

We confess in our catechism, No. 1, that our only comfort in life and in death is that we belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, because He has purchased us with his precious blood. Because of the marvelous grace shown to us, the great apostle calls us to give ourselves to Christ, to present our bodies as living sacrifices. I preached on this topic three weeks ago. This is another way of saying that we are to give ourselves completely to Christ, to come before Him and present ourselves ready and willing to do whatever He commands us to do. Just as our bodies were instruments of wickedness before we came to Christ for we lived for ourselves and our bodies were instruments of our selfishness and pride, so now our bodies are to be surrendered up to Christ for whatever He requires of us. So three weeks ago I preached on Presented, Conformed, and Transformed, from Romans 12:1.

Then, two weeks ago, we saw that not only are we to be offered up as sacrifices unto the Lord, the Bible also speaks to the manner in which this offering is to be made. I spoke from Psalm 34:18: "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." We looked at the Contempt OF God for the Proud; the Chastening BY God of the proud; and the Cry TO God that He will hear from the proud. The sacrifices that God will receive are those that are of a humble and contrite heart, that trembles at the Word of God. Pride must be repented, forsaken, and hated. God delights in humbling the proud and bringing them down before Him.

So, three weeks ago we looked at What our offerings of Thanksgiving must be [Ourselves, body and soul]; then two weeks ago we looked at the what the attitude of our offerings must be [humble and contrite]; today we will look at the energy that God requires in our offerings.

The offering of ourselves up to God means that we are to be I. Businesslike, II. Boiling Hot, and III. Bound Up with Christ.

I. Businesslike "Not Slothful in Business"

A. "Business" means "with haste" or "diligence". Not Slothful in Business means hasty diligence. You do it right now. Do not put off what is necessary.

B. Proverbs 10: 3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked. 4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. 5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

1. Many a business has failed because of slothfulness.

2. See Proverbs 24: 30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; 31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. 33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

C. "Make haste" has a time element to it. It means to get there on time. A journey of twenty feet may take a few seconds, or a few hours. Here, the Lord is saying to consider the time.

D. There is a time for everything, the wise man tells us in Ecclesiastes. To waste time is to waste life, and even to shorten time. Even ordinary things:

1. Maintenance on your car.
2. Getting an education
3. Courtship
4. Education and training of children
5. Reading the bible
6. Getting to church. A great many people go to hell because of slothfulness than deliberate wickedness. They just never got around to taking care of their souls.
7. There is a time to stop and smell the roses, but not when the house is on fire, the business about to fail, the family in ruins, and the soul in danger of eternal damnation. Then the message must be, “Awake thou that sleepest and rise from the dead and Christ will give thee light.”

E. Doing first things first.

1. Do them in the proper order: Plow before you plant; Pray before you work. Knowing priorities: Mary sat at the foot of Jesus; Martha was busy about many things, but not the most important thing. Martha was a good woman, but Mary was a wiser woman.
2. In the training and discipline of children. You only have a short time; make it priority, for the window of opportunity will soon be closed.
3. Settle things with your soul first of all; don't be a wanderer, wandering from place to place, never getting settled in your work, your faith, you values. Buy the truth and sell it not, the Proverb tells us.

F. Diligence –making haste—is commanded throughout the Bible. “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life:

Ro 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

2Co 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

2Pe 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

2Pe 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

II. Boiling Hot “fervent” means “hot” Jesus said that lukewarm was worst of all. He implied that cold was better, but hot was best of all. The trouble with lukewarm is that it is comfortable. God often brings both cold things and hot things into our lives to stir us out of our comfort zone, to get us out of our box.

A. How often we are warned against the cooling of our energy. Our bodies are to be offered up to God on the burning altar of thankfulness, hot with our love for Christ, filled with zeal for truth and righteousness.

- B. What hot love the Lord Jesus Christ pursued His church. The zeal of the Lord of Host consumed Him, He offered up Himself, not half-heartedly, but fully to endure the wrath of God and fully take away our sins. We must also put our hands to the plow and not look back if we are to show ourselves worthy of the Kingdom of God.
- C. We must not grieve or quench the Spirit that calls us to fervency in our faith. Whatsoever we do we are to do it with our might. We must pray with energy; sing with energy, play with energy, fight with energy, love with energy. Fervent in spirit. We are to stir up ourselves, throw off lethargy and laziness; stir our bodies to do the work God has called us to do.
- D. Our laziness will offer many reasons and excuses. As Proverbs again says:
 Heb 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
 Mt 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:
 Pr 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.
 Pr 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.
 Pr 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.
 Pr 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.
 Pr 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.
 Pr 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.
 Pr 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.
- E. There is so much in the Bible about this: awake, get up, go forward, arise, etc.

III. Bound Up with Christ. “Serving the Lord” “Serving” means as a slave. He has nothing of his own. His very person belongs to His master.

- A. We are not our own, but belong to our faithful savior Jesus Christ. He is Lord of our bodies, our talents, our energy, our time, everything. We are not our own. As Psalm 150 puts it
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
 - 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- B. As we once gave our bodies to serve the devil, so are we now to give ourselves up to serve the Lord:
- “16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” (Ro 6:16-19)

- C. This means that the lives we live here are intensely personal, for we are bound to the person of Jesus Christ.
- D. This brings us to the applications: Because it is personal, the bonds and bonds of love: it is not first of all moral, although our service IS moral and Jesus does not lead you into immorality but to obedience; it is not first of all philosophical, though it involves a philosophy, for Christ does not lead us into foolishness and irrationality; it is not first of all to each other, though in serving Christ we serve each other, for Christ calls us to love His people and the sheep of His pasture. But it cannot truly be called Christian unless our service is to Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, who walked this earth some two thousand years ago and promised eternal life to those who would take up their cross and follow Him.
1. It is the Lord Jesus who took a real human body and soul for us, so that He could offer up that body and soul as a sacrifice for our sins, to remove the curse of sin and death that hung over all of us. He calls us to offer up our bodies as living sacrifices in love to Him, serving Him with all that we have.
 2. It is the Lord Jesus who by His Spirit called us to faith, to believe in Him and His promises. He is truly the Savior of the World and will save all those who call upon Him.
 3. It is the Lord Jesus who has sent His Spirit to us to shepherd us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. We are not to seek our own way and our own glory, but follow the Spirit of God, not grieving Him, quenching Him, or resisting Him, but fervently giving ourselves up for the sake of the Gospel of Christ.
 4. It is the Lord Jesus who has called us to love one another, to not seek our own way, to seek the good and wellbeing of the people and church of God in the ways that He has given us commandments in the Scriptures.
 5. Without Christ morality become self-righteous moralism, which has killed as many people as open wickedness in the history of the world. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags if we do not offer ourselves up as living sacrifices to Him.
 6. Without Christ philosophy becomes lifeless rationalism or destructive irrationalism, ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth, the mind turning upon itself, inventing strange and foolish doctrines because the wisdom of this world is cursed if we do not offer ourselves and our thoughts up to Christ as living sacrifices. The wicked must forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and turn unto the Lord if he is to find rest and salvation.
 7. Without Christ professed love for neighbor become sentimental and irrational humanism, where everything human is considered natural and good, no matter how depraved and wicked is might be in the sight of God. We only can begin to love our neighbor as ourselves as we offer ourselves up to our Lord Jesus, finding perfect humanity in Him, and not in our vain and empty dreams and glory in the flesh.
 8. The Apostle Paul expressed the beauty of this text perfectly in Ga 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." The only thing we lose when we offer ourselves up to Christ, recognizing that His death was truly our death, is that which is at enmity

with God—our whole man in Adam, which would bring us all into hell and damnation. What we gain in new life in Christ, where He lives in us, a life of faith in and through the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us. Amen and Amen.
God bless you.