

## We are to honour God– 09/10/2016

***“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving***

***And pay your vows to the Most High;***

***<sup>15</sup> Call upon Me in the day of trouble;***

***I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”(Psalm 50:14-15)***

Beloved in the Lord,

Offering sacrifices are a part of most religious systems. We have a Thai restaurant opposite our house, and on regular occasions there is a food sacrifice with incense placed outside the restaurant as a devotion to Buddha. People offer sacrifices to their gods in the hope of gaining their favour, in the hope of receiving a blessing.

Before Jesus, the people of Israel sacrificed sheep and bulls to atone for their sins. God’s law states that without the shedding of blood there can be no atonement for sin. The blood of animals was poured on the altar to atone for sin. With Jesus everything changed. He offered up Himself as a sacrifice for all sin, for all men. When He shed His Holy and innocent Blood on the cross of Calvary, it atoned for all sin. Today we no longer have to offer up blood sacrifices, as Jesus paid the full price for all time.

There is however a daily sacrifice required of us as Christians, and that is the sacrifice of thanksgiving. We read in our text: ***“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving”***.

It is important to offer God thanksgiving regularly, as we are absolutely dependent upon Him. Last Sunday we saw that we are created for God’s glory. We considered the fact that God has a plan for our life, and that we must depend upon Him, submit to Him, trust Him in all things. When we walk in faith then we honour Him and bring glory to His name, and that in turn brings us blessing.

Today we continue this line of thought, and consider the truth that we are to be continually offering sacrifices of thanksgiving to Him. When we do, we draw near to Him, and He draws near to us. Why does the Psalmist talk about a sacrifice of thanksgiving? I believe that in order to be truly thankful, we need to humble ourselves, and acknowledge that we are totally dependent upon God. A prideful, egotistical person does not give God thanks, because that attitude has no room for God. The prideful person places himself in God’s position. “I did it my way.” Where the ego rules, there is no room for God. Humility involves sacrificing the ego.

Just before I wrote this sermon I read the following:

“To be humble doesn’t mean to think badly of yourself, but it means to think less about yourself.” This is right. Many Christians don’t understand this and think that humbling oneself means beating yourself up. This often results in a false humility that actually is prideful in saying look how I debase myself and how humble I am. I repeat : “To be humble doesn’t mean to think badly of yourself, but it means to think less about yourself.” I would add to this by saying it also means to think more about God, and to thank Him for all things.

October 9, 2016

We are to honour God

Paul writes: ***“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil.4:4)***

In order to truly rejoice in the Lord, we must begin with thanksgiving. We read in Psalm 100:

***“Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup> Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. <sup>3</sup> Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. <sup>4</sup> Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. <sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.***

We are clearly taught to come before the Lord with joy and thanksgiving. Verse 4 teaches us how to enter His presence: ***“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.”*** I have noticed that more and more places I go, have access codes on the door. This is especially true in retirement villages and nursing Homes. You cannot get in or out if you do not know the code. If you know the access code and enter it on the keypad then the door opens.

To some extent thanksgiving is the access code to God’s presence. If we want God to hear our prayer we need to enter His presence via the gate of thanksgiving. We thank Him for who He is, we thank Him that because of Jesus we are able to come to Him, and we thank Him for His love and that we know that He will answer our prayers accordingly. We thank Him that He is Omniscient (all knowing); Omnipotent (all powerful) and Omni present (everywhere).

Over and over in the Bible we see how God acts favourably towards those who gratefully worship, adore and praise him. God moves where He is praised. He inhabits the praises of His people.

There is a description of a battle in the Old Testament where the army set up in battle array against the enemy and placed a choir in the front lines. I am not sure how many of you would sign up to sing in that choir. They marched out to face the enemy with the soldiers behind them. God heard their singing, their praise of Him and He routed the enemy without the army having to lift a sword. Miracles occur where God is honoured.

It is not always easy to do, but when we thank and praise God in faith, not looking at the circumstances, there victory is ours. We need to look to Him always.

Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abed –nego. They are Daniel’s three friends, who remained faithful to God in trying times. They refused to bow down and worship the idols that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Everyone in the kingdom had been ordered to worship these idols every time there was a sound of music played on a variety of instruments. If someone refused to bow down and worship the idols then they would be executed in a fiery furnace. These three men, honoured God, they offered God a sacrifice of praise and refused to worship these false gods. The king having found out gave them one last chance. We pick up the story:

***“Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? <sup>15</sup> Now if you are***

***ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.<sup>17</sup> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.<sup>18</sup> But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."***  
***(Dan.3:14-18)***

These three men had their focus fairly and squarely on God and not their difficult circumstances. They would only worship and honour the one true God. Of course this enraged Nebuchadnezzar and he ordered they be thrown into the fiery furnace. He ordered it be heated 7 times hotter than usual. It was so hot that the soldiers who threw them in perished from the heat. Well God blessed them, saved them and they walked out of the furnace without a trace of fire or smoke upon them. The God whom they trusted came through.

Daniel had a similar experience when during the reign of King Darius, he was thrown in the lion's den, because he broke the law by worshipping God. We find similar stories all throughout the Scriptures. God blesses those who honour Him and worship Him alone. God blesses those who offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

It is vital to keep our eyes on Him. When we are focused on Him, then thanksgiving and praise are a natural response. When we practice praise and thanksgiving on a regular basis every day, then we soon find that His help is always there. Listen once more to our text:

***"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving  
And pay your vows to the Most High;  
<sup>15</sup> Call upon Me in the day of trouble;  
I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."***

You see God promises that when we honour Him and bring a sacrifice of praise, then He will hear when we call in the day of trouble and He promises to rescue us. Over and over God promises to save, to protect, to supply all of our needs. He said that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

In faith we need to offer thanks everyday and many times throughout the day. As we do we grow in Him, and our relationship flourishes and He receives more honour and we are blessed. Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***