

August 26, 2020

A Living Sacrifice

Last week we began looking at the matter of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice. Our bodies serve as the physical vehicle through which we live and interact with our physical environment. The physical body is also the vehicle through which we live our Christian life. While the flesh, our sin nature, still exists in our body, as a believer, our body is also the temple of the Holy Spirit who indwells us – **I Corinthians 3:16-17**. Not only does God indwell the body through the Holy Spirit, but He has also purchased or redeemed our body through the blood of Christ, so that the body of the believer actually belongs to God – **I Corinthians 6:19-20**. Because our body is God’s temple, He has full claim to it, nevertheless, He desires that we present it to Him as a living sacrifice.

For the Jew, animal sacrifice was part of their worship. In offering an animal sacrifice, the life of the animal was taken, and its blood was shed as an offering to God. In offering our bodies as a sacrifice, God does not intend for us to harm or mutilate the body. It is to be a living sacrifice. The life that is to be taken, is not the physical life, but the self-life. I recall a conversation that took place in the early years of my ministry. During the service, the pastor made an announcement regarding the choir and their part in the upcoming special meetings. After the service, one of the members of the choir approached me and was upset that she would be expected to be present for all the meetings. Her statement to me was, “I have a life you know.” What she meant was, I have a life outside of church that I am not willing to give up or sacrifice for the Lord. The sad end of the story is that individual and her family soon quit going to church in order to pursue their other life.

In our text, **Romans 12:1**, this living sacrifice is to be holy and acceptable to God. I Corinthians 3:16-17 warns against defiling the body, God’s temple. I Corinthians 6:16-20 says we are to glorify God with our body. What are some ways that we can defile our body? Read **I Kings 18:25-28**. Cutting the body has always been a part of Satanic worship. While there are still those today who try and harm themselves through cutting, our “refined” society has turned to tattooing and piercing as an acceptable form of defiling or cutting the body. Excessive body piercing and body art is a form of defiling the body. Another way to defile the body is to present it in an immodest manner. Proper modest dress is part of our presentation to God and the world.

The determining factor is not what we want, but what is acceptable to God. Ephesians 5:10 “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” The burden of proof does not fall on God, but on us. The question is not, “What’s wrong with it?” The question is, “Does it please God.” Let’s conclude this week’s meditation with a familiar story. Read **Genesis 4:3-13**. Cain and Abel both brought an offering to God. One was acceptable and one was not. Cain became angry because God did not accept his offering. According to verse 7, what was the problem? When we begin to argue about what is acceptable to God, it is a sin problem. A humble spirit is willing to do whatever God asks. In what ways have you been unwilling to die to self or sacrifice the self-life? Is your stubbornness pleasing to God? What should you do about it?