

Spiritual Sacrifices

by William Ray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual sacrifices, particularly the sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of joy, in our relationship with God.

Duration: 58:15

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 5:13, Psalm 27:6, Psalm 51:17, Psalm 66:10-12, Psalm 126:2, Jonah 2:4, Romans 12:1, Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 Peter 5:10

Topics: "Spiritual Sacrifices", "Gratitude in Adversity"

Description

William Ray emphasizes the significance of offering spiritual sacrifices, particularly the sacrifice of praise and joy, as essential to fulfilling God's will. He illustrates this through biblical examples, such as Jonah's struggle with God's commands and the dedication of Solomon's temple, highlighting that true worship involves gratitude in all circumstances. Ray shares personal experiences of overcoming hostility towards God and the transformative power of thanksgiving, ultimately leading to a deeper relationship with Him. He encourages believers to rejoice always and to offer their lives as living sacrifices, trusting in God's sovereignty and goodness.

Transcript

We have this sacrifice of praise mentioned again in 1 Thessalonians 5, 18, where we read these words, In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Now there we have two verses which very clearly and very specifically show us what the will of God is and what our obligation and duties are in the offering of these spiritual sacrifices. Now let me briefly point out to you the words of the sacrifice of praise because these two are given specifically in the word of God.

With what words shall we offer these sacrifices? This is a very important point. Now here we have it then. Listen to this.

We have this in 2 Chronicles 5, 13. Do you remember when the trumpeters and singers were assembled at the dedication of Solomon's temple? That we read that when the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising God that then the glory filled the house and the priests were not able to minister for reason of the glory that filled the house. But I want you to notice the words of the singers for they are recorded here in 2 Chronicles 5, 13.

For he is good, God is good, for his mercy endureth forever. And over in 2 Chronicles 20 and in verse 21 we find the little choir which Jehoshaphat organized and whom he commanded to sing unto the Lord on the plains of Tekoa when surrounded by enemies, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites. The same words are found here.

His mercy endureth forever. Now we need to understand that there is a hostility in the human heart and the fact that we have believed on Jesus Christ does not abolish that enmity. It should if we believed aright.

But the fact that we have accepted Christ to be our personal savior does not of necessity mean that the old enmity has been abolished. Let us take a look at the experience of Jonah. Jonah was a true servant of God, this prophet Jonah.

But he had a controversy with God. Now how did this controversy come about? Because Jonah's opinions and ideas differed from the opinions and the ideas of the Lord God. And dear friends, so it is with us.

This is one of the marks of the evil heart of unbelief that we are continually in a state of hostility toward God. Or if not constantly in that state, at any rate, when things go wrong with us we find that that hostility latent in our hearts rises up and we find ourselves being offended in the Lord. Now Jonah was told to go to Nineveh.

He didn't go to Nineveh. He had no relish for that task. And we read that instead of that he went to Tarshish.

He went down into the ship and as he lay asleep the storm arose. The superstitious martyrs, fearing for their lives, began to look around for the culprit, the guilty one. And finding Jonah asleep in the bottom of the ship, they woke him up.

And when they had questioned him as to his identity and to his occupation, they realized that he was the man who had caused them this trouble. And so at Jonah's own request they threw him into the mighty deep. You remember how the Lord prepared the great fish and it swallowed Jonah.

And in the second chapter of the book of Jonah we find there Jonah praying in the belly of this great fish. And he says this. Now please notice what he says.

Yet will I turn again unto thy holy temple. Dear friends, it was God who turned Jonah again. And it is God and ever God who turns us again.

Else would we continue in our hostility and enmity to him, to his will and to his purposes. But God in his loving kindness turns us again and he turned Jonah. Then I want you to notice what Jonah said.

He said, Thou, O Lord, hast cast me into the deep. Now, it was not the Lord who cast Jonah into the deep. It was the heathen mariners.

But I'm glad that Jonah did not blame the mariners. God may send men along in our experience and these men shall ride over our heads. And dear friends, that too is the purpose of God.

And if in our experience we ever come to this, when the Lord causes men to ride over our heads, remember God has declared it. It is his purpose to bring us into a wealthy place. Now Jonah could have blamed the storm.

He could have blamed nature. A great many people are blaming nature for adverse weather conditions. What they mean to say is that God is not doing the right thing in giving them the kind of weather he's giving them.

That's what they really mean. I was talking with a Christian lady the other day and she said, I've just been reading in the paper that it is predicted we shall have a very wet summer. And she began to really complain about the wet summer that we're going to have, while we might not even have any summer.

And I said, Dear sister, I don't think you ought to blame God in advance. You don't ought to blame him any time. God knows the kind of weather we need.

God is sovereign in the universe. He knows what things we have need of. And our times are in his hand and we ought to rejoice in all that God sends us and know that it is his holy purpose and holy will to work out his purpose in these circumstances, whatever they might be.

Now Jonah didn't blame the storm. He didn't blame the mariners. And I'm glad that he didn't turn around and blame God.

He didn't blame God. And something else to notice here, he didn't blame Jonah. That is, he didn't give himself over to self-criticism.

Self-criticism, dear friends, is not sanctification. There may be some value in looking into our lives but there is far greater value of looking beyond ourselves, even unto Jesus Christ. Nothing is to be gained by looking in, but by looking up.

And Jonah did not blame himself. He did not give way to self-pity. He did not give way to self-criticism.

But instead of that, he admitted the sovereignty of God and he said, Thou, O Lord, hast cast me into the deep. And if ever we come into circumstances similar to these in which Jonah finds himself now, let us remember whether men have been in the plan or not, Christian men and women, bad men and women, it matters not, dear friends. God can send anyone he wishes and we should be perfectly satisfied with the working out of his plan.

Jonah, instead of blaming God or blaming the mariners or blaming himself or blaming the elements, he turned to God and he says, Thou, O God, for Thou hast cast me into the deep. Dear friends, it is God who casts us into the deep. We are told in the 66th Psalm how he does it.

David says there in verse 10 and 11, For Thou, O Lord, hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou hast proved us. Thou hast brought us into the net.

Now listen to what he does. Thou hast laid affliction to our loins. He laid affliction to Jacob's loins and Jacob had to limp physically in order that he might leap spiritually.

He laid affliction to our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. You hear that? That is God allowing men to ride over our heads.

And then finally David says, Thou hast made us pass through fire and through water, through fiery trials. Yea, trials that go deep and hurt and burn, but thank God they bless. Because David says this, Thou hast brought us into a wealthy place.

And all of these things are to bring us into a wealthy place. Jonah was in a state of hostility to God. Jonah's evil heart of unbelief was functioning perfectly.

And the trouble is that our evil hearts of unbelief function in the same way. And when we find our plans and ambitions and purposes crossed by God, then we come into a state of rebellion. That is a very sad condition to come into.

Now I want to tell you a little story to illustrate this point. I remember once in China, my wife and I were away up in the mountains of the province of Guizhou working among the aboriginal tribes. They're a tribe known as the Miao.

And not long after we went in among these Miao folks, our nine-month-old baby took sick, became very ill. We were living with a family up in the mountains in a little straw hut. No ceiling, no windows, no floor.

And it was a very difficult place in which to nurse a sick baby. And I remember after some days and the baby gradually becoming worse, I decided to go to the nearest Chinese city and try and find carriers who would carry my wife and baby out to the Burma highway to the hospital out of Ansuang. I went down into this little Chinese city and I went around the places where ordinarily you can find men to carry your loads or carry you yourself.

But they were all smoking opium. They were all so deeply engrossed in their opium that none of them would volunteer and none of them were willing to go. And I remember how sad at heart I was when I came out of that city.

And then as I was coming through the gate of the city I met a Chinese man with a bundle of rice straw under his arm. I knew he had a little corpse in there and I said to him, what did the baby die of? And he pulled back the straw and he showed me this baby, a little boy, the corpse, the body of a little boy about the same age as our own. And he told me he died of a white throat disease, diphtheria.

Then I knew that our baby had diphtheria because the man told me that there was a plague and had been a plague of diphtheria in that place for a long time. Well, I remember after I left him coming up the hillside my heart was very heavy to think that here we were with a dying child, a child whom we loved and we were not able to do anything for him. And then somehow a hostility rose up in my heart against God and I began to contend with the Lord and I said, Lord, why don't you help us? We came here believing that you would preserve and protect.

Now we seem to be left alone with our problem and you raise up none to help us. And then I remember as I went slowly up the mountainside the hostility grew hotter and waxed hotter and hotter and before I had got to the village where my wife and baby were I had said to God, Oh God, if this baby dies I am finished. I will not go on.

I will not serve thee any longer. And there I was, standing on the mountainside contending with the living God, telling God that unless he fell into line with my plans and ambitions that then I would really fall out of line with his. And dear friends, that is nothing but arrogance, nothing but pride.

It is the evil heart of unbelief functioning. The Lord marvelously undertook for the baby. Thank God he remembers our frame.

He remembers that we are dust. That night he performed a miracle for that baby and the baby lived and is very much alive today. And I'll never forget the feeling I had when I saw God perform this miracle.

I thought, well, I cannot go on now. I have failed the Lord God. I have failed Jesus Christ.

I'm not fit. I'm no real true representative of Jesus Christ the Lord. And the best thing I can do is to leave China and just quietly slip out of the picture as quickly as possible.

And so my wife and I came down the Burma highway in 1942 and we were both determined that we could never return to China. We could never return. That old hostility to God, it had come up not once but many times and we just felt so utterly frustrated.

We did not know how to deal with it, did not know how to be rid of it. And so we felt we could not return for we were not true representatives of the King of Kings. But thank God, lying in a hospital in India where I had terrible sickness, as I lay there at the point of death, I began to plead with God.

God turned me again as He turned Jonah. And I said, Oh Lord, show me the way. Let me not die in defeat if I must die, but let me die victoriously.

And if I am to live, let me live victoriously. Show me the way and I will follow Thee. And just like a flash from heaven, like a light from heaven above the brightness of the noonday sun, these words came into my mind, these precious words from 1 Thessalonians 5, 18, In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Here I'd been praying for 12 odd years that God would teach me to do His will. And I suddenly saw that all the will of God was wrapped up in this, that if I would in everything give thanks, this was the will of God, and that God would from that point on lead me on and show me His salvation. And I thank God that that day there came to me in that hospital in India, a great deliverance, a great deliverance.

I'd been crying out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? But thank God that day I came to that deliverance of which Paul spoke when he said, I thank God through Jesus Christ for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. That old bondage was gone. That old enmity, that old hostility was ended.

And I found that I was at one with God. I could will one will and think His thoughts and rejoice in His will whatever it might be. I want to tell you a little more about this.

After we came home from China I was very sick and had to go into the hospital in Toronto. And after some eight months I came right down to the point of death. And one evening the doctor told my wife that I could not possibly last the night.

And so my wife came to tell me. And when she told me I said, Muriel, I want you to pray. I want to hear you pray this prayer.

Lord, if you take my husband you are doing right. Just let me hear you pray that prayer. And then say, not only say you are doing right but I thank you that thy way and thy will is perfect.

And so my wife stood there for a moment weeping and she said, I cannot pray that prayer. I said, yes, you can pray that prayer if you will. If you will.

She said, no, I can't. I said, why? She said, I don't feel like it. Then I said, but Abraham didn't feel like offering Isaac.

He did it. It must have been all against his feelings to take a knife and plunge it into the bosom of his dearly beloved son. But God asked him to do it.

And he was willing to do it. But he didn't feel like it. My wife said, yes, that is true.

Perhaps we are at fault in relying and thinking about our feelings. We should do the will of God. Then I shall do it.

And so she bowed and she said, Lord, if you take my husband you are doing right. And I thank you right now. Then when my wife had prayed that prayer, I said, is there anything else that troubles you, Muriel, that you find it difficult to thank God for? My wife said, I wonder why God promised to give us a house.

He promised us houses and land if we would leave all to follow Him. And we left all and followed Him and we've been home now two years. We haven't been able to get a house.

Just a room here or a room there. I said, well, just you bow. And thank God and say, Lord, we thank you that thou hast heard our prayers and that thy promises are true.

And if we have not got a house yet, it is because it is thy purpose to withhold it. And we just wait with patience the hour when thou shalt fulfill thy word. My wife thanked God for not having answered yet.

And then I said, is there anything else that troubles you? And my wife said, yes. She said, I wonder why God let us get this big debt, this hospital bill. When you've gone, how will I ever find the money? Why, she was going to have to find a thousand pounds at the very least.

And I said, I don't know how you'll find it. But I do know this, that God says that if we offer the sacrifice of praise, He will show us His salvation. And so you thank Him for this fiery trial even if you do not understand it.

Don't even try to understand it. But just thank God for it and leave it as it is. And so my wife bowed again and she said, Lord, I thank You.

I do thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast allowed me to have this trial, this fiery trial. I do not know how I shall ever be able to pay that large sum of money. But I want to thank Thee right now that Thou didst bring me into this fiery furnace and I'm going to thank Thee and leave it there.

And so she left it there. You know, she went out of that hospital after bidding me goodbye, thinking she had seen me for the last time alive. And she said she got out on the sidewalk, down at the bottom of the stairs of the hospital, and suddenly a great joy and a great peace flooded her soul, flooded her heart.

Dear friends, that is in the Bible. That is what is meant when Jesus said this. If ye love me, keep my commandments and my Father and I will come and make our abode with you and we will manifest ourselves to you.

You see, all the commandments of God are wrapped up in this little sacrifice, the sacrifice of praise. Yes, they are. Just as the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, and just as the end, the summing up of the whole law is to love the Lord our God with all our

heart and soul and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

I tell you, everything about surrender, everything about true living faith is wrapped up in this one thing. You remember God said to Abraham, because thou hast done this thing, it wasn't many things, it was this thing, because thou hast done this thing, that blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And so my wife that night came to the blessed reality of the indwelling of Jesus Christ.

Oh, he had been indwelling her before, but that conscious indwelling had not been experienced or known until this moment. And I want to say that it is here that we come to the opening of the eyes of the understanding. It is here in the offering of the sacrifice of praise that we become strengthened with might by His Spirit in our inner man.

And Christ is consciously at home in our hearts. And we are conscious of His being consciously at home in our hearts. It is here, dear friends, that we are rooted and grounded in love.

Here that we are able to comprehend with all saints the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. Here it is, in the offering of this simple sacrifice of praise, that we are filled unto all the fullness of God. Did you ever notice that over in 2 Chronicles 5, in the closing verses of that chapter, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, we read there that when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising God and saying God is good and His mercy endures forever, that then the glory filled the house.

And it is at this point that we become filled with the Spirit. And by continually offering this sacrifice of praise, thank God we remain filled with the Spirit. And so here is the way then.

This is the way into the fullness, and this is the secret of being kept in that blessed fullness. Now I want to pass on to the next spiritual sacrifice, the sacrifice of joy. You remember in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 16, we read these words.

I believe it is the shortest sentence in the whole Bible, next to Jesus wept. Rejoice evermore. Two words.

Rejoice evermore. You have it enlarged a little in Philippians. Rejoice in the Lord all the way.

Now here again we have a spiritual sacrifice. Because over in Psalm 27, verse 6, I read these words. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about.

Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle the sacrifices of joy. I will sing. Yea, I will sing praises unto thee.

Ah dear friends, here is another sacrifice. The sacrifice of joy. You know, there is a wonderful thing recorded in 2 Chronicles about Hezekiah.

I believe it is in chapter 30. You remember when Hezekiah had established again the temple services. And the temple had been repaired and the services of the Levites reorganized.

That we find Jehoshaphat commanding the Levites and the sons of Esau to sing. To sing. He commanded them to sing.

He commanded them to rejoice. And you know, in the New Testament we are commanded to rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always.

Rejoice evermore. That is a command. It is the command of our King.

A greater than Jehoshaphat. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself commands it. And so we must rejoice in Him.

Be glad in the Lord, O ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart. And in that other word, and let all them that trust in thee rejoice in thee. Let them rejoice in thee.

And here is the spiritual sacrifice that we are to offer. The sacrifice of joy. Why you say I thought that joy was some kind of a feeling I would have when the Spirit of God took entire possession of my heart.

Dear friends, joy is something deeper than a feeling. It is the very joy of Jesus Christ. It is the very joy of God becoming our strength when we offer this spiritual sacrifice of rejoicing in Him always.

Some time ago I was coming back from Japan on a ship and I was talking with a young missionary couple belonging to the Evangelical Alliance mission. And in discussing these matters with this couple the husband said to me, the young man said to me, Bill, it's not joy that I... Then I pointed out to him that joy is power because the Bible says the joy of the Lord is our strength, is our power, is our power. Dear friends, joy is power.

And if you can be joyful under all the circumstances of life, if you can rejoice whatever your circumstances may be, then I want to tell you there is no greater power to be had than this. None at all. This is the greatest of all.

The joy is the power. And so let us offer this spiritual sacrifice. I want to tell you a little story in connection with this.

It's rather amusing in a way but quite interesting. I remember some time ago I was on my way to the capital city of Canada and going down the highway as I drove along I was praying that God would guide me to speak to those whose hearts had been prepared by the Spirit. And as I drove along I remembered that I would pass through a little town and in that town was a young woman who had just recently been married.

A young woman with whom I was well acquainted and whom I had helped in the Lord when she was but a child. And I'd been invited any time I was passing through to go and spend the night at that home. And so as I drove along I began to pray about this and I felt that it was the will of the Lord that I should spend the evening in that little town with these friends.

Well, when I got to the little town I went into the home and greeted this young woman and another young lady there. I found that she was a school teacher and that she was also a candidate with the Evangelical Alliance Mission and hoping to go to Africa as a missionary. She was also a graduate of Prairie Bible Institute, a very fine Canadian Bible Institute.

Well, sitting at the table as we sat there eating and talking I got onto the subject of thanking God for everything. I'm always on this subject, friends, because it was in learning this secret that I came to learn the secret of God, the secret of the Lord. And so I was talking about it and I noticed a rather peculiar look on the face of this school teacher and I said to her, Georgina, you don't look very happy about my suggesting or God suggesting in His Word that we thank Him for everything.

Do you thank Him for everything? She said, no, I don't. Well, I said, should you? Well, she said, it says in the Bible I should. Well, I said, will you? Are you supposed to do what's in the Bible? Are we supposed to obey it or was it just put there for us to choose whether we shall obey it or not obey? Oh, she said, I suppose we're supposed to obey it.

I said, Georgina, now, don't let's have any supposing. Just yes or no, must we obey the Lord or must we not? She said, we must. I said, all right.

You must in everything give thanks. Now, what is your trouble? What can't you thank Him for? Wherein does your controversy lie with God? And she told me this. She asked me this.

She said, can you answer this question? Here is my friend. She pointed to this young married woman. She said, here is my friend Lonnie.

Lonnie is a school teacher. I'm a school teacher also. Lonnie is bright and quick and intelligent.

I am dull and slow and stupid. Can you tell me why God made us as He did? I said, no, I'm sorry. I can't tell you the reason for God's doing things at all.

But I can tell you what God says that we are in everything give thanks. We have to rejoice in His will. Rejoice in His ways.

And I said, Georgina, you have a controversy with God. Now I said, let's stop for a moment. You say you're going to Africa or hope to go as a missionary? She said, yes.

Well, I said, when you get to Africa what are you going to tell these people there? Are you going to tell them that God loves them? Well, she said, of course. Doesn't He love them? Well, I said, He does, yes. But you don't believe that very profoundly.

You believe that God made Lonnie bright and intelligent and quick and He made you dull and slow and stupid. So He doesn't love you at any rate. And if you're not persuaded of His love, I am afraid that nobody else will be persuaded by your words.

And she saw the logic to that. I said, Georgina, I don't think that God made you as you think He did. But at any rate, let me suggest this, that you bow and say, Lord, if you did make me dull and slow and stupid, I'm going to thank you right now that you made me just as I am.

And that you had a purpose, Lord, in making me as I am. And also thank Him that He made Lonnie bright and smart and quick and intelligent. Thank Him for that.

Because there may be envy here, there may be something way down deep in your spirit, a spirit of envy, and it must be dealt with. And so you thank God not only for making you as He made you, but thank Him that He made Lonnie your friend as He made her. And that girl struggled.

I tell you, she had a terrific spiritual struggle. And I prayed. I didn't pray audibly that God would help her.

Dear friend, God will never help us to offer these spiritual sacrifices. When we offer them, when we offer them, then God's Spirit will come to quicken and to enable and to help. But not before.

And I prayed, O God, help this girl to break. Help her, Lord, to offer this spiritual sacrifice to Thee. And suddenly this girl began to pray.

And she said, Lord, I don't want to pray this prayer. I don't feel like doing it. I know there's rebellion in my heart.

But I know it does say in my word. And You have commanded it, Lord, that we are to rejoice in everything. So I'm going to rejoice that You made me just as I am.

And I'm going to rejoice that You made my friend lonely just as she is. And suddenly she stopped praying. And with a great shout, she shouted out, Lonely.

Lonely. Praise the Lord. I really mean it.

I can thank Him now. I can really thank Him. Then she got up from the table and went upstairs weeping.

Weeping with joy, dear friends. Why? Because that dear girl had been delivered by the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. That old wretched ego with all of its self-pity and all of its hostility to God, that evil heart of unbelief, God had dealt with it.

And that dear girl was off. Two months later, she was off to Africa. I found out that she'd been two years trying to get individuals or churches to support and send her.

And she had not been able to find any. But thank God, when she came to offer the sacrifice of praise, she was not only fitted to go among the heathen, but God wonderfully provided and quickly and suddenly raised up friends to help her. The sacrifice of joy.

Now, there are two others. I'll just mention them in passing. The sacrifice of a broken spirit.

We have this in the 51st Psalm where we read the sacrifices of God in verse 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. And the best way to have a broken spirit, and the only way to have a broken spirit, is to rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks.

Now, I want to tell you a little story about that. The sacrifice of a broken spirit. I remember once down in the city of Ottawa, I went to visit a dear lady there, a Christian lady.

She has one daughter on the mission field in South America. She has a boy, her only son in college, in university studying medicine, with a view to being a medical missionary. And I remember on this occasion I went into the house, into the home, and I found this lady very discouraged.

She, ordinarily, was very bright, very cheerful, but on this occasion she was really cast down in her soul. And I said to her, What is the matter with you sister? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And she said, Bill, I've got a real problem. She said, you know, when we got, when my husband and I became Christians, when the Lord saved us, we were, before that time, living a worldly life.

But we saw that we'd been saved to serve. And right after we were saved, I said to my husband, Let us sell this house we have here in the country, and let us move into the city of Ottawa, and buy a bigger home, and where we can entertain God's people, missionaries, preachers, and where we can have meetings and invite neighbors in. So she said her husband was perfectly agreeable, but when they began

searching for a house and learned the cost of the house they wanted to purchase, they realized they didn't have enough money.

So she said my husband went to his mother and told her the problem, told her of the problem, and she said, My husband's mother was willing to lend the money so that we might buy the house in the city. She said, After we bought the house and moved in, my husband's mother moved in with us. We hadn't reckoned on that, but she did.

And then she said, Of late, I've had a terrible time, because when the guests come to the door, and when the bell rings, I go to open the door and welcome the guests. She says, My mother-in-law gets in before me, steps in before me, and I just feel so embarrassed and I feel so hurt and so wounded. Well, I said, Do you want to know the solution to this problem? She said, I don't see that there is any solution to this problem.

I said, Oh yes, there is. God says if we offer the sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of joy and the sacrifice of a broken spirit, he will show us his salvation. Now I said, We're going to pray.

You're going to thank God for your mother-in-law. Thank God that she's a Christian. Thank God for everything thank-worthy about her, and don't mention anything else to the Lord.

Just leave it there. Thank the Lord that she, your mother-in-law, was willing to give the money that this house might be purchased, and then say, Lord, if you want me to be the doormat, I'm willing to be the doormat. If I'm to be nobody in this house, if that is thy holy will, then I thank thee for it.

I'm willing to be nothing and willing to be nobody, if that is thy holy will, and I accept it as thy will, and I rejoice in it. In the suffering, the mental anguish it has caused me, I'm going to rejoice in it. Even if underneath I am sorrowful, I am going to be always rejoicing.

So she said, You think that's the right thing to do? I said, I don't think it. I know it. And come on now, we're going to pray.

And we knelt down and she prayed. And she was thanking God for her mother-in-law and for this fiery trial. By the way, she told me something else.

She said, You know what, Bill? We've come to a real crisis in our home. My husband has not spoken to me for two weeks because of this problem I have with my mother-in-law. And she said, This is really crushing me.

Well, I said, Come on now, Mrs. Harrison. Let's get on with it. You just pray.

Say, Lord, I want to thank you for my mother-in-law. I want to thank you, Lord, that you chose her, redeemed her, saved her, and that for some reason thou didst allow her to come to this home. And from the present circumstances, I'm going to just accept him.

Not only accept him passively, but actively rejoice in it. Rejoice in it. Glory in my tribulation for thy name's sake.

Tell him that. And so she did. And when she was praying, she turned to me.

She said, Bill, you know what? All that enmity and bitterness against my mother-in-law has gone. It has gone. And that woman bowed there, thanking God that God had delivered her from that awful feeling of enmity, that feeling of bitterness that had been growing up in her heart.

And in the evening when her husband came home from the office, remember he hadn't spoken to her for two weeks. He came downstairs into the dining room where the lady of the house was preparing the table for supper. And he said, Margaret, I want to speak to you.

And he went over to his wife and he said, I'm sorry. I want to apologize. I've been all wrong in the attitude I've adopted.

And then she began to apologize to her husband for the bitterness she had had against his mother. And when they were standing, man and wife, standing there apologizing one to the other, the old mother-in-law came in and she said, Oh, Margaret, will you please forgive me? Oh, Harold, will you please forgive me? I've caused you an awful lot of trouble, but I shall leave tomorrow. And she was as good as her word.

She left on tomorrow. She left on tomorrow. And so, thank God, their problem was solved.

Now imagine a practical problem like that being solved in such a way as that. Ah, that is the way. The last sacrifice, the sacrifice, the living sacrifice of the body, the one we find in Romans 12.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Here we have the living sacrifice. Now I want to say something about this living sacrifice.

Dear friends, this sacrifice has to be offered in faith. I feel that this is where we err, that we do not offer our sacrifice of ourselves to Christ in faith. We are sincere, we are wholehearted, we do want to render unto the Lord an absolute surrender, but somehow we never seem to be confident that we have come to that place.

Well, there's only one way we can be confident, and that is to believe that what we offer unto God, He takes. You know, over in John's Gospel there's a little word there in the 20th chapter about the miracles, and it says this, many other miracles truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name. Now let me point something out to you.

You remember in the feeding of the multitude, the disciples brought the little lad who had the five loaves and the two fishes, and we read in the 26th chapter of Mark's Gospel that when the lad came and offered his five loaves and two fishes, Jesus took the loaves and the fishes. Dear friends, He took, and when you offer yourself to Him, He takes. But if you do not believe that He takes, then you shall never have the witness of the Spirit of God.

You shall never know the full assurance of faith. You shall never know the fullness of joy until you believe that Jesus has taken that which you have given Him. Some time ago, I was dealing with a man very active and energetic in the work of the Lord, a man who gives a great deal of money to God's cause every year, and I saw when I went into his home that he was very discouraged about some of the problems he had with his family, and I remember speaking to him about rejoicing in the Lord always, rejoicing in the Lord and giving ourselves to God and believing that God had taken us and giving our children to God and believing that God had taken them likewise, and I showed him the way.

I showed him from the illustration given us in the Word of God, the one we are to follow. By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that received the promises offered up his only son, accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead, wherein he received him in life's figure. I showed him that it was because of the faith as much as the offering of Isaac.

By faith, Abraham offered Isaac, and I said, Dear brother, you must give yourself to God in faith. You must believe that Jesus has taken you. I said, Did you ever do that? Why, he said, I did that twenty years ago.

Well, I said, you'll have to kneel down now and say, Lord, twenty years ago you took me, but because I didn't believe it, thou wert not able to manifest thyself in my life or through my life, but now I come to tell thee that twenty years ago when I offered myself to thee, thou didst take me. And he prayed that prayer, and God's Spirit bore witness to that blessed act. Now, dear friends, that's the thing we ought to remember, that Jesus takes.

What I give, He takes. And what He takes, He blesses, for He took the bread and He blessed. He blessed.

Ah, yes, He blesses the life with that blessing that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. He blesses that life, blesses it with the fullness of His Spirit, blesses it with the opening of that fountain that springs up into everlasting life, blesses the life with rivers of living water flowing out through us and emanating from us, influencing multitudes of others for the Lord Christ. Jesus takes.

What He takes, He blesses, and what He blesses, He breaks, and He gives to the multitude, and that is what He is waiting to do. And I want to say that in these spiritual sacrifices, listen, listen to this one, create in me a clean heart. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

God shall restore your joy when you begin to offer the sacrifice of joy. Uphold me with thy free spirit. Now listen to this, will you.

Listen carefully. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways. Then shall sinners be converted unto God.

Dearly beloved, it is here that sinners are converted unto God. It is in the offering of these sacrifices that God's Spirit works in our lives and works through our lives. We have that illustrated in the case of Paul and Silas that night in the jail at Philippi with their backs torn and bleeding and their feet fast in the stocks, enduring unspeakable anguish and agony, and yet at midnight Paul and Silas did not complain, did not murmur, did not repine.

At midnight, Paul and Silas sang praises unto God. They offered the sacrifice of praise. They offered the sacrifice of joy.

They offered the sacrifice of a broken spirit. They offered the sacrifice, the living sacrifice of their body. And suddenly there was a great earthquake and everyone's bands were loosed.

And you remember that night how salvation came not only to the Philippian jailer but, thank God, to his whole house. And I want to say it is this way. It is by this means that God is going to speak.

By this means, we have it again in Psalm 126. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed. Then were our mouths filled with laughter and our lips with singing.

Then said they among the heathen, The Lord, the Lord, are the heathen now are becoming conscious. The heathen are becoming God conscious. Why? Because God had turned again the captivity of his

people and their mouths were filled with laughter and their lips were filled with singing.

And how were their lips filled with singing? Why, they obeyed the command to in everything give thanks. They obeyed the command to rejoice evermore. So they came to the sacrifice of a broken spirit and were eager and weary and glad.

And with spontaneity offered their bodies a living sacrifice for Jesus Christ. Dear friends, that is the message. That is the message you need.

That is the message we need. Oh, let us make a vow. Shall we not, as David says in Psalm 116, pay this vow.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving. I tell you, you offer that sacrifice.

You go to God and say, Lord, I will rejoice. I will bless thy name at all times. I will in everything give thanks.

And I want to tell you, you shall come to the blessed reality of being set free from all the bondage that has made you wretched and that has hindered God's operation in and through your life. You shall come to the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Dear friends, make the vow now.

Make it before the Lord. God grant that you shall do so for his name's sake. You wanted to know a little bit about my friend William Ray.

It's a long story and there's plenty to it. But just a few points might be of interest. He went out as a young man to China where he was a missionary and was known to my father quite well.

He's always been a very quick wit, very humorous, kept everybody laughing in the party. And I remember quite clearly his visiting our home in London when he was in England a few years ago and keeping us entertained all one evening with the stories that he had to tell. But one story perhaps is of particular interest.

It is the story of when he had an operation. He went along to see the doctor about this pain that he'd got. When the doctor had examined him the doctor told him that it would mean an operation for him.

So Bill said, well, if you feel that it means an operation I suppose you'd better get on and have it. Well, he said, the doctor, there's one other thing and that is you're a missionary, aren't you? Now then, who's going to pay for this operation? Are you going to pay for it or is the mission going to pay for it? Well, he said, Bill, that doesn't matter. You get on and do the operation.

We'll sort out who pays for it afterwards. Not at all, said the doctor. I want to know first of all who's going to pay for it.

Are you going to be responsible for it or is the mission? Well, said Bill, then if you insist I'll be responsible for it. The doctor agreed and they arranged for the operation. Now things went wrong in the operation and Bill was very near to the door of death and as he was lying there semi-conscious, unable to speak, he realized that the doctors were talking about him, saying that he was very likely to die and as he lay there he prayed in his heart, Lord, why have you allowed this? And then the doctors tried to give him a blood transfusion but he was so far gone that he couldn't even get the blood into his veins.

And after they had given up trying he heard them saying, Well, there's nothing for it. He'll just die. As he lay there thinking about it, in his heart he asked God why it should be that he was allowed to die so soon.

And then there came to his mind the verse in 1 Peter 5, 10 After that ye have suffered a while, the Lord establish, strengthen, and keep you. He said, Hallelujah, Lord. That means that I won't die.

Thank you. By the next morning, sure enough, he was still there and feeling a bit better. And a houseman came around to see him.

So Bill said to the houseman, Hadn't you better give me a blood transfusion? Oh no, said the houseman, Don't worry about that, old man. He said, It'll just hurt if we tried to do that. Look here, said Bill, If I die and you haven't tried to give me a blood transfusion, it's you that killed me.

Well, the outcome of it was that the houseman got the blood transfusion equipment round and everybody's surprised that morning he took it. So the result was that he began to get better. And as he was getting over his operation, one by one the different doctors came to see this fellow who should have died and hadn't.

And Bill began to realize that something extraordinary had happened. And so when his own doctor came in to see him, he said, Doctor, do you know that this is a matter of God having healed me? And he proceeded to tell him about the promise that he'd had when he was so low. And he said, Do you agree, Doctor? Do you think that this is a case of divine healing? Well, said the doctor, I don't really believe in divine healing.

Well, said Bill, I was too far gone for you doctors to do anything, wasn't I? Well, yes, said the doctor, I suppose that's right. Well, then God must have healed me, said Bill. Well, said the doctor, I suppose that if there's any case where you could say that God had healed me, healed a person, well, I suppose it was this case.

I agree, said Bill. He said, I'm sure it is. It was God who healed me.

Well, I suppose so, said the doctor. We concede that point this time. And so, after they'd talked a little bit longer, the doctor began to say farewell.

And just as he was going, Bill said, Bye-bye, Doctor. You won't have the cheek to send me an account for what you couldn't do and God did, will you? He'd never got a bill either. Exactly.

Old Bill Ray is just full of such stories like that. Old Bill Ray is just full of such stories like that. He told us the occasion too when he was out in Japan and wanted scriptures to give to the people.

He was actually offering some Bibles for sale and found that nobody was taking them. So he asked a Japanese Christian why nobody was accepting them and got the reply that probably they hadn't got the money to pay for them. Well, this very much troubled Bill's conscience when he realized that there were people there who couldn't have Bibles simply because they hadn't got the money for them.

Praying about it, the Lord reminded him that he'd got a nice car back at home in Canada. So he cabled home to his wife, sold the car, and sent the money for Bibles. Well, his wife went along to see one of their business friends and said to the man, I've just received this cable from Bill, do you think that you could help me selling the car? Well, said the businessman, if he's determined to sell it, yes, I think I could help you.

So he went out, and I don't just know what happened, but through his business connections he was able to get a better price for the car than he would have got normally. So when he came along to see Mrs. Ray shortly afterwards, he said, here's the money for the car, \$700. And he said, here's the extra that I was able to get through my special connections, \$300.

He said, the \$700's for the car, and the \$300 you can buy yourself a refrigerator with. Oh no, said Mrs. Ray, I mustn't do that. The money's for Bibles in Japan, and it all goes out to Japan.

As the businessman was walking out the door, God said to him, what right have you got to tell her to spend part of the money on a refrigerator? If she needs a refrigerator, you can afford to buy one for her. So he had to get a refrigerator for them. And Bill, meanwhile, out in Japan used the money and distributed Bibles, but of course when he got back to Canada he hadn't got a car.

And one time when this man had given Bill a lift, God said to him, look, you're driving around in a lovely car, Bill Ray hasn't got a car, and you sold his car for him. You'd better get him another. So he had to buy a car for Bill.

Bill said to him, he said, you know, people sure get it tough when they disobey God, but he said it doesn't matter as long as...

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