**SACRIFICE**

Bible sacrifice defined: (a) giving your will up to the will of others and the Lord; (b) giving up your wants for the needs of others; (c) giving something of value (something that costs you) for a good cause. All of these involve giving up something important, sometimes something that really hurts, for the Lord and others.

Sacrifice of self, money, and time: In this building this morning we have many who have sacrificed greatly for others. They have put aside what they would rather do for the good of serving the Lord and helping others. We see this clearly when a spouse or a loved one cares for one who is chronically sick or when parents give up buying new things to help their children achieve their goals. We also see this when one sacrifices a lot of their time in order to teach someone the gospel of Jesus.

Sacrifice of self for a good cause: In our congregation we also have examples of those taking on tasks that we may take for granted, but are very important. Brian and his family and others made sacrifices to renovate our auditorium. Gene and Barbara have made a regular sacrifice on our TV program for years with no backups. Now we have a need for two or three people to make a sacrifice of an hour a month to help teach the gospel on television. This past Monday we had a good caller named Sabrina, then Dan and I had a short internet study from one who watched our program, and we received good feedback from the community. Here is an opportunity for someone to sacrifice for Jesus a little bit and transform a small sacrifice into something that is a blessing, an honor, and a privilege!

Daily sacrifices: I do not know about you, but what I sometimes struggle with is those daily sacrifices that are **inconvenient.** When a spouse needs to talk and maybe the reaction is “you want to talk now? I am in the middle of something”. Or when a daughter or son has something important to talk about right when you had plans to do something or right before bed. The reaction may be something like “Can we talk about this tomorrow?” **Sometimes we need to simply put aside our wants and make that sacrifice right then!**

Sacrifices that come our way that may seem **inconvenient** could be:

* Be at Bible Study to worship God and encourage others when we are not feeling 100 per cent
* Take time out of our day to make that important phone call of encouragement or write that letter or card
* Make room in our schedule to get together with a brother or sister for lunch or visit a discouraged brother or sister
* Take part in a good work we know the Lord wants us to take part in, even though it means changing our plans or routine
* Sacrifice of ourselves at work or school to tell others about Jesus even though we may lose a friend or face a confrontation
* Meet the financial needs of a brother or a neighbor even though we had other plans for that money

**\*Sometimes it may be inconvenient, but the Lord expects us to make that sacrifice.**

The challenge: Doing something good for someone else is not difficult when it fits in with our plans, our schedules, our budget, or our comfort zone? But when asked to do something that does not fit our plans, our schedules, our budget, our comfort zone, or is something we would simply rather not do, the sacrifice sometimes becomes much harder. Those are the times when the Lord is asking us to sacrifice for Him and for others on His behalf. He expects us to sacrifice what we want for what He wants. There are many verses about this in the New Testament (**Acts 5:17-21, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 5:1-7, 25, 6:4, 1 Timothy 5:4, 2 Timothy 2:3, 3:12, 1 Peter 2:18-24**). Today I want us to focus on three examples that I hope will help us improve our sacrificing for God.

**Sacrifice our Time** (**John 4:6, 31-34, 39-42**) – The busiest man on earth took time to take an unexpected two day journey for those despised by His Jewish brethren; the Samaritans. Sometimes we have trouble sacrificing because we simply do not want to be inconvenienced. We can see in this example of Jesus with the Samaritans, that He was greatly inconvenienced. However, Jesus looked at the inconvenience as a way to gather the white harvest (**John 4:35**)!

**Sacrifice our Money** (**2 Corinthians 8:1-5**) – The Macedonians first gave themselves to the Lord and then out of their deep poverty showed generosity [liberality (NAS)] beyond their ability [means (ESV)]. They pleaded for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints (NIV). Are we looking for ways to use our means, our money, our homes, our food, and our clothing to share with our brethren and others like these Macedonian brethren? Are we truly giving as we have prospered? Sometimes the Lord expects His children to give, even when it hurts a bit.

**Sacrifice ourselves** (**Acts 26:19-29 & 28:30-31**) – Paul continued preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus to anyone (including kings) who would listen – knowing that at any moment it may cost him his life! Maybe we do not have these same fears in our country; but are we willing to sacrifice friendships, positions with our jobs, family ties, etc. for the Lord? Will we tell others about Jesus even though it may cost us something of value?

**CLOSE**

**How can we improve in sacrificing for the Lord and others?** When we look at the three examples of Jesus, the Macedonians, and Paul we see a common thread. They all took the sacrifice in front of them and transformed that sacrifice into a blessing, an honor, and a privilege for God and for others! Let us work to transform each sacrifice we find in our lives into a blessing, an honor, and a privilege to serve the Lord and others.

Notice this idea is one the early disciples embraced in **Acts 5:40-42**. They took on the challenge and sacrifice of spreading the gospel, knowing they would be beaten or worse. They changed the sacrifice into a worthy honor in serving Christ!

Good questions to ask ourselves: **Am I sacrificing as I should for the Lord? Am I sacrificing of myself as I should for the good of my brethren, my family, and others?**

Notice **1 Peter 2:5**. **What are my spiritual sacrifices?**

**Are we willing to sacrifice worldly pleasures to gain Christ and one day eternal life in Heaven?** Paul transformed his sacrifice into a blessing, an honor, and a privilege to gain Christ(**Philippians 3:8**).

**If you are not a Christian, we encourage you to become one. It may seem like a sacrifice, but soon you will see that living as a Christian for the Lord is a blessing, an honor, and a privilege.** Believe Him, confess that He is the Son of God, repent of your sins, and then be baptized to wash your sins away. Jesus has died for you. He gave up Heaven to live on earth as a man to become your ultimate sacrifice. **Why not sacrifice your life for Him?** Then you can start offering up spiritual sacrifices that will lead you to Heaven!

Please come forward now if we can assist you now, while we stand and sing.