

When Is It a Sacrifice?

by Theodore Epp

True sacrifice requires giving up something that is valuable to us, and it is only then that our service to God is pleasing to Him.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 24:24, 1 Chronicles 21:18, 2 Chronicles 3:1, Psalm 51:17, Matthew 16:24, Mark 12:41-44, Luke 14:27, Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:7-8, Hebrews 13:15-16

Topics: "Worship", "True Sacrifice"

Description

Theodore Epp emphasizes the significance of true sacrifice in his sermon 'When Is It a Sacrifice?' by examining David's decision to purchase the threshing floor of Ornan for an altar. David understood that offering to God must come at a personal cost, rejecting the free gift of the land and offerings, as he believed that true worship requires sacrifice. This act serves as a powerful reminder that serving God involves personal investment and commitment, rather than merely giving what is easy or free. Epp highlights that genuine sacrifices are those that come from a broken spirit and a contrite heart, aligning with God's desire for heartfelt worship.

Transcript

2 Samuel 24:18-25

The Lord not only stayed the plague, but through Gad He also instructed David to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite (1 Chron. 21:18). The Lord was very specific about this and left no alternative in the matter. Why this particular spot was chosen does not appear in the narrative, but later on in 1 Chronicles 3:1 we have this statement: "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

If David had been a grasping, selfish man, he might have looked on this as an opportunity to fulfill the will of God without any cost to himself. He had been passed over when the plague struck men in Israel, and now a rich man had offered him a threshing floor for an altar and animals and grain for the offerings. But David refused to bring before the Lord that which cost him nothing. "And the king said unto Araunah [Ornan], Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24).

What a tremendous lesson for us. It is one thing to serve on boards and committees that handle the affairs of others; it is quite another to make decisions that affect us personally. It is not a sacrifice to the Lord if we give of that which costs us nothing.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

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