

Subject: *Offering Spiritual Sacrifices*

Scripture: *1 Peter 2:5-10*

Worship involves many things including prayer, praise, Bible teaching, silence and reverence, faith and repentance, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Another important element of true worship is the offering of sacrifice.

From the earliest days of history, worship has always involved the act of sacrifice. It began with Abel's sacrifice that was acceptable to God. Noah offered sacrifice on the altar to God. Abraham offered sacrifice on the altar to God. Old Testament priests offered sacrifices in the Tabernacle and the Temple. All sacrifices were to be offered only to the one true God.

Today we can approach God in worship only through Christ's perfect sacrifice. We no longer need blood sacrifices to approach God because Jesus laid down His life as the perfect Lamb of God. We don't need any more blood sacrifices to atone for sin. Christ's sacrifice was final and all-sufficient, and it is only through His blood that we can draw near to God.

***Hebrews 10:19-22**¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;²¹ And having an high priest over the house of God;²² Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

But there are other sacrifices we offer to God. The Bible calls them "spiritual sacrifices."

***1 Peter 2:5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

1. WHO offers spiritual sacrifices?

In our text Peter is referring to God's people, the church. He describes us in several ways:

In verse 5 of the text we are called "living stones, a spiritual house (temple), an holy priesthood." In verse 9 of the text Peter describes us as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people. In verse, we are simply "the people of God." The concept of God's people as a priesthood began with Israel in the Old Testament.

***Exodus 19:5-6**⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Ever since the days of Christ and the apostles and even now until Christ returns, the church is God's priesthood serving under Jesus Christ our great high priest. OT priests and NT believers who are also priests share these great blessings of God:

- Priests are *called by God*
- Priests are *cleansed of sin*
- Priests are *clothed for service*
- Priests are *anointed for service*

- Priests are *prepared for service*
- Priests are *ordained (set apart) for service*
- Priests are *to honor God's Word*
- Priests are *to walk with God in obedience*
- Priests are *to influence people for God*
- Priests are *to be messengers for God*
- Priests have *access to God* (this is the highest privilege)

God is to be worshiped with spiritual sacrifices offered by His people. These spiritual sacrifices are not to be offered only by the pastor, the music minister, or the choir. These are to be offered by all believers. In OT worship the priests offered sacrifices on behalf of the people, but NT worship is different. All believers are priests and therefore all believers offer their sacrifices to God. Worship is very specific and very personal. True worship is offered only to God and it is offered only by God's people, the church.

2. WHAT spiritual sacrifices do we offer?

A. We offer the sacrifice of *thanksgiving*

Hebrews 13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

B. We offer the sacrifice of *helping others*

Hebrews 13:16 *But to do good and to communicate (share) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

C. We offer the sacrifice of *obedience*

1 Samuel 15:22 *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

D. We offer the sacrifice of *personal dedication*

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (spiritual worship).*

3. WHY do we offer spiritual sacrifices?

Two reasons for worship are given in the text.

A. Our worship must *please God*

The first reason is found in verse 5: to offer sacrifices that are “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” We must offer what is acceptable and pleasing to God. This has always been the issue in worship, ever since the beginning of time.

Genesis 4:3-7 ³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. ⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: ⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. ⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? ⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

So only one question should enter our mind: what does God want, expect, and deserve? The issue is not what we want, or even worse, what does the world want. The only thing that matters is what God wants and what is acceptable to Him. Worship is for an audience of ONE. God is our only attraction and God is our only audience.

B. Our worship must proclaim God

A second reason for worship is found in verse 10: “that you should show forth the praises of him (God) who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” We offer spiritual sacrifices to “proclaim” or “tell forth” something that otherwise would not be known. This word is only found this one time in the NT. In worship God’s people are to proclaim the praises (excellent qualities, virtues) of God. True spiritual worship reveals the glory and majesty of God.

The text states that we are to proclaim that God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Worship should reveal God’s holiness and it should focus on His call for our holiness. We are called to be “a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (special) people.”

1 Peter 1:15-16 ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

That is the theme of all worship: God’s people worshipping a holy God and seeking to become more like Him. And then our text reminds us of something else in verse 10. Not only has God called us from darkness into light, but He has shown us mercy, undeserved favor. True worship calls us to be holy and to be humble.