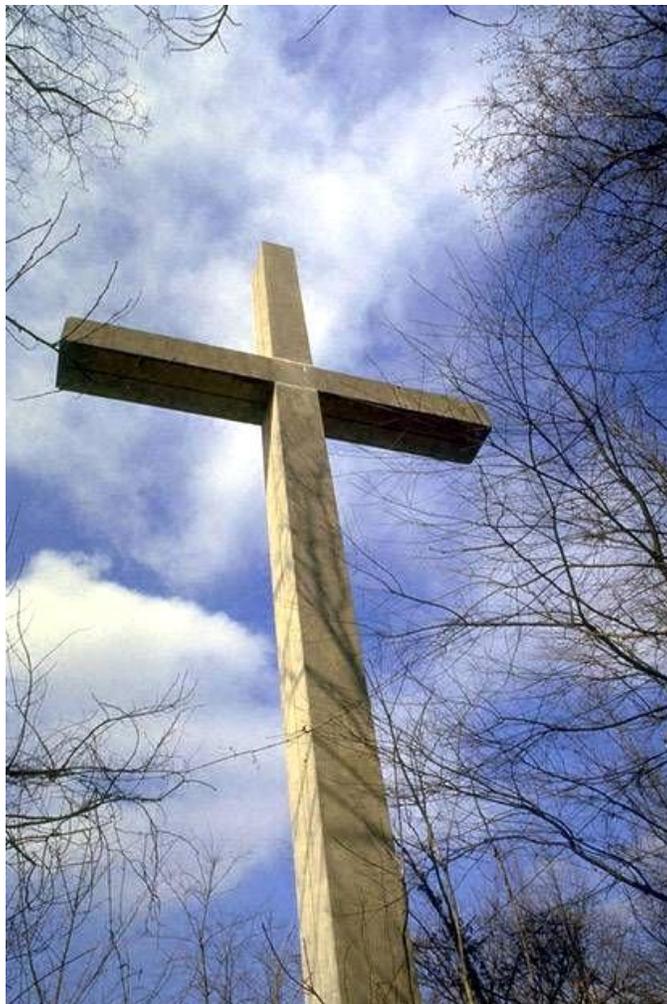


A LIVING SACRIFICE



by
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A LIVING SACRIFICE

Please open your Bibles to Romans chapter twelve and verse one. I would like to preach a message entitled "A Living Sacrifice." By way of introduction, let me say this: God did not save you that you might live for yourself and do what you want to do. The Bible is very clear on this. In II Corinthians 5:15, the Bible says, "They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." That is one of the clearest passages in all the Word of God which shows that God did not save you that you might live for yourself and do what you want to do, but that you might live for Christ.

In Romans 6:6, the Bible says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." You ought not to be serving the old sin nature that you have that you were born with. You ought to be serving the Master. You ought to be serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Your body is not your own to do with as you please. In I Corinthians 6:19-20, the Bible says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." In I Corinthians 10:31, the Bible says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

God did not save you that you might live for yourself and do what you want to do. Why then did God save you? God saved you so that you might live for Christ, that you might do the will of God, that you might glorify God.

You say, preacher! How can I do that? How can I live for Christ? How can I do the will of God? How can I glorify God? How can I be what God wants me to be? The answer is found in our text today. The Bible tells you how you can live such a life for Jesus Christ.

Notice first of all, the request made here is given to Christians. In Romans 12:1-2, the Apostle Paul said, "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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Brethren, the only way you are going to accomplish what is required of you in these two verses is by means of the mercies of God. You are not going to live for Christ; you are not going to do the will of God; you are not going to glorify God; you are not going to accomplish anything, anything at all for God apart from God's mercy. It is only going to happen as God has mercy on you.

You ought to present your bodies a living sacrifice to Jesus Christ, and the only way you are going to accomplish that is by means of the mercies of God. We are going to notice three things: number one, present your bodies a living sacrifice;

number two, be not conformed to this world; and then number three, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Please notice number one, present your bodies a living sacrifice. In Romans 12:1, the Apostle Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." The Greek word "present" here is the very same word Paul used in Romans chapter six and verse thirteen where it is translated "yield." Here he said, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." It is the very same Greek word. What was Paul saying? He was saying this. You are to present your bodies a living sacrifice to Christ. That is, you are to yield your bodies a living sacrifice to Christ. Not as a dead sacrifice, but as a living sacrifice.

In Romans 6:11, Paul writes, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Now, in that sense, you are a dead sacrifice. You are to be dead indeed unto sin. You are to be dead indeed to living for yourself. But that verse goes on to say "but alive." That's the living part. That's the living sacrifice—"but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you." You can clearly see from this passage of Scripture that God's promise to you as a believer in Jesus Christ is that sin shall not have dominion over you. You no longer have to stay in sin. You no longer have to stay under the bondage of any sin as a child of God. If you do, you choose to do it. Because you have been set free, it was your choice to do so. You have been set free from the dominion, from the controlling power, from the rule and reign of your old sin nature once and for all—not from its presence, but from its power to rule and reign in your life. You have a new nature. You have the very presence of the Holy Spirit of God living in you as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, you have the power to turn off the old sin nature that you have.

In Galatians 2:20, Paul writes, "I am crucified with Christ." Now, in that sense, you are a dead sacrifice. You are to be dead indeed unto sin. You are to be dead indeed to living for yourself. But that verse goes on to say, "Nevertheless I live." That's the living part. That's the living sacrifice. "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."

How can you live for Christ? How can you do the will of God? How can you glorify God? How can you be what God wants you to be? You can be what God wants you to be as you yield your bodies a living sacrifice to God, not as a dead sacrifice, but as a living sacrifice, dead indeed unto sin, dead indeed to living for yourself.

Paul, what do you mean by a living sacrifice, holy? The word "holy" here means that which is dedicated, that which is set apart. What is Paul saying? He is saying this. A living sacrifice is to be dedicated to God. A living sacrifice is to be set

apart to God. When you yield your bodies a living sacrifice to Christ, you are dedicating yourself to God. You are setting yourself apart to God. This is a simple reminder that everything that you possess belongs to God. Every ability that you have, every spiritual gift that you possess, every talent that you have--it all belongs to God. Your life, your dreams, your plans, your ambitions, your goals, your children, your family, your car, your house, your time, your money, your body--it all belongs to God.

For example, you need to give your mouth to God. In Ephesians 4:31-32 the Bible says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

If you are going to present your bodies a living sacrifice dedicated to God, it is going to be more than just going to church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. It is going to be more than just reading the Word of God every day. It is going to be more than just praying every day. It is going to be more than being a witness for Jesus Christ every day. If you are going to present your bodies a living sacrifice dedicated to God, it is going to be more than just putting your tithes and offerings in the offering plate. You must yield your bodies a living sacrifice totally to God; and that is the key—totally to God, totally dedicated to God, totally given over to God in every single way.

Then the Apostle Paul said, "Acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The word "acceptable" here speaks of something that is well pleasing to God because God is the one you must please. What was Paul saying? He was saying this: Brethren, you have not been saved to please yourself. You have not been saved to do what you want to do in this life. You have been saved to yield your bodies a living sacrifice to God, totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased, totally given over to God, seeking only to please God because that is your reasonable service.

Listen folks! You are not going to serve God to the extent God wants to use you in His service if your bodies are not totally dedicated to God, if your bodies are not totally given over to God in every single way. So let me ask you something. Do you have any thing in your life today that is not totally dedicated to God? Do you have any plans in your life over which the Spirit of God does not have complete control, rule, and reign? Do you have any areas in your life where you say, "Lord you can have everything but this"? If that is true of you, my dear Christian friends, I beseech you, I beg you, I urge you to give every thing to God because God knows how to get what you are trying to keep from Him.

We have noticed number one, present your bodies a living sacrifice; but notice number two, be not conformed to this world. Evidently there were some Christians in Rome who were fashioning themselves just like the world. They were acting like the world. They were copying the world's standards. They were playing the world's music. They were wearing the world's clothes. When you see children of

God that way, it is hard to tell whether or not they are truly born again. The words "be not" in our text "be not conformed to this world" literally mean stop doing it. What was Paul saying? He was simply saying this: Stop being like the world. Stop acting like the world. You can't possibly please God by acting like the world. You can't possibly honour God by acting like the world. You can't possibly glorify God by acting like the world. You can't even truly worship God Almighty by being and acting like the world. So stop doing it.

My dear Christian friends, do you allow the world to dictate your values in this life? Do you allow the world to dictate your priorities? Do you allow the world to dictate your standards in dress, in music, in speech, and even in entertainment? You ought not to be doing that. It is absolutely impossible for you to love the things of this world and love Jesus Christ at the same time. It is absolutely impossible for you to copy the things of this world and be what God wants you to be. In I John 2:15-16, John said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: Brethren, I beseech you, I beg you, I urge you to yield your bodies a living sacrifice, totally dedicated to God, in every single way so that God is well-pleased. And stop acting like the world. Stop being like the world. You are frustrating yourselves. You are grieving the Holy Spirit of God living in you today as a child of God, and you will never be happy. The bottom line is this: Since you are born again, since you have been cleansed by the shed blood of Christ, since you have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, and since you are a new creature in Christ, why then don't you act like it? In II Corinthians 5:17, the Bible says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Why don't you act like it? Why don't you act like the new creature that you are? Why don't you act like the child of God that you are and stop acting like the world? Stop being like the world. You are frustrating yourselves. You are grieving the Holy Spirit of God living in you as a child of God, and you will never be happy.

You say, preacher! How can I do that? That's number three--but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. The word "transformed" here means to be changed. The only way you are going to be what God wants you to be is to be changed by the renewing of your mind every day, by learning to think right. If you can learn to think right; if you can learn to think like God; if you can learn to think as God thinks; if you can learn to think God's thoughts, you will be transformed to what you ought to be for God, you will be changed to what you ought to be for God.

You say, preacher! How do you do that? How do you learn to think right? That's a good question. How do you learn to think like God? That's even a better question. How do you learn to think as God thinks? How do you learn to think God's thoughts? It is at this point that the Bible makes its strongest bid for your attention. How important is the Word of God in your life today? The Bible is the record of God's thoughts. If you want to know how God thinks, read the Bible. If you want to know how God feels, you need to read the Bible. If you want to know

what God hates, read the Bible. If you want to know what God loves, read the Bible. If you want to know what God wants you to do in fulfilling your Christian responsibilities in this life, you need to spend quality time in the Word of God every day, feeding the new nature that you have. If you will let the Word of God rule and dominate your mind, you will learn to think right. You will learn to think like God. You will learn to think as God thinks. You will learn to think God's thoughts. If you think right; if you think like God; if you think as God thinks; if you think God's thoughts, you will be transformed to what you ought to be for God, you will be changed to what you ought to be for God. The battleground is in the mind. The world will do everything it can to influence your thinking. The flesh will do everything it can to possess your thinking. And the Devil will do everything he can to mess up your thinking. If any one of these three succeeds, they will mess you up in your spiritual growth, in your daily walk with the Son of God.

You say, preacher! What must I do? You need to give your mind to God. You need to yield your mind to God. It is that simple. Brethren, what do you think on as a child of God? Does the Bible have anything to say about it? Yes, it does. In Philippians 4:8, the Bible says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Your mind ought to be governed and guided by these kinds of things.

All right, what is the end result of doing all of this? If you yield your bodies a living sacrifice, totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased; if you refuse to be conformed to this world; if you learn to think right; if you learn to think like God; if you learn to think as God thinks; if you learn to think God's thoughts, what is the end result of doing all of this? Paul goes on to say, "That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." What is Paul saying? He is saying this. By doing these things, you can prove the will of God. You can test it out and prove it to be good. You can prove to yourself and others that God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect.

Don't you want to live for Christ? Don't you want to do the will of God? Don't you want to glorify God? Don't you want to be what God wants you to be? Then, like the Apostle Paul, 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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

How can you accomplish in this life what God wants you to be? You can accomplish in this life what God wants you to be as you yield your bodies a living sacrifice, totally dedicated to God in every single way, so that God is well-pleased; and as you stop acting like the world. Stop being like the world. You are frustrating yourselves. You are grieving the Holy Spirit of God living in you today as a child of God, and you will never be happy.

Let me give you an example. There were a five-year-old girl and a ten-year-old girl jumping up and down on their bed. They were waiting for the garage door to open to let them know that daddy was home. They were having fun playing on the bed. They both heard the garage door open. The ten-year-old girl wanted to be first to daddy so she pushed her five-year-old sister off the far side of the bed. While her sister was on the floor, she went out the bedroom door and down the stairs. As daddy walked in the front door, she slid across the hardwood floor and caught hold of his leg and sat down on his foot. By this time, her five-year-old sister had picked herself up from the bedroom floor and begun to make her way out of the bedroom and down the stairs. As she began to walk toward daddy, her ten-year-old sister on daddy's foot looked at her and said very brashly, "See, I have all there is of daddy." As her sister made her way to daddy, daddy bent over and picked up his daughter. They embraced each other and daddy wiped away her tears. Then the five-year-old responded to her ten-year-old sister who said "See, I have all there is of daddy." She said, "Yes, sis, you might have all there is of daddy; but look up here. Daddy has all there is of me."

Listen folks! God has all there is of me. But does God Almighty have all there is of you? Are you like the ten-year-old girl or are you like the five-year-old girl? Have you presented your bodies a living sacrifice totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased? If not, you ought to! You ought to present your bodies a living sacrifice totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased.

I have primarily preached to those who profess knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are saved. You are born again. You are on your way to heaven, and you ought to be a living sacrifice totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased. But if you are here today and you don't know Christ as your own personal Saviour and Friend, it would be absolutely impossible for you to be a living sacrifice apart from the new birth. In John 3:7, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again!" You must be saved in order to become a living sacrifice.

You say, preacher! What must I do to be saved? The very first thing you must do is realize the fact that you are a sinner and in need of a Saviour. In Romans 3:10, the Bible says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one." In Romans 3:23, the Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Because you are a sinner, you are condemned to die; and the Bible is very clear on this in Hebrews 9:27, which says, "And it is appointed unto men once to die." In Romans 6:23, the Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death." That includes eternal separation from God and the people of God in an awful place called hell.

You will never be able to work your way into heaven. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

God loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to bear your sin and die in your place on Calvary's cross. He became your substitute. In II Corinthians 5:21, the Bible says, "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Believing is the key. In Acts 16:31, the Apostle Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In Romans 10:9-10, the Bible says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In Romans 10:13, the Scripture says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

If you have never been saved, if you have never been born again, you need to be saved. You need to be born again so that you can become a living sacrifice. And with the new birth, you will receive forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life, and a home in heaven when you die.

Brethren, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, each of you ought to be a living sacrifice totally dedicated to God in every single way so that God is well-pleased.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

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