

An Example of Sacrifice; Romans 12:1-3

I. What is Sacrifice?

- A. The act of killing an animal as an act of worship, restitution, or atonement in regards to God (The Burnt Offering, The Trespass Offering, and the Sin Offering)
 - 1. This Greek word is used 28 times in the New Testament
 - 2. It refers directly to Old Testament worship 23 times
 - 3. When people heard this word, it must have triggered thoughts of Old Testament worship; the sacrificing of animals, grain offerings, and drink offerings
- B. Paul writes, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice”
- C. Our task, then, is to put our lives on the altar, effectively killing (burning) our own plans and goals, replacing them with God’s plans and goals which is our “spiritual worship”
- D. Other definitions
 - 1. An offering made to God
 - 2. “The act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone,” Merriam-Webster’s
- E. Our task this morning is to see what that looks like for us today

II. Resources

- A. Philippians 4:14–20; 14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.
- B. Paul compares their monetary giving to the Golden Altar where they burned incense in the Tabernacle
- C. Exodus 40:25–27; 25 and set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. 26 He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, 27 and burned fragrant incense on it, as the Lord had commanded Moses.
- D. Our giving is designed to be a fragrant offering like the incense on the golden altar
- E. Revelation 8:2–4; 2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, 4 and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.
- F. It is important to understand this concept because too often we are so taken up with our own finances we forget our sacrificial offering, our spiritual worship
 - 1. A lot of us live week to week and sometimes are very concerned about how we are going to get by
 - 2. Some are concerned about retirement, so ensure that they give to their IRA every month
 - 3. We make budgets to ensure all our debts are covered, and that maybe we can put some in savings
 - 4. We take our finances very seriously
 - 5. The churches finances are our finances; we are the church
 - 6. If we would take such pains to ensure that the church makes ends meet

7. Fortunately we have an Elder that is very good at budgeting and finances
 8. It is our task to determine what our sacrifice, our smoke of the incense, our prayer will be
 9. We must decide in our heart (2 Corinthians 9:7) what our sacrifice will be, then follow through with it
 10. 2 Corinthians 9:1–5; 1 Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. 4 Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.
- G. I find it necessary to urge us to complete our sacrifice, to give what we have decided in our hearts
 - H. To let our offering become a sweet smelling aroma that rises to the Father
 - I. Hebrews 13:16; Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

III. Ourselves

- A. Another area in which we need some urging
- B. In churches across the country this statistic rings true, “80% of the work is accomplished by 20% of the people.”
- C. That is a hard statistic to hear
 1. In a congregation of 100 people, that means the majority of the work is done by 20 people
 2. 1 Corinthians 12:12–20; 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.
- D. If there is anyone out there that thinks you’re unimportant to this body, you are mistaken
 1. Each person is important and adds to this body a unique service (sacrifice)
 2. This service is indispensable and needed by the body
 3. We cannot consider ourselves as bystanders or guests
- E. We need everyone’s time, energy, and creativity
 1. Being the Body of Christ is more than just meeting on Sundays and Wednesdays
 2. Romans 12:3–8; 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so

we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

- F. This is not an all inclusive list, but lets look at a few of them
 - 1. Service - the act of providing something to meet a need
 - 2. Teaching - ask Byron how difficult it is to get teachers
 - 3. Exhort - to alleviate sorrow or stress; to give emotional strength
 - 4. We all can't do everything, but if each one of us does something, that means that those 20 people aren't doing everything
 - 5. Whatever it is that you are good at doing, do it with fervor!
 - G. 2 Corinthians 8:1–5; 1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.
 - H. Christianity is not limited to our worship on Sundays and Wednesdays
 - I. Our service in the Kingdom does not revolve around this building (but our service must include keeping the building serviceable)
 - J. Our service does not revolve around church “programs” (even though they are important and need volunteers to run them and to participate in them)
 - K. This congregation that God has place here on the corner of 9th Street and Columbia Street needs you!
 - L. You are a vital member and you are needed to contribute the gift that God gave you (whatever that may be)
- IV. Our Example
- A. John 13:15; For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
 - B. 1 Peter 2:21; For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.
 - C. If we are going to follow “in His steps” then we must relinquish who we are to God and let Him make us who He wants us to be
 - D. This means giving of our resources and of ourselves