

# Precious Cornerstone

1 Peter 2:4-10

PART THREE

*"As you come to him"*

**In Christ, we have become the beneficiaries of the most magnificent spiritual treasures.**

**We are in direct union with Jesus Christ.**

In Christ, we now have **unrestrained access to God.**

**A spiritual sacrifice is just that – a *sacrifice*.**

"And David said to Ornan, 'Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the Lord—give it to me at its full price—that the plague may be averted from the people.' Then Ornan said to David, 'Take it, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering; I give it all.' But King David said to Ornan, 'No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing'" (1 Chronicles 21:22-25).

**Unacceptable Sacrifices**

*When Modernizing the Mission Misses the Mark*

"What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me. Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will lay before this people stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble; fathers and sons together, neighbor and friend shall perish'" (Jeremiah 6:20-21).

"stumbling stone" (Romans 9:32).

"as it is written, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 9:33).

"The ancient path is the simplicity of Word and Sacrament. The good way is simply the people of God meeting in the presence of God to pray, sing, break bread, and listen to the Word of God" (see Acts 2:42-47)." (Philip Ryken).

"Ritual performance perfumed with imported incense will never hide the stench of moral disobedience" (John Guest).

**To those who have lost their way, God provides the way back home:**

"Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever.... Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master'" (Jeremiah 3:12, 14).

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent” (Proverbs 21:27).

“In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell” (Genesis 4:3-5).

### **Acceptable Sacrifices**

#### **1. Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God when they are offered in *faith*.**

“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4).

“it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6).

#### **2. Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God when we *love God* and diligently seek to *know Him*.**

“For I desire steadfast love/mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6).

### **God wants His people to know Him intimately.**

“Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13).

“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2).

“And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 12:33).

#### **3. Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God when the *whole person* is offered to Him.**

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).

“bodies” Gk *soma*; “an organized whole made up of parts and members.” (Zodhiates).

“Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15).

### **In Christ, our bodies are to be used as instruments of His righteousness.**

“Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness” (Romans 6:13).

### **Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit:**

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

“as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

**This is a full surrendering of our lives to God.**

“[Jesus] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

**The whole outward active life should be the outcome of an inward surrender of the self.**

**4. Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God when they are offered from the *heart*.**

“And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deuteronomy 30:6).

**When a people of God lose their heart for God, God rejects their sacrifices:** Amos 5:21-25.

“Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5).

“Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24).

**If the *body* of the Christian is God’s temple, then the *heart* of the Christian is the altar.**

**Without a heart filled with love for Jesus, there is no *access* to God:**

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

**Without a heart that is grateful for God’s grace, there is no *altar* for spiritual sacrifice:**

“Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat” (Hebrews 13:9-11).

**When the heart is won by God, the mind is renewed, the will is captured, and *self* is dethroned.**

“For you will not delight in [animal] sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:16-17).

“The true offering is not the slaying of animals or the presentation of any material things, but the utterance of hearts welling up thankfulness” (Maclaren).

“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

**5. Our spiritual sacrifice is acceptable to God when we *obey Him* from the heart.**

“And Samuel said, ‘Has 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 listen than the fat of rams’” (1 Samuel 15:22).

“For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:23).

“For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you'” (Jeremiah 7:22-24).

**6. Our spiritual sacrifice is acceptable to God when it is offered with *praises* to God.**

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name” (Hebrews 13:15)

**7. Our spiritual sacrifice is acceptable to God when we *serve others and share with them*.**

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (Hebrews 13:16).

“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” (Philippians 4:18-19).

“But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!” (Jonah 2:9).

“And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord” (Psalm 27:6).