

# (Clip) Let Your Love Be a Fragrant Offering

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of not forgetting the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice and the love we are called to walk in as Christians. It challenges believers to imitate God and Christ in sacrificial love, highlighting that great acts of love and sacrifice are pleasing to God. The message encourages self-reflection on how we are imitating Christ in our lives and calls for a life of sacrificial love and good works that shine before the world.*

**Scripture:** John 3:16, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 4:18, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 5:1, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 John 3:16

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## Description

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## Transcript

You know, there's something about familiarity. Like I say, cursed familiarity. Familiarity breeds, as they say, contempt.

And we begin to forget. The longer you're a Christian, you can forget the stock you came from. You can forget what you were.

You can forget how you lived. You can forget the sins that you did. You can forget the amazement that you originally experienced by being brought into the family of God, by the extent of the sacrifice of Christ and what it is that He paid for you.

You know what's being said here? You're being called to live your life a certain way and you're being called not to forget these things. You're being called to think these things through. Think these things out.

Consider what is done. Where do you see love like this? He became the victim upon whose head our sins are laid. Our sins couldn't remain on us or we were in trouble.

They had to be put somewhere. And here He is. Where would they go? One had to be a victim in our place to be killed in our place.

Scripture said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away... He takes it away. The sin of the world. He came to do that.

He offered Himself up on our behalf. He must bear those sins in His own body upon the tree. This is what Scripture tells us.

This is no vague manifestation of love. Those ladies wept when He was going to the cross. What did He say? Yeah, you do right in weeping.

This is a very sad moment. He doesn't say that. Don't weep for Me.

Don't weep. Of course not. This was no defeat.

This was actually something not to sorrow over for. It must be so, and He willingly went. And this is a reason to shout in triumph.

He came to lay down His life and take it up again. So, walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. And He goes on to say this, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Now if you have eyes to see here, what He's saying is this, that when an act of love is performed like this, it is a fragrant offering and sacrifice, and that if you do as He did, it will go up to God the same way. Because we are a royal priesthood. What do priests do? Priests offer sacrifices.

You just think with me here. You remember such a man by the name of Epaphroditus? Epaphroditus was sent from the church of Philippi. Not only did he go himself to help Paul, he took money with him.

And you know what Paul says? I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. Brethren, don't miss this. Great acts of love and sacrifice are the things that God finds to be a sweet-smelling savor.

You just knowing right doctrine, yes, we need that. But see, if that right doctrine doesn't produce this kind of love, then what good is it? What do you do more than others? Well, I know the colonistic doctrines and I can spell out the five points. Yeah, and you can go to hell like that too.

That doesn't save a person any more than it makes for a good child of God. Look, big acts of love. Big acts of sacrifice.

This is no meager standard. It's almost like we can't even... can we really embrace this as a reality? That we're actually being called to imitate God the Father and we're actually being called to imitate Christ? And not just in any old way. Why? The way God forgave us and the way Jesus offered Himself is the standard.

You might say, well, if it was just Jesus putting the towel on and washing our feet... but I'll tell you this, if you're really seeing the one standard, then it probably would be a lot easier to imagine putting a towel on and washing feet. You say, is this even something that I can believe? I'm supposed to imitate God like this? I'm supposed to imitate Christ like this? But you see, brethren, it's with what we have at our disposal. Should we be willing to give down our lives? Yes.

We should be willing to sacrifice our lives. But what that looks like, that may be different for all of us. Christian, what I want you to do just as we wrap this up, I want you to consider your life.

I mean, when you get done, what are the great sacrifices that you have made? Not because of a legal requirement, but because you look at your Father and He's made you His child. You long to delight Him and cause Him joy. And you want to be like Him.

And the sacrifices that that has produced. And you look over at Christ and there is such gratitude that you want to live for Him. You want to follow Him.

You want to identify with Him. You don't want to get as far away as possible. I would just ask you this.

Consider your life. Consider your life. At what point are you most glaringly not imitating Christ? I mean, think through your life.

Are you going to say, well, you know, I am trying to imitate Him at every single point. Are there some points where you can say I fail? I would say this, when is it? Where is it? Where are those times? Isolate it. Face it.

Look at your life. Oh, we already talked about when we talked about let the thief no longer steal, how we have givers and takers in the church. But brethren, do you realize the magnitude of giving that we're being called to? And I would just say this, you're not ordinary people.

You are not like Gentiles and tax collectors. You are the children of God. And a price has been paid for you that is staggering.

It is unimaginable. You are the royal family. And you are here to let your good works shine before this onlooking world.

And yes, by that, they'll know you belong to Him. You need to look. We have to look.

What would God do? How would God act? And yes, it goes from circumstance to circumstance, but it's this big picture of your life. What are you living for? What are you sacrificing for? Sometimes we can have just misconceptions about this. You know, oh, we have to be reading our Bible, listening to a sermon, praying, fasting, being a missionary if we're really doing the things that are Christ-like.

That is so narrow. You might provide wine for a wedding and be doing what Jesus did. A man may embrace his wife and be consistent with 1 Corinthians 7. You may be playing with your children on the floor and doing exactly what Christ would do when He said, let the little children come to Me.

You may be out under the stars and beholding the glory of God and be very much consistent with Psalm 19. Life isn't all Scripture reading, listening to sermons. That's not the issue.

Oh, those things are essential. We want to connect with our God. If we're His children, we want to be talking to Him.

We want to be praying to Him. But this isn't some legal thing where you basically have this checklist. Oh, I prayed today.

I read my Bible today. Check, check, check. Is that how you want your children to relate to you? I hugged Dad today.

Check. Brethren, we're being called to love. And I would just say this, as we move forward in the life of this church, brethren, it's not just that we are warm towards each other and learn how to give a socially appropriate kiss.

Brethren, you know what they did? The church at Philippi, all you have to do is read about the Macedonian churches. These people were poor. And they not only sent Epaphroditus with funds for Paul, those Macedonian churches also gave liberally to the needs of the saints in Judea.

And when you hear, it's like Paul's staggered by these guys. It's almost like Paul has to tell them to stop because their love was over the top. Brethren, when the annals of our church are opened up, I hope that it will say on judgment day when it's read, oh, this was no common people.

These people did such acts of love and sacrifice.

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