christ and offering your life as a living holy sacrifice here in the Shoals area. And to be a part of something that God is doing.

Let's pray.

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