

Sacrifices at the Altar of the Cross

Hebrews 13:15-16

Reading: 1 Peter 4:1-11

Bethany Baptist Church

September 8, 2019

November 18, 2018 (Thanksgiving Sunday)

...pray...

The Old Testament worshipper brought **five** main types of sacrifices to the tabernacle's altars (*feast after feast, year after year*):

- The *burnt offering*,
- The *grain offering*,
- The *peace offering*,
- The *sin offering*,
- The *trespass offering*

But as we've seen over & over in *Hebrews*, in God's economy, the **Old** Covenant has *passed away*, the **New & Better** Covenant has *arrived*.

But as we've **also** found in *Hebrews*, the **New** Covenant has its own *alter*:

- **13:10** (last Sunday) – *We have an **altar** from which those who serve the tabernacle have **no** right to eat. ... Our altar is Jesus' cross.*
- And the *Lamb of God* inaugurated His altar with the **one sacrifice** of His own *blood*, outside the *gates* of Jerusalem & its temple. *Once is enough!*

But if Jesus' **one sacrifice** paid for *every* sin of *all* His people, for *all* time, are there any sacrifices for *you* to make...?

Be careful – that might be a *trick question!*

Turn with me in your NT to Hebrews 13:10-16 (focus = 15, 16).

God is still *pleased* with the His people's sacrifices: *praise, thankfulness & doing good & generosity*.

Two ways to worship at the altar of the cross:

1. **The sacrifice of thankful lips (v.15).**
2. **The sacrifice of thoughtful deeds (v.16).**

God wants to *hear* your sacrifice of *thankfulness* (read v.15).

1. We've seen in Hebrews that the *Old Covenant* has been replaced by the *New Covenant*. Some people in the early church had to be asking: "*What about sacrifices...is **all** that over, too?*"
 - a. The answer is *yes*...and **no**!
 - b. Those **five** offerings at the Temple of *animals & crops*, given through the *Levitical priests*, were *passing away*! Because...
 - i. Jesus' *bloody offering* of Himself *on* the cross *for* the sins of *all* His people *was* a one-time offering; *once* was enough for *all*.
 - c. But God *still* expects (and enjoys) your sacrifices!
2. The **first** sacrifice that God wants is for you to *praise Him*.
 - a. We praise what is *good*. We praise what we *love*.
 - b. Christian, you *love* God (He loves you), & that means you are to *praise Him*.
 - i. We are to *praise Him **continually***. In addition to that word "*continually*," all the verbs in **vv.15&16** are *present tense actions* → which suggest a *lifestyle of worship*. As surely as you *breathe*, you are to *praise Him*.
 - ii. *Ask yourself*: does God ever *stop* being *worthy* of your praise?
 - iii. When is the unchangeable God **not** *good, mighty, wise, holy, loving*? We are to *praise Him continually*.
3. As you keep reading in **v.15**, you discover the *key ingredient* of *praise*: it's your *gratitude* – your *thankfulness*. *Thankfulness* leads to *praise*.
 - a. The psalmist captured that truth when he wrote (100:4): *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

- b. *Thankfulness* sets your feet on the road to *worship*. And as you *draw near to God*, your eyes are drawn to look up from *blessings in your hand* to the *God who blessed you*.
 - c. One commentator points to the “*fruit of lips that give thanks*” and suggests that God wants to **hear** your *gratitude & praise*.
 - i. Don’t **you** like to be told *you’re appreciated & loved..?*
4. Your *offerings* are acceptable to God *through Jesus Christ*.
- a. The only way to have a *relationship* to God is through *faith in Jesus* and that means the only way to *praise & thank* God is through Jesus.
 - b. Jesus is our *Great High Priest*; our *sacrifices of praise & thanksgiving* are offered **through Him** and God *hears* them **because of Him**.
5. The writer of *Hebrews* goes on to say (v.15) your *worship & thankfulness* are given to God...to His **name**.
- a. We **don’t** need to *distinguish* between those **two** ideas (God & God’s name), to the first readers of *Hebrews*, they were essentially *interchangeable*: God’s *names* teach us *who* He is & *what* He does. And that teaches us to *be thankful...and to worship*.
 - b. The idea of *thanking His name* got me thinking about His many different *names* in the Bible...

First & foremost, He is **YHWH** (Jehovah) ← “**I Am**”

- i. **YHWH** (Jehovah) → “**I Am**”

Ex 3:14,15 (*Burning Bush*): *God said to Moses, “I Am Who I Am”; and He said, thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, “I Am has sent me to you.” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial name to all generations.”*

- ii. **Andonai** – *Master*. He is *our* Master, and He's *good*.
- iii. **El Shaddai** – the *Lord God, Almighty*. What is your *burden*? God is *all-powerful*.
- iv. **Jehovah Nissi** – *the Lord, My Banner*. Armies *march & wage war* under the *banner* of their *King*. We are *soldiers of Christ*.
- v. **Jehovah Raah** – *The Lord, My Shepherd*. God is our *Good Shepherd*, meeting every *need*, leading every *step*, fighting every *foe*, bringing us *home* when the *shadows fall*.
- vi. **Jehovah Rapha** – *The Lord that Heals*. God heals *bodies* but more importantly, God heals *souls*. He transplants *old hearts* w/ *new hearts*.
- vii. **Jehovah Jirah** – *The Lord Will Provide*. What a *great* name to remember when times are *tough*!
- viii. **Jehovah Shalom** – *The Lord is Peace*. God offers you the *peace which surpasses all understanding*, in Christ. God offers you *eternal peace* w/ Himself.
 - **Rm 5:1** - *Therefore, having been justified by faith with have peace w/ God thru our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - **OBTW** – Paul goes on to connect God's *peace* to our *worship* in his very next breath (5:2): *through [Jesus] also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in the hope of the glory of God.*

6. Christian, here is suggest on how to *praise God*, on what to give Him *thanks* for, every day: **the gospel!**
 - a. *Thank God for* the cross, from the **altar** of the cross. Rehearse the *gospel* to yourself every day; ***beloved, you know these truths...***
 - b. *Jesus* is God's Son. *Jesus* is **God**. *Jesus* came to us as a **man**. *Jesus* was crucified. *Jesus* was buried. *Jesus* rose on the third day. (Scripture promised it would all happen this way.) *He* died for all my sins. But now, *Jesus* is alive. *He* is enthroned in heaven. *He* is praying for us. *He* is coming back for us!
 - c. By *faith* in these promises, my sins are completely forgiven. ***I*** am new (*born again*)!
 - d. We can ***jump-start*** our worship every day by hooking our ***heart's battery cables*** to the promises of the ***Good News!***

God wants to *hear* from you today (and tomorrow!). You love His *blessings*; let God *hear* your *grateful praise!*

And God wants to see your sacrifices of doing good & sharing (read v.16).

1. The New Covenant Gospel of *faith* alone by *grace* alone in *Christ* alone has a place for *good works*!
 - a. **Matt 25:40 (Jesus)** - *"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'*
 - b. **Eph 2:8-10** - *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*
 - c. **Jas 1:27** – *Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*
 - d. **1 Jn 3:18-19** – *Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.*
 - e. **Heb 6:10** - *For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.*
 - f. **Heb 13:1-3** – *Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers... Remember the prisoners...and those who are ill-treated.*
2. **OBTW**, Did you notice that *doing good* almost always involves an **individual** on the *receiving end*, and often that individual is *another Christian*...?
 - a. In fact, the term for “*sharing*” (16) is derived from the word for “*fellowship*”

3. There is *caution* here. We are *directed to not neglect doing good & sharing*.
 - a. It's easy to be *too busy* for someone else.
 - b. Or we *reduce* our Christianity to our favorite spiritual activities. Beloved, you can get caught up in the *vertical* & neglect the *horizontal*.
 - c. I love my Christian *music* and my Christian *books & podcasts* and I love my *church*, but I must not *forget* to concern myself with my *neighbor*.
 - d. God says **not** to *neglect him*...
4. God's pleasure is for those who *do good & live generous*. I feel like I need to say that again: *God's pleasure is for those who do good & live generous*.
 - a. Don't you want God to be happy w/*you*...?
 - b. I have fought in my own life the strong tendency to be so driven by the *Puritan work ethic* & the *self-made man* & the virtue of *personal responsibility*, that sometimes I don't want to offer *anyone* a *hand up*, let alone a *hand out*...
 - c. Yet I know that I'm only *saved & sustained* by God's *grace*. Paul points out (1 Cor 4:7): *what do you have that did not receive*...? I.e., everything I *have* is ultimately *from* God and *for* God.
 - d. And so God is *pleased* when you & I are *good & gracious*.

This week God wants to *hear your grateful praise!*

And He wants to *see your good & generous deeds!*

What will *fuel your worship* I for this week?

1. You should *count* your everyday blessings and *tell* God how thankful you are for:
 - a. *Life*
 - b. *Home*
 - c. *Family*
 - d. *Measure of health*
 - e. *Freedom*
 - f. I know that **not** *everyone* enjoys the same measure of *this life's blessings*, & we all know that *everyone* surrenders them ... *sooner or later*.

2. So you should also *rehearse* your **Gospel** blessings. You **won't ever** need to *give these up*:
 - a. *Complete forgiveness*
 - b. *New life*
 - c. *Quite conscience*
 - d. *Answered prayer*
 - e. *An interceding Savior*
 - f. *Christian fellowship*
 - g. *Word of God*
 - h. *Spiritual gifts*
 - i. *Useful service*
 - j. *The Holy Spirit*
 - k. *Power to resist temptation*
 - l. *Peace that surpasses all understanding*
 - m. *Wisdom for every trial*
 - n. *A worldwide cause that is bigger than you*
 - o. *A heart that **now** knows how to love!*

 - p. **I could keep growing this list, and it would be as long as your NT! But I'll round it off w/ this...**

 - q. *The blessed certainty of eternal life in the company of Jesus*

God is looking for *spirit & truth* worship. There's nothing like the *gospel* to *ignite your praise & power your good*. ...pray...

