

# Living Sacrifice, part 2

Peter Ditzel

---

This is the final part of an article adapted from *The Word of His Grace* radio program, "Living Sacrifice" (<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/audio/livingsacrifice.mp3>).

---

In Luke 17:11-18, we read,

And it happened while He [Jesus] was traveling to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood at a distance. And they lifted their voice and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And seeing them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went away, they were cleansed. And one of them, seeing that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell down on his face at His feet, thanking Him. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were not any found returning to give glory to God except this foreigner?"

*English Majority Text Version (EMTV)*

Yes, our salvation is totally free. God gives it to us by grace. And, yes, Jesus healed all ten lepers. But Paul, in Romans 12:1, is telling us we should be like the one leper who came to Christ and thanked Him. How much of your life have you sacrificed for Jesus Christ? How much of your time have you devoted for prayer, reading the Bible, serving other Christians, or helping your neighbor? How much of your money and other resources have you given to help others in need or to support the dissemination of the Gospel? How much of a true sacrifice, one that hurts, are you making?

## **Not a Basis for Judging Our Salvation**

How you answer the questions I have asked is between you and God. I don't believe God would have us dwell on the past. If you don't believe you have done enough, now is the time to start doing more. It is really that simple. My job is to remind you, instruct you, encourage you, and "exhort you through the compassions of God, to present your bodies a

Copyright © 2005-2016 wordofhisgrace.org

Permission is granted to reproduce this article only if reproduced in full with no alterations and keeping the copyright statement and this permission statement intact. Unless otherwise noted, Bible references are from the World English Bible (WEB).

livingsacrificeR2p2.pdf

living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your intelligent service" (Romans 12:1, *EMTV*). Anyone who says this is foolish is certainly wrong, for Paul says this is our *logikēn*—logical, intelligent, rational, reasonable service or worship.

Now, I am not trying to lay guilt on you. That would be very wrong. I am also not saying that we should judge our conversion or salvation by our works or lack of them. Scripture very clearly teaches that we are not saved by our works:

Not by works of righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This saying is faithful, and concerning these things I desire that you affirm confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Titus 3:5-8

Works are good and profitable to men, but they are neither the basis of our salvation nor the standard by which we are to judge our own or anyone else's salvation. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus' atoning sacrifice saves us, and our belief is the instrument through which we receive that salvation. If we believe, we are saved. Let's not let our assessment that we fall short in works be a means by which the devil can discourage us and cause us to doubt the salvation that Christ has already achieved and secured for us.

If we believe, we can be assured of our salvation. But let's go on from there:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works.

Titus 2:11-14

## **A Sacrifice to Not Be of the World**

Paul goes on in Romans 12:2: "And do not fashion yourselves after this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and well pleasing and perfect will of God" (*EMTV*). In other words, do not take on the pattern or likeness of the world. The Greek word is *aion*. It means the age, the age in which we live, this sinful age as opposed to the age to come. The pattern of this world means its cares, its wisdom, its rulers, its fashion, and so on. As Christians, we are not to pattern ourselves after the world. We are to be different. Remember, God is setting us apart as holy. He is setting us apart from the world around us that is unholy.

Jesus prayed concerning His disciples and all those who would follow them, "I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). Yes, we are in this world, but we are not to be of it. We need to look into our Bibles and find God's standards for living. And then we need to conform to God's standards and not the world's standards.

Yes, it is a sacrifice. It takes courage. You have to be brave to look, act, and speak differently than the world. But it is your reasonable service. How do you do it? Paul tells us: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." The combination of the Holy Spirit working in us and our taking the Word of God into our minds by reading the Bible should change us. Our values should change from the world's to God's.

What does the world value? What motivates it? Money, greed, power, illicit sex, possessions, seeking after entertainment, comfort, idolizing entertainers and sports stars, just to name a few things. But, while your natural desires might still want to go after these things, the new creature that God is creating in you enables you to put off "your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit" and to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Noah was ridiculed by all around him. Abraham was a stranger and sojourner on the earth. Daniel and his three friends dined alone. Jeremiah prophesied and wept alone. Jesus' disciples fled and even Peter denied Him. Paul said, "no one came to help me, but all left me" (2 Timothy 4:16). But none of them gave up. Peter tells us, "Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

Scripture after Scripture tells us Christians are to be set apart from the world. As just one example, in 2 Corinthians 6, we read,

Don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has a temple of God with idols? For you are a temple of the living God. Even as God said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "'Come out from among them, and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you.'"

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

Is this what we see today? Or do we see the churches lowering themselves to the world's standards of behavior, often on the pretext that they are winning souls to Christ. What is really happening is the devil is winning the churches to the world. Worldly churches then attract people who want to think good of themselves for attending church and talking about Jesus while hanging onto their worldly ways. But Paul tells us that "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). Christians who understand what God expects of them, what I am now telling you, will not be attracted to worldly enticements. They will want to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

Christians are to be so noticeably different from the world that they stand out as a light. Jesus called both Himself and His followers the light of the world. In Matthew 5:14-16, speaking of His followers, He said, "You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can't be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp, and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). The world is in darkness. A light contrasts completely with darkness. Because there is such a difference, it stands out and is very visible. This light, the light of Jesus Christ shining through His followers, will attract the sinners God is calling out of the darkness of the world.

Are you so different that it is noticeable? If Christianity suddenly became illegal and you were brought before a judge, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Have you taken up your cross? Are you following Jesus Christ? Or are you still very much in the world? James says that whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Are you reading your Bible? praying? speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord? Are you giving thanks always? or grumbling? Are you dressing "in modest apparel, with propriety and discretion, not with braids or gold or pearls or expensive clothing" (1 Timothy 2:9, *EMTV*) as the Bible directs? or are you letting your bottom hang out and getting your body pierced and tattooed in every conceivable place? Are you remaining chaste before marriage and faithful after marriage in both body and mind? or are you making a mockery of the relationship between Christ and the assembly that marriage pictures? Do you "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven"? (Matthew 5:44-45a) or do you hate your enemies, return curses for curses, and plot against those who mistreat you?

Do you obey and honor your parents? or do you ignore them as old fashioned, not understanding, or even stupid? Do you avoid provoking your children to wrath? or do you always let it all fly, excusing your unbridled anger because your kids are so aggravating? Wives, do you submit to your husbands as to the Lord? or do you listen to the anti-Christian feminists who say that to do so is degrading and that Paul was a frustrated male chauvinist? Husbands, do you love your wives as Christ loved the assembly? or is it obvious that you love your work, your golf or fishing, your car, or something else more?

Maybe what I have said is discouraging. You feel you could never live up to it. But remember, it is God who is working in you. Look to Him for your strength. Pray! Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Just as you trusted in Christ as your Savior at the beginning of your salvation, continue to trust Him now for your sanctification. As Paul wrote, "Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.*

Ephesians 6:10