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Kingdom Living, Part 7

Scripture calls us to be living sacrifices unto God. Recall in Genesis 22 God commanded Abraham to take Isaac, his son, to Moriah and there offer him as a sacrifice unto God. What a brutal calling! See, Isaac was the promised child for whom Abraham waited over 30 years! And furthermore, he was Abraham's begotten son! Yet reasoning that God could raise the dead¹ Abraham went forward in obedience to God.

Well brothers and sisters, had Abraham not been stopped by God, Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice, that's what was offered in the Old Testament sacrificial system. In contrast, from beginning to end Abraham was a living sacrifice, as he was called to serve God, NOT by his death, BUT in his life. He was a living sacrifice by remaining steadfast in his service when everything within him said, "No!"

And it is to this that we have been called as citizens of God's Kingdom.

Luke 9:23, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

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."

¹ Compare Hebrews 11:19

What is involved in being a living sacrifice? How specifically are we to function as a living sacrifice?

Our text addresses these questions by showing us through Saul's commissioning whereby God instructed the King as to the calling that rested on his life. And yet as we have seen, this passage is far more than just Saul's commissioning, it is a shadow of the Messianic Kingdom of which you and I are members. This passage contains OUR commissioning as well.

The Sacrifice

Last time we saw the first command placed on Saul's life as a king- to take out the Philistine garrison at Gibeath. Now, we are going to see the second command placed upon Saul's life, his call to be a living sacrifice.

1 Samuel 10:8, "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do."

Now, Gilgal was a city that was about eleven miles east-northeast of Gibeath in the Rift Valley about 1000 feet below sea level. And it was here that an anticipated worship service where burnt offerings and peace offerings would be offered. The identified offerings here are quite significant.

Hertofores I have taught you that in the Old Testament worship of God there were three types of offerings prescribed. First there were the sin offerings, of which there were two. These emphasized the forgiveness of sin. When the offering was given the worshipper confessed his sins which symbolically placed them on the lamb. Then the worshipper slit the lamb's throat and the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar.

Secondly, there were the burnt offerings, of which there were three. These primarily emphasized dedication. Here the offering was given and the entire animal was consumed on the altar. The implication was that the worshipper thereby was offering himself to God.

Thirdly, there were the peace offerings, of which there were six. These offerings laid stress on fellowship. With this sacrifice, the lamb was offered, but the remains were given back to the worshipper to bring home. Here the local priest was invited to a fellowship meal which signified that peace between God and man had been restored.

Now in the absence of a sin offering, the burnt offering carried a dual-purpose. It not only was an offering of dedication² but it also served as an offering by which sins could be atoned.³

In light of this, Samuel here anticipated a time in the near distant future where after Saul "did what the occasion required" (1 Samuel 10:7) the king would have another opportunity to fellowship with God! WHAT A PROMISE!

Typically, most Jews in the Old Testament times did not participate in a Peace Offering but once a year! This was not because they didn't want to fellowship with God; rather, it was because animals were quite

² Compare Leviticus 6:22; Exodus 29:38-42

³ Compare Leviticus 16:24. Though this was a rare usage, nevertheless Scripture contains and example of this in Leviticus 16.

expensive and most couldn't afford it.

Well get this. Prior to his anointing, Saul was privileged to participate in a peace offering.⁴ And now after he fulfilled his calling, he was promised a second opportunity to sit at a table and fellowship with God.⁵

What a glorious promise and privilege afforded this servant of the Lord!

And yet as wonderful as the prospect of fellowshipping with God would have been here, these two offerings were not “THE SACRIFICE” paramount in this text. No! The sacrifice of this verse was the call for Saul to “wait seven days until [Samuel] came to [him].” THAT you must see... WAS THE SACRIFICE!

As we saw last time, God clearly was calling Saul here to attack and so destroy the Philistine garrison which had been erected in the holy city of Gibeath.⁶ Now it is obvious that this would NOT have been a very difficult thing to do. The garrison was NOT well-manned. It did NOT contain the greatest of warriors. It was NOT stationed in the most strategic of places. And we know this on account of Jonathan's attack on this garrison in 1 Samuel 13 and the easy victory.

Now, Jonathan was bold and a man of great faith, yet he wasn't stupid. And the fact that he attacked this garrison with limited men and resources indicates again that this Philistine encampment was not that formidable. Truly it wasn't the battle that was intimidating; you must see that it was the aftermath. To attack this garrison was to declare war on the Philistine nation. And in that event, Israel once again would be the focus of the five Philistine Lords who no doubt would band together in the attempt to crush them.⁷

And that in fact was exactly what happened as a result of Jonathan's attack on this garrison.

1 Samuel 13:4-5, “And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.”

It didn't take a prophet to predict this reaction. Thus I hope you see that THE SACRIFICE referenced in this passage revolved around Saul's willingness to wait on the Lord for seven days while the Philistines amassed their troops and readied for war! One man wrote, “there are two sacrifices referenced in this passage- the one Samuel would offer and the one Saul would offer. Samuel's was the offering up of animals. Saul's was the offering up of himself.”

This brothers and sisters, the giving of oneself to God; waiting on the Lord, was/is a difficult calling! In fact, for Saul it would be worse than imagined.

1 Samuel 13:6-8, “When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As

⁴ Compare 1 Samuel 9:22-24

⁵ Compare 1 Samuel 10:8

⁶ Compare 1 Samuel 10:7

⁷ Compare Judges, 1 Samuel 4, etc.

for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him."

From this we behold the SACRIFICE which accompanies all Kingdom Work is waiting on the Lord even though

- The enemy is assembling.
- Your base of support is dwindling.
- Your heart is quaking.
- The odds clearly are against you.

This is THE SACRIFICE to which Saul was called in our text. And that is the SACRIFICE to which every citizen of God's Kingdom has been called!

Psalm 27:14, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

In theory that sound's great.... until you are wronged or your circumstances become undesirable. Yet here the command remains the same.

Proverbs 20:22, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee."

Waiting on God in pleasant pastures is a wonderful prospect. Yet here, the calling is to wait when

- You are wronged.
- Things aren't going smoothly.
- The end doesn't seem secured.
- The bitterness of this estate is being felt most heavily.

Thus God's command to a persecuted people who seek justice and yet have not found justices is this:

Zephaniah 3:8, "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy."

This doesn't mean that we take the posture of a doormat, passively sitting by while others take advantage of us. Rather, it means that after we have done all to stand, we wait upon the Lord. We David exemplify this when he was being pursued by Saul. David vowed, "I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints" (Psalm 52:9).

Again, David's waiting on the Lord didn't make him passive. Rather he fought to stay alive for the many years Saul pursued him. Rather "waiting on the Lord" meant regardless of the atrocities of Saul, David remained faithful to God and so trusted Him for ultimate deliverance. And this is the calling placed on all

Christians. Listen to how Paul summarized the redeemed life:

Philippians 3:20, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Brothers and sisters, this is THE SACRIFICE to which all of us are called in this life! In the face of

- Trial.
- Difficulty.
- Wrong doing.
- Hardship.
- A bitter providence.

Our call is to wait upon the Lord to

- Protect us.
- Deliver us.
- Vindicate us.
- Honor us.
- Bring us to Himself!

Now in theory this sounds great. But in reality, you must know that this is one of the more difficult callings in the Kingdom of God. If we are called to

- Attack.
- Walk across burning coals.
- Persecution.
- Give our body to be burned.

The soul though burdened will at least have something to do. But, call us in the face of alarm, wrongdoing, or an evil generation to do nothing but rely upon God... that's a high calling. David understood this difficult calling:

Psalm 69:1-3, “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.”

Have any of you been here?

Maybe some have been waiting on God, and He hasn't brought you instant relief. Instead today, you are weary on account of your tears. Your throat is parched. Your head is spinning. And you have found yourself crying out to God with Habakkuk, “How long?”

Now I wish I could tell you, as did Samuel to Saul, that God's plan for your waiting involves just seven more days before He will act. Yet, such instructions do not accompany the Christian's life today. Rather, our call is to wait upon the Lord for an undetermined amount of time.

And yet I can tell you that this text provides the means whereby the child of God will be enabled to wait patiently for the Lord. With Habakkuk you will be able to “wait quietly for the day of distress, for the

people to arise who will invade” (Habakkuk 3:16b).

Notice the end of 1 Samuel 10:7. It is quite explicit:

1 Samuel 10:7, “And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; **for God is with thee.**”

Do you understand the implication of this little statement? It is profound!

In the history of God's dealings with His people beginning in the time of Abraham all the way through to the end of Revelation, this promise has been the mainstay of the child of God!

Genesis 15:1, “After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”

God was with him, protecting him and providing for his needs! God promised this again to Isaac:

Genesis 26:3, “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.”

Though Isaac was in a strange and foreign land, nevertheless he was assured of God's blessing because the Lord was with him.

Genesis 31:3, “And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.”

Jacob saw what God did when the Lord's presence remained with someone. Though Jacob was a wretched being; nevertheless God deigned to bless him in his dealings with Laban. What confidence would this man have as he now returned to a place where his brother sought to kill him? God would be with him!

When God called Moses to represent the Lord to Pharaoh, God assured Moses that:

Exodus 3:12, “And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”

As Israel turned their heart toward taking the Promised Land, a land filled with giants, Moses gave these encouraging words:

Deuteronomy 31:8, “And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”

After Moses died and the leadership of the nation was thrust into Joshua's hands God said:

Joshua 1:5, “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

To Gideon God promised:

Judges 6:16, “And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.”

When the baton was passed to David, God gave this promise:

2 Samuel 7:9, “And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.”

This was the promise that accompanied all God's kings in Judah! And yet this is the promise which God gives to each and everyone of us this day. At the announcement of Christ's birth, God gave this promise to His people:

Matthew 1:23, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Christ's name was intended to be a sermon to His people, a sermon in which God promises never to abandon us! When Christ sent His disciples, and so the church, out into the world to serve Him, this is what He promised:

Matthew 28:20, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Do you understand that God is with you this very moment? No matter the suffering, fears, or the foe. God has not nor will he ever forsake you... even when you and I face the greatest trial, passing through the valley of Baca/weeping! When the child of God passes through the water (a metaphor of death) listen to the promise of God:

Isaiah 43:1-2, “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

If you've stood by the bedside of a dying saint, you know rarely does the child of God pass peacefully into glory. In the words of William Tiptaft, “We come into the world crying, we go through it complaining, and go out of it groaning!” Yet you must know that even in death, God will be with us for whether you realize it or not, that is the theme of redemptive history!

Revelation 21:3, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

Isn't this glorious?

The God who calls us to wait upon Him will never abandon us in the hour of need. Rather, as He always has been, He will continue to be here, beside, before, behind, and within us. This is how Saul was to

worship God and take no mind as to the Philistines. And we are to strive for faithfulness even though the days are evil and long has been our sojourning.

GOD IS WITH US!

Yet how does this work? How is God's nearness a comfort to us?

It isn't unless we "wait on His name." Notice a very important qualification that David made.

Psalm 52:9, "I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name [character]; for it is good before thy saints."

This brings us to the "secret" of waiting on the Lord. It is not enough to know that He is with us. As Psalm 52 teaches, we must come to know and trust His Character!

If God to you is

- A far off Being who simply wound up the world and is sitting back watching from afar
- A Being who has deigned to sit back and allow the game we call life to play itself out
- A capricious god just waiting to trip you up

Then waiting upon Him will be impossible. This no doubt is why Saul did NOT attack the Philistine garrison, but rather played it safe and went home. It is not so much that he was a coward, per se (although we could debate this)⁸ rather, it primarily was because he did not know God! He didn't have a relationship with Christ! God to him was an impersonal being in the heavens.

Now, truly if you do not know God or your understanding of Him is stilted, then waiting on Him will be impossible. BUT if you know that God is

- Good and sovereign.
- Compassionate and in charge.
- Loving AND zealous for His name and His people.
- Never will abandon you, but will always be with you.
- Will fight for you while you keep silent.⁹

Then waiting on Him, though difficult, will be a reality! Indeed, "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

Child of God, run into the shelter of God's name this day! Take refuge in His character! In the words of Georg Neumark, "God never yet forsook at need the soul that trusted Him indeed."¹⁰

Now I dare say that all of us here will find this calling to be beyond us. Accordingly, let me give you three suggestions to cultivate a waiting heart.

First go to Christ this day. Go to His word and there seek Him. Come to know Him, and delight in Him.

⁸ Compare 1 Samuel 10:22

⁹ Compare Exodus 14:14

¹⁰ The New Trinity Hymnal, Hymn #670

Secondly ask of Him the grace to take refuge in His name. In the words of one of Christ's disciples pray, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Oh Christian! We do not have because we do not ask.¹¹ Make this a large part of your prayer both for yourself and this body!

But then finally, with conscious effort, make Christ your boast this day. This is what Paul did in his life.

Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

You will recall that to boast in Christ is to make Him the basis upon which you stand before God and this world. Every one of us approaches God and our world on a particular basis.¹²

- Maybe it's your looks.
- Or your money.
- It could be your success.
- Or maybe a reputation for being a good worker, parent, spouse, etc.

In contrast, the calling in Scripture is to come to the place where you are boasting, delighting, glorying, and taking refuge in Christ alone and His appraisal of you! Lancelot Andrewes put it this way:

"Thyself, O my God, Thyself for Your own sake, above all things else I love. Thyself I desire. Thyself as my chief end I long for... always and in all things I seek with all my heart and marrow, with groaning and weeping, with unbroken toil and grief. What will You give me therefore in the end? If You give me not Thyself, You give me nothing..."¹³

When this is your passion, waiting on the Lord will not seem like a sacrifice but a privilege!

¹¹ Compare James 4:2

¹² In fact, what you are boasting in will be revealed by how you respond when any of these areas are attacked. If you are offended when your good is evil spoken of, your love is trampled under foot, your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, and your opinions ridiculed, then the implication is that you are not boasting in Christ.

¹³ Lancelot Andrews, c 1609, Taken from *A Passion for God*, page 115

About Bethel Presbyterian Church

The Bethel Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word is published regularly.

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Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10th Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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About the Preacher

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