

A Sacrifice Like a Perfume

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of sacrifice and selflessness, and the need to examine our own motives and actions rather than judging others.

Duration: 59:13

Scripture: Genesis 8:21, Mark 12:41-44, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 4:18

Topics: "Sacrificial Giving", "Worship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of sacrificial giving and worshiping God with a fragrant aroma, focusing on the story of the widow's offering in Mark 12. It challenges believers to offer their lives as living sacrifices, denying themselves for the sake of God's kingdom. The speaker highlights the need for genuine love and sacrifice in all aspects of life, including financial giving, to please God and be filled with the Spirit of Christ.

Transcript

Let's turn to Ephesians in chapter 5. One of the things that we read frequently in the Old Testament, if you have read through the Old Testament, is that right from, you know, Abel, the first thing that you read after the Garden of Eden is that Cain and Abel offered a sacrifice to God. It's the first thing written in the Bible after man was put out of Eden. But only one of those sacrifices was accepted.

Cain's sacrifice was not accepted. Abel's sacrifice was accepted, teaching us that not everyone who makes a sacrifice for God, his sacrifice is accepted. And that's a lesson that many Christians need to learn too, because a lot of us think, God will surely appreciate all the sacrifices I've made for him.

Coming on a Sunday morning may be a bit of a sacrifice, but it could be like Cain's sacrifice, not accepted. Then what's the use? I mean, I don't want to give something which God says, don't want it. Imagine my going and giving something to God and God says, no, that's worse than not coming and giving at all.

You know, you give a gift to somebody and he says, no, I won't get it. I won't take it. Don't you think that's a bit of an insult to you? I think it is.

If I were to give a gift to somebody which I've taken trouble to prepare and go and give to him, maybe his birthday or something. And he says, no, I don't want it. That would indicate that that person has got something against me.

Definitely. And if God rejects a sacrifice, it indicates God's got something against you. He certainly had something against Cain.

But do you think Cain knew that when he brought that sacrifice? No. It's only when the fire fell on Abel's sacrifice and did not fall on his that he knew, hey, Abel's sacrifice accepted, mine is not. At least he knew that.

The tragedy today is that many Christians don't even know they're worse off than Abel, worse off than Cain. Imagine discovering after I've lived 60, 70 years, when I stand before God, that he didn't accept any of the sacrifices I made. That'd be terrible.

And I'd say, Lord, why didn't you tell me when I was on earth? And the Lord would say, didn't you have a Bible? Didn't you read it? Oh, you were more busy watching television. No wonder you didn't know what I accept and what I don't accept. It's, for me anyway, it's very important for me to know that everything I do is accepted by God.

That everything I give is accepted by God. I'm not interested in praying long prayers. I'm interested in praying prayers that God accepts.

Many an all-night prayer meeting, God doesn't accept. And the people satisfy themselves, I pray. Many fasting, God doesn't accept.

The people satisfy themselves. I have fasted. Is it possible that you are going through many religious activities like Cain, God's not accepting them? Yeah, it's really possible.

My own conviction is that lots and lots of sacrifices made by believers, they are sacrifices. They have denied themselves something. It could be money they give.

It could be their body. Before I come to Ephesians 5, let me show you 1 Corinthians 13. In 1 Corinthians 13, it says, I want to leave out a little section here and read it like this.

I give all my possessions to feed the poor and I even give my body to be burned as a martyr for God. It profits me nothing. God says zero out of hundred.

Zero out of hundred? After giving all my money to help the poor? Not just one rupee to a beggar, all my money to help the poor. My body to be burned for Christ? Zero. It's written there in Scripture because what counts with God is not the action, but the motive.

We'll discover one thing when we stand before the Lord in the final day, that the important question will be not what did you do, but why did you do it? Not how much did you do, but why did you do it? Anything. I believe that every sermon I ever preached in my life will be evaluated by God one day and it will not be evaluated for how much people accepted it or how fine it was or how good the grammar was or how eloquent it was or not even by what results it produced. But why did you preach? Why did you say that? Why did you add that other sentence? Everything I, the Bible says, I mean, right? As soon as man is created, he's tested and that's the message of the Bible.

Genesis chapter 3, as soon as he's created, he's tested in a garden. And the last page of the Bible, it says in Revelation 22, Jesus says, I'm coming quickly and my reward is with me to give to every man according to his work because he's been tested. And the Bible from cover to cover is full of examples of people

whom God tested.

Abraham, David, the apostles. It says in one place where there were 5,000 hungry people and Jesus asked Philip a question, how shall we feed them? Not because Jesus didn't know what to do, but it says he was testing Philip with a question. So it's not what I did, but it says here, was it out of love? Is it because I love Jesus with all my heart that I did that? Or was it a ritual that was taught to me by my parents that I thought was a good thing to do? It has no value.

You'll discover in the final day that love alone has value. Whatever I do, which is not done in love, will be burnt out. If I've done it out of love for Christ and from that because of love for my fellow human being, it'll remain for all eternity.

Think that you and I have the possibility of doing little things and that little action of ours remains for all eternity because the motive behind that action was love for Jesus Christ and love for our fellow human being. And whatever you did carelessly as a matter of ritual or because you hated somebody or you didn't like somebody, that will also cause you torment and sorrow throughout eternity. Every person you spoke evil about, you gossiped about, you judged without knowing all the facts, and one day God shows you at the judgment seat of Christ that that person whom you judged had a much better life than you.

And that person whom you criticized did that thing with a very good motive. You gave him zero, God gave him a hundred because you couldn't see the motive. Like a foolish, stupid idiot, you judged him.

All people who judge others are foolish and stupid and idiots. I have no hesitation in saying that because they are violating a law of God which says, don't judge according to the outward appearance because you don't know the man's motive. God sees the motive.

So some places where you give zero, he will give a hundred. And some places where you give a hundred to somebody, he will give zero. So I say, Lord, I'm not the examiner.

I'm not the one who evaluates these answer papers. No. They've written their answers.

It's fine. I've seen it, but I give no marks because I don't know. That's a very good policy to follow.

I remember in my younger days, like all the foolish children of Adam, I never followed this principle. I judged many people. I judged servants of God.

I judged elders of churches. I'd never been an elder myself. I never planted a church myself, but I judged others.

And I suffered the consequences of it. I reaped in my life, in my younger days, the consequences of my judgment. I became a backslider.

That was God's punishment on me. Discipline, I would say, because he didn't want to cast me off forever, but he wanted to teach me a lesson that the area where you judge another, you will fail yourself. The sad thing is sometimes our children also suffer because they get infected with this poison.

And so I say to you what I've said for many, many years now. I have these words written in front of my table at home. I look at it often.

The happiest people in the world are those who never judge others, but always judge themselves. I need to remind myself of that frequently because I have a flesh which has not been eradicated. And one of the primary characteristics of that flesh is to exalt oneself over others.

And one manifestation of that is to judge them. I am not like you. That's what you're saying when you judge somebody.

I am better than you. That's one of the primary characteristics of the flesh. And that's why we are so miserable.

That's why we frequently get depressed and discouraged. Let me tell you my honest testimony. I used to be tremendously depressed and discouraged in my younger Christian life.

But if you ask me when was the last time you were depressed or discouraged, I can't honestly, I can't think. It goes back so many years and decades. It's gone.

You want to live a happy life? God wants you to. The happiest people on earth are those who never judge others, but always judge themselves. Let's turn to Ephesians in chapter five.

So all that I'm going to say is for us to examine our own life and not somebody else's. I told you that love is the most important thing. And it says here in Ephesians five in verse two, verse one, be imitators of God.

It's the one place in the Bible which says, I have to imitate God. Jesus said that. You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

You know, we hold up examples for people. Look at that person. Follow his example.

Follow his example. I like what mother Teresa said. She said, Jesus didn't hold up Moses and Elijah as an example.

He said, be like your father. Be like your father in heaven. Perfect.

That's our standard. Be imitators of God. Don't say, oh, brother, I don't have any good examples around me.

Isn't God there? Be imitators of God and walk in love. Because that's what God's nature is. God is love.

He never changes. His discipline is a discipline of love. His rebuke is a rebuke of love.

His encouragement is an encouragement of love. His gifts are gifts of love. Everything he does is out of love.

He's the most perfect father in the universe. And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you. We have one more example, the son of God.

Walk in love following Christ's example, the way he loved you and gave himself up for us. An offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. You know how nice we feel when we smell a really good perfume.

There's something nice about it. And that's the example God uses. God doesn't have a nose or sense of smell or anything, but he's using human language.

Just like what God is saying is just like you feel so nice when you get a very pleasant smell. And you feel so repelled when you have a smell something dirty. God says, I also am delighted when I see somebody giving himself up for me and for others as a sacrifice.

That's the thing that brings a beautiful perfume before me. And when I see a man selfishly living for himself and his family, ah, that's a dirty smell. And just like you're repelled by a dirty smell.

I'm repelled by somebody who just thinks of himself. The characteristic of the children of Adam is they live for themselves. It's not adultery and murder and all that.

Those are only the manifestations of the fruit. The fruit comes from the tree. The tree is I live for myself.

And because I live for myself, somebody says, I want to commit adultery because that's good for me. I want to kill that fellow because he hurt me. It's all self, self, self, self, self.

Selfishness is the opposite of love. And that's what makes God pull back. I don't want that.

Do you feel God pulls back from you? Because of something he smells in your life? Other people around you don't have that sense of smell. So they're good friends of yours. Because most of them don't know, don't have a clue about the motive with which you're saying something, doing something.

You know how some people say, I'm just saying this for prayer and pass on some gossip. Sounds very spiritual. You think God is fooled by all that? People are fooled because they don't have discernment.

I've discovered that 99% of born again believers don't have discernment about what is really spiritual. So don't be deceived that most people in the church here think you're a pretty spiritual person. It means nothing.

They're not spiritual enough to evaluate you. A spiritual man, the Bible says, can discern. And he's not fooled.

Because he lives close to God. And when he lives close to God, he can discern. You got to live very close to God to discern.

So here is what is pleasing to God. When a man, it says about Jesus, he loved us, gave himself up for us, is the opposite of living for oneself. We can say the opposite is a man lived, loved himself and sacrificed many things for himself and his family.

Well, is there anybody in the world who doesn't sacrifice for that family? I know there are a few drunken fathers and mothers and few evil fathers and mothers who ignore their children. But I say they are in the minority. Lots of atheistic families, they take very good care of their children.

They sacrifice a lot. I personally know atheists who have sacrificed a lot for their children. That's not something special that you sacrifice for the sake of your children.

Does not make you one bit better than any atheist or non-Christian. That's not what he's talking about. Jesus gave himself for us an offering of a fragrant aroma.

In the Old Testament, you read occasions like that. It says, when Noah came out of the ark, after God had wiped out the earth because of their sin, the first thing he did, just like Abel, was offer a sacrifice. And it

says there, God smelt a fragrant aroma.

What does it mean? Here was a man who, it was not the land that God was bothered about, the man behind the offering. That's what gives value to the offering. Here was a man who stood for me for 120 years, preaching the truth.

And everybody mocked him, made fun of him, laughed at him, called him a madman. Noah was 480 years old when he started preaching. And suddenly he started preaching.

It's going to rain. God's going to judge. I'm building an ark and there's no sea anywhere near there.

Building a ship when there's no sea or lake nearby. People really thought he had gone crazy. But he had heard God.

And he preached and preached and preached and preached for 120 years. Nobody joined him. He never got discouraged.

I wonder how many of us could do that, to preach the truth of God without lowering our standards. If Noah had lowered the standards, he could have got many people into his church, but he didn't. He preached and preached and preached and preached and preached.

And only his family. It doesn't matter. One day God told Noah, get into the ark with your family.

And the judgment came and destroyed everybody else. Can you imagine how God was so delighted that he found one man on earth who did what he wanted him to do? I believe God finds the same delight in anyone who stands for him today without compromise. Who brings up his children in a good way that they get into the ark with him.

Noah had only three sons and they were all in the ark with him. He had three daughters-in-law. They were all in the ark with him.

That's a blessed man. And God saw that this man Noah, he made the ark with his own money. Have you heard of people serving God full time with their own money? Noah was the first.

He didn't preach to take an offering. He preached the truth of God to warn people about what was coming, whether people believed him or not. And imagine how expensive it was to build a ship.

He cut down trees from his own field. He spent millions of his own money to serve the Lord. And it says here that when Noah came out of the ark, he built an altar.

This is Genesis 8 verse 20. And it says in verse 21, the Lord smelled the soothing aroma. That's quite a verse.

Genesis 8 verse 21. The Lord smelled a soothing aroma. What do you think that that means? You know that God doesn't have a nose or a sense of smell.

He's using human language to tell us just like the nice sensation you have when you smell a beautiful perfume. That's exactly how I felt when I saw Noah offering this offering to me. I wasn't looking at the lambs and whatever there was on that altar, but the man behind that.

God's looking for such people today because he said the last days will be like the days of Noah. The world will be as evil as Noah's day, full of violence and sexual sin. That was characteristic of Noah's day.

You read in Genesis 6, violence and sexual sin were the two things characteristic of Noah's day. There were terrorists, murderers, and there was no police. The last days will be like that.

But the last days will also have a few people like Noah here and there who bring up their families in the fear of God. Who make sure that every member of their family is in the ark in Christ and who are witnesses irrespective of whether people call them mad or crazy or heretics or false teachers or whatever. It makes no difference.

And you endure. Even if they stand alone, they stand alone. That's how Jesus stood.

He offered himself as a sacrifice to God, not just on the cross once for all, but all his life was a sacrifice. And God smelled something pleasant long before he went to the cross. He said when he was 30 years old at his baptism, this is my son.

I'm so delighted in him. When you read those words about Jesus, do you have a longing that God will say the same about you? I have. I say, Lord, when you look at my life, my private life, those areas in my life which nobody in the church knows about, the thoughts I think about, the thing I think about when I wake up in the morning, when I go to bed at night, the thing I'm thinking about during the day, my attitude to money, the way I look at women, the way I look at people and my enemies perhaps.

Do you smell something sweet? Do you see that I sacrificed something of myself because I want to please you? That is the Spirit of Christ. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ in the Bible. It's very sad that so many people have thought that being filled with the Holy Spirit means you speak in tongues, you do a lot of emotional jump around, etc.

A man can be drunk with whiskey and do all that. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. And when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ will come into you, controlling your thoughts, your motives, your actions.

That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit. And that will be the Spirit that Jesus had who gave himself as a sacrifice, a sweet perfume to God. Then you're really filled with the Spirit.

It says further down in Ephesians 5, verse 25, same chapter, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, gave himself up for her. How did Christ prove his love for the church? He gave himself up for the church. I have a responsibility for a number of churches.

God has given that to me. It's not my choice. I never chose it.

I would say it's an honor, the privilege God's given me to have responsibility for a number of elders, a number of churches. And I'll tell you honestly, it's the best I know how, I love the church. I don't mean the worldwide church.

I'm not talking about the people in Argentina and China whom it's easy to love. I'm talking about brothers and sisters whom I see regularly. It's easy to say I love them.

But the only way I can prove my love for the church is by giving myself up for it. That's what it says here. Christ loved the church, gave himself up for it.

There's no other way. It's not by coming to church Sunday morning that I prove I love the church. That may only prove you're a religious man.

You could be like Cain. If Cain were alive today, he'd be here every Sunday morning to offer a sacrifice to God. The only thing is God wouldn't accept the sacrifice, that's all.

You think all the praise and thanksgiving that goes on today, Sunday, in every part of the world, God accepts? Oh no, not at all. It can sound very wonderful, but God's not much bothered with music. I'll tell you that music is a gift of God, but it doesn't disturb him if some people can't play the keyboard well or the drums well or the guitar well.

And it doesn't excite him when somebody does play it well. Please remember that. I've told you many times how many, many years ago, I remember I was standing right here one Sunday morning.

And some of the musicians behind were not, I mean, I don't have such a great ear for music, but even my ear, it was a bit jarring. So it wasn't good. And the Lord spoke to me and said, do you know that I'm not disturbed because the music is not good? Because two instruments are not playing together? I'm disturbed because there's a husband and wife here who are not playing on the same scale.

I'm disturbed because two brothers here can't get along with each other. Two sisters here can't get along with each other. That disturbs me much more than some instrument is not playing together.

And I prayed a prayer that day. And I said, Lord, from now on, I never want to be disturbed by things that don't disturb me. And I want to be disturbed by the things that disturb me.

It's good if we turn off our cell phones before the message starts. But if despite the thousand and one warnings, somebody still doesn't turn it off and it rings during the meeting, I don't believe he did it deliberately to disturb the meeting. Did he tell somebody, call me in the middle of the meeting? No, it won't disturb me because it doesn't disturb God.

What disturbs God is two people who can't get along with each other. If this fan begins to creak, maybe we'll turn it off, but it won't disturb me. I said, Lord, I never in my life.

I mean, we want to do things well. We want to turn off our cell phones. We want to make sure fans don't creak.

If one of these lights goes off, okay, we'd like to have it on, change the bulb. But I'm not going to be disturbed by these things. Same thing in your home.

Ask yourself, what a lot of things disturb you, make you fight with your husband or wife, things which God is not disturbed at all. And the things that disturb God don't disturb you. What is it that makes a sweet aroma to God? There was a great saint who said, the only commandment I give you is love God with all your heart and do what you like.

Is that all? Love God with all your heart and do what you like. Because when you love God with all your heart, what you like will be what God likes. It's true.

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. I tell you, those are the ones this morning and every day in whom God smells aroma. Those who got the spirit of Christ.

Not those who boast, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and I speak in tongues. Maybe you do. But there's a stench coming out of your life to God.

He smells something rotten. And just like you turn away from something. Sometimes when I've traveled in a bus down to some village for a meeting and it stops somewhere and it's written there, toilet.

And boy, you got to see these toilets in these village bus stops. You got to see it to believe it. You go there desperately wanting to use it.

You enter through the door. You come out and you say, I think I'll hang on till I reach my destination. There's something there repulsive.

That's how God feels when he sees somebody who's praising him, saying so many wonderful things and CFC acting so spiritual. And he looks at his life and he sees a stench of living for himself. He pulls back.

No, no, no, no. I don't want God to pull back from me. I want to make sure that every area of my life is a sweet perfume to God.

And God's shown me the way. Sacrifice. He offered himself as a sacrifice to God.

You know, we read in 1 Corinthians 13 that you can sacrifice without love. But you can't love without sacrifice. That's not possible.

You can sacrifice your money, your time, your life without love. But you can't love without sacrificing. That's impossible.

God so loved the world that he preached. God so loved the world that he gave. And there's a difference in giving.

God so loved the world that he gave the best he had. He gave his only begotten son. That is the love of God.

It's not just giving. Many people know that Brother Zach preaches against tithing. A lot of people are upset with me.

Because I say tithing is an old covenant law. And people who are upset with me are pastors. Whose offering goes down when people listen to my preaching.

That's one side. The people who are happy with my preaching are those who really don't want to give anything to God. Ah, this is the place I love.

Both are far away from God, I'll tell you that. So don't think that because you love my preaching against tithing you're very spiritual. You're just as bad.

As those pastors. Only you're at the other end of the spectrum, that's all. But what do I preach? I preach giving.

Sacrificial giving. Which is much more than tithing. God so loved the world that he gave his best.

That's sacrifice. Giving is not a sacrifice. You can give without sacrifice.

But when you love you give your best. Think of mothers and fathers who sacrifice, sacrifice for their children. There's a wonderful true story that I heard.

In the United States of a poor woman, her son was caught falsely accused for some crime. You know, every now and then you read that in the United States they did a DNA test on some man who's been in jail for 20 years and discovered that he wasn't the criminal. Imagine being 20 years in jail.

And then they let you go saying, no, no, no, you're not the criminal. Well, that type of thing happens sometimes. Well, this guy was put into jail and his mother knew.

My son never did that. But she didn't have the money to get a good lawyer. And she was a cleaning woman.

Poor cleaning woman. I remember reading an article about her years ago called Tilly Scrubbed On. That was her name, Tilly.

She scrubbed floors morning, noon, and night to raise money to get a lawyer to fight the case for her son. Years and years and years, only a mother will do it. Finally, she saved the money to get a lawyer and got her son released.

Did she give to her son? Sure. What a price. I'm sure many of you mothers will do it too.

I'm sure many atheist mothers will also do it. This mother, I don't even know whether she was a Christian. That's the heart of a mother.

Sacrifice of a true mother. But God's love is even greater. When God compares his love, he says, even a mother may forget her child, Isaiah 49, 15, I won't forget you.

God so loved that he gave. And when I say the spirit of, I want the spirit of God to fill me. How many of you have prayed for the Holy Spirit to be immersed in the spirit of God? Hang on now.

Do you really want it? Do you really want to be filled with a spirit that makes you give all your money to God? You want it or not? Hang on before you ask God for such things. Give your time, all your spare time for God. No more spare time to watch television and movies and things like that.

You want it. You know why people don't get filled with the spirit? Because God sees these people are asking for an excitement. They don't want my spirit.

Oh, no. They want to testify that I also got it. They want to speak in tongues.

They want some supernatural gift. They want to preach well or sing well. No, brother, sister.

They want to be filled with the spirit of a fragrant aroma. And I believe God is speaking right now to some of you sitting here. He's got his eye on you.

He's calling you. Live a worthwhile life on earth. I'm so thankful that when I was 21 years old, I said, Lord, I've got only one life.

And if I discover at the end of my life, the wrongs I did in this life, the way I live, at the end of my life, I'll either feel happy or unhappy. That's it. And particularly when I get into eternity and look over my life, the way I live, and I'll tell you something.

If you follow the example of Christ, you will have no regret. We all agree there. If I were to ask you the question, how many of you believe that if you follow Jesus' example, you will live without any reserve? Totally.

Whatever the cost. That's it. It's like the man of God put it.

He said, Lord, whatever it costs, send me the bill. I'll pay it. Jesus said, count the cost.

That's what makes a difference between a man of God and a believer who just wants to go to heaven. Between a woman of God and a sister who just wants to go to heaven. Between a woman who wants to love her children for the glory of God and a woman who wants my children to be a good testimony in the church.

A lot of difference. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. You know, it says in Romans 12, verse 1, in view of all the mercies of God, that means when you think of the wonderful things God has done for you, God has done amazing things for you.

And he lists some of that in chapter 5, 6, 7, 8. Wonderful things God has done. 9, 10, 11. And he says at the end, in view of all these mercies of God, what are you going to do in return? Go on Sunday morning and clap your hands for half an hour and say, praise the Lord, I thank you, Lord, and I love you and all that.

Is that all you're going to say? Then you don't understand how much God has done for you. If you really believe God's done such fantastic things for you, as many of us will say, or when we pray, oh God, we say the most wonderful things, and the better your English language, the more wonderful things you can say to God. You think God is impressed? God says, yeah, his English is good.

He's not impressed. Is it a fragrant aroma? It's a fragrant aroma if there's a life behind it. Present your body, a living sacrifice to God.

In the Old Testament, they had only dead sacrifices. This is one difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant. Every sacrifice in the Old Covenant was dead, except a few where they allowed the birds to fly in the air.

But in the New Covenant, every sacrifice is to be a living sacrifice. That means every day, while I'm alive, I give my life, my body. We're going to break down this body.

Lord, I give my eyes to you today as a sacrifice. There are many things I'd like to look at today. My dirty lusts want me to look at many things, but I'm going to sacrifice them.

Why do I want to sacrifice them? Because you love me. You gave yourself to purchase me from this wretched thing that messed up my life. I don't want to go into all that again.

It's a sacrifice. Sacrifice means it's painful. I have to deny myself something.

When you don't look at that pornographic picture in a book or the internet or anywhere, you have to deny yourself something. It's a little pain, but that's where you prove your love for God. What do you say to yourself today? Lord, I'm going to prove my love to you, not on Sunday morning, but when I sit before the computer and I'm tempted to see something, when I sit before the television and I'm tempted to see something, I'm going to prove my love for you there.

I'm going to prove my love for you when I want to contribute for the work of God on earth. Not just in words. Any person can use words.

But Lord, your work is on my heart, and I want to spread your work, and I want to sacrifice for it, first of all, by giving my body. I want to sacrifice my tongue, Lord, many a time during the day. I'm tempted to say something to somebody, to give them a piece of my mind, as they say, and I'm going to be a sacrifice.

That's where I prove my love for you. I'm going to hold my tongue, just like I open my mouth and let my tongue loose on Sunday morning to praise you, I'm going to control my tongue in that provocative situation and prove my love for you there. And I'll tell you, that's a greater proof of your love when you hold your tongue somewhere than when you open your mouth and let loose your tongue in praise on Sunday morning.

That's what it means to give our body, my eyes, my tongue. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, because that's how we worship, it says. That's the type of worship that the Father is receiving.

The Father seeks for people around the world who will worship him in spirit and truth, and it's a sacrifice. The way they offered to worship God in the Old Testament was with a sacrifice. And David said in 2 Samuel 24, 24, when he was offering a sacrifice, I will never, I will never give to my God that which costs me nothing.

I will never give to my God that which costs me nothing, because it's shameful. I mean, when you give a gift to a beggar, okay, that's all right. He doesn't owe you anything.

But think if you were going to give a gift to a doctor who did an amazing surgery on your son or daughter and saved his life from certain death, and he says to you, I'm not going to charge you anything. It's free. But I want to go and give him a gift.

What will you give him? A greeting card? Five rupees? We are more grateful to human beings who've done something for us in the physical realm than we are to God. I tell you, if you were to go to Tirupati, which is the great Hindu temple city, and see the offerings that people put into those handis, into those jars, for their God, they would put most Christian churches to shame. They would.

We say, we've got more light. We're not blind like them. Your God deserves less than their God? Really? Or are you fooling yourself that you love God? You know, the Philippian Christians sent Paul some money once because they were very grateful for all the ministry he had fulfilled in their midst.

Now, Paul was a man with dignity as far as possible. He lived with his own, worked with his own hands and supported himself. And he trusted God.

He didn't depend on the Philippian believers or anybody. He trusted his Heavenly Father and he trusted. Didn't he? When he didn't have enough money to buy new clothes, he lived with the old clothes.

And every true servant of God in the history of the Christian church has gone through that. But when they sent him some money, he said, in verse 10, Philippians 4.10, he says, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that at last indeed you were concerned before but you lacked the opportunity. That means they sent him some money.

Not that I speak from want because I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know how to get along when I have very little. And I know also how to live in prosperity.

In every circumstance, I have learned the secret of having much or having little, being filled, going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all of this through Christ who strengthens me. But you have done well to share with me in my financial need.

And you yourselves know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel after I left Macedonia, no church supported me financially. In the matter of giving and receiving. But you alone.

So Paul did receive sometimes from, but he didn't receive from every church because he was a spiritual man who knew where to receive and where not to receive. He wasn't indiscriminately saying, yeah, yeah, thank you very much. And when I was in Thessalonica, you sent a gift to me more than once.

Because in Thessalonica, we read in 2 Thessalonians 3, Paul was even paying for the food that the believers supplied to him. He was very careful. He paid believers for the food they gave.

And the church in Macedonia, Philippi, sent him money. Because they knew that with his tent making, he may not be able to make enough for himself and Timothy and all his team. Then he says, not that I seek the gift itself.

Listen to this man of God. He says, when I got a gift, I didn't say, ah, my need is met. No, I sought for the profit, the blessing, which will come to you.

The blessing that will come to you because you gave to God's servant or to God's work. But I received everything in full and I have an abundance. I have plenty.

What a man he was. To the only church that supports him, he says, I've got plenty. And they may say, ah, then we don't need to send to Paul.

He was willing to take that risk. That when he had nothing, he would pretend that he had everything so that he would not live on charity. God would supply his need.

He was a servant of Almighty God. But I have received from Ephraim, and listen to this now, verse 18. What you have sent, this money, is a fragrant aroma.

Uh-huh. Money is a fragrant aroma. A sacrifice that God is so pleased with.

You see how the fragrant aroma not only applies to ourself and our body, it applies to the things we give to God materially where I deny myself and sacrificially give to God. It may be anything, you know, where I don't seek to take advantage of the church in any way, but I seek to bless the church and God's work that it can spread. God's work goes on, not with the big crowds of rich people, but with the few who give sacrificially like that.

A fragrant aroma. God smells of perfume. I'll give you an example of that and then I'll close.

In Mark chapter 12, we read of Jesus smelling an aroma. Mark 12 41. And these are amazing words.

He sat down opposite the treasury in the temple. In the temple there was a box. They didn't take a collection in the temple.

There was a box there the way we do it because God wanted people to give secretly and cheerfully without people knowing. And it says here Jesus began to observe how people were putting money into this offering box. Does Brother Zach preach that Jesus sits next to the offering box and is watching how people give? Yes, he does preach that because it's written in the Bible.

How many of you knew that Jesus sits next to the offering box watching how people give? Some people say, Jesus is not interested in all that. Oh yes, he is because he's looking at people's hearts. He's not seeing how much they give.

Read carefully. He began observing how much the people gave. No, not at all.

He never observes how much people give. He was observing how, how, not how much. That's what we have preached in this church for 32 years.

But how? Is it sacrificially or not? Many rich people put in large sums and he was not impressed by any of them. Great. I love Jesus.

He's not impressed with rich people and what they give. I'm not impressed either. But he saw this poor widow.

She had two small copper coins and he saw her putting it in and he didn't say, stop, stop sister, you're poor, keep that. I think I would have done that sometimes. He said, no, let her give it.

God will bless her and take care of her much better than if she tries to live with these two copper coins. She'd probably get a cup of tea with this, that's all. But if she gives, God will so bless her she'll be able to pay her rent.

Oh, Jesus is so wise. He called his disciples. Hey, come here.

I want you to see something. Jesus is so excited. You know what people are excited about today? Brother, do you know how much we got in the offering box this week? Aha, now you wouldn't believe it.

That's not what excites Jesus. He called his disciples and said, see this woman. All these people put out of their surplus but she sacrificed.

That's the thing. You can give out of your surplus or you can give sacrificially. And Jesus doesn't observe how much you give, but how.

And it's a fragrant aroma. I want to be a fragrant aroma to God. Yeah.

I say, Lord, in everything I want to give to you secretly. I'm not preaching what I've not practiced. I would never preach what I don't practice.

God has blessed me immensely. He's blessed my children immensely. He's blessed my family immensely.

I live for the glory of God. Heavenly Father, help us to honor you. Not just speak words, but give as you gave your son for us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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