

Living Sacrifice

Study Notes

The Principles of Sacrifice

A. New Testament usage of the language of sacrifice

1. In reference to Christ: 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 5:7, 7:27, 9:14, 9:25-28, 10:10-12; Revelation 5:5-6
2. In reference to ourselves: Acts 24:17; Romans 12:1, 15:16; 2 Corinthians 9:1; Philippians 2:17, 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:6; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 6:9

B. Principles behind the sacrifices of the Law

1. Sacrifice is *the* act of worship: Exodus 20:22-24, 22:29, 34:19-20; Leviticus 1-7; Deuteronomy 16:16-17; Hebrews 9:22
2. Sacrifice is a return to God of a portion of what is His already: 1 Chronicles 29:10-16; Isaiah 40:12-17; Psalm 50:10-12; Acts 17:24-25
3. The animals weren't the point: Psalms 40:6-8, 50:7-15, 51:16-17; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 1:10-20; Jeremiah 7:21-26; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8
4. God did want the offerings to be made: most of Leviticus (e.g. 5:6-7,11); Isaiah 43:22-24, 56:3-8; Haggai; Malachi 1-3
5. Offerings were acceptable only if:
 - The best was offered: Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3 (and many similar); Leviticus 22:21-25; Deuteronomy 17:1; Malachi 1:6-14
 - Offered in the right place: Exodus 5:1-3; Deuteronomy 12; Deuteronomy 15:20 (and many similar); 1 Kings 22:43 (and many other references to the "high places"); Isaiah 36:7
 - Offered in sincerity and truth: Joshua 24:14 (compare 1 Corinthians 5:8).
 - contrast: sincere offering to false god: Deuteronomy 32:15-21; Isaiah 44:15-20
 - insincere offering to the true God: Isaiah 1:11-20; Proverbs 15:8
6. Our relationship to God is affected by the quality of our sacrifice: Haggai 2:14-19; Malachi 3:8-12
7. Fulfillment of the types:
 - Christ is the fulfillment of
 - the victim (lamb): John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7
 - the high priest: Hebrews 2:17, 8:1-2
 - the altar: Hebrews 13:10; 1 Corinthians 10:17-21
 - He does not fulfill the role of the worshipper.
 - Types we have a part in fulfilling: laying hands on the head of the victim, first fruits, freewill offering, thank offering, peace offering, votive gifts, incense, tithes

C. Jesus' application of the principles

1. He gave his own body in living sacrifice as well as dying, calls us to same: Luke 9:23

The Offering of My Time

A. Giving our bodies in living

1. Purpose of human life: Ephesians 1:5-12
2. Living = spending our lives = spending time; least common denominator of all offerings
3. Budgeting our time: the first and the best belong to God
4. Tithes: Leviticus 27:30,32; Deuteronomy 14:22-26; Malachi 3:8-10
 - Tithe of waking hours is 1.6 hours per day, 11.2 hours per week
 - Covers ongoing activities; special offerings (like thank offerings & peace offerings) are in addition: Leviticus 1, 2, 7:11-12,16; Exodus 3:29
5. Giving money
 - Can be either sign of real devotion or easy way out of real service: Mark 12:41-44
 - Giving money is the work of our hands, traded for cash with our employer
 - "Take my silver and my gold" can mean giving up the pursuit of wealth
6. Votive gifts = carrying through on our resolutions and promises: Psalm 15:4

B. Setting priorities

1. We spend time on what is important to us: Matthew 6:21. We cannot do everything!
2. Change is required: Romans 12:2
 - Reassess career goals & attitudes (example, Brother Roberts)
 - Change our criteria from ease and enjoyment to profitability: Ephesians 5:15-20
 - Eliminate time wasters: Ephesians 5:11
3. Family must not be neglected: Ephesians 5:23-6:4
4. Giving money is good, but no substitute for giving service
5. Our rest comes later: Matthew 6:2,5; Hebrews 4:3-10, 11:13-16

The Offering of My Voice

A. Choosing our offering

1. We are guided by Providence, but we still have to *decide* what to offer.
2. We are to give our literal bodies in serving: Romans 12:6-13
3. Use of our mouth is a microcosm of all our behavior: James 3:2, 9-12
4. A tree is known by its fruit—our words: Matthew 12:33-37

B. Good fruit

1. Preaching
 - Preaching by example (Matthew 5:16) must lead to speaking of the Truth: Romans 10:14-17.
 - Preaching is specifically called a pleasing sacrifice: Hebrews 13:12-16

2. Teaching, follows preaching: Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Proverbs 22:6
3. Exhortation
 - Hebrews 3:12-13; Proverbs 27:17
 - Sometimes necessary to address uncomfortable subjects: Matthew 18:15; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13. *Not* judgment, rather a desire to build up.
4. Singing: Colossians 3:15-17; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Acts 16:25; Matthew 26:30; Revelation 5:8-10; Psalm 147:1
 - "psalms" (*psalms*) - literally music of a stringed instrument, always used in New Testament of the inspired songs of the Psalms
 - "hymns" (*hymnos*) - a religious poem, generally a song of praise
 - "spiritual songs" (*ode pneumatikos*) - words of a song, of the spirit
5. Prayer
 - For guidance (Luke 6:12-13), in time of need (Luke 22:41-42), in praise and thanksgiving (John 11:41-42), repentance and confession (Luke 18:13-14), etc.
 - Under the Law, every sacrifice was accompanied by incense, which represents prayer: Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4

C. Why should God want my mouth?

1. Divine communication with men has almost exclusively been through human mouths: Hebrews 1:1-2. The Law, the prophets, the gospel through Jesus and the apostles were all spoken.
2. Our imperfection is unimportant, only our willingness is required: Isaiah 6:3-8
3. Failure to speak can cause others to die: Ezekiel 3:16-21

D. "We all make many mistakes..." (James 3:2)

1. Problems of content (things we say which we shouldn't)
 - Catalog in Colossians 3:8-9: hastiness, anger, maliciousness, gossip, foul talk, lies. Possible addition: useless drivel.
 - Remedy: think before you speak. Colossians 4:5-6
2. Problems of attitude (causing us to not say things we should)
 - Fear: Mark 8:38; Romans 8:15
 - Shyness ("I can't"): Exodus 4:10-14
 - Weariness ("out of season"): 2 Timothy 4:2; Mark 6:31-34
 - Remedy: love. Colossians 3:14-17; 1 John 3-4
3. Garbage in, garbage out. But if the "word of Christ dwells in us richly" (Colossians 3:16) then the word of Christ comes out.

The Offering of My Hands and My Feet

A. Feet & walking, literal and figurative

1. Where we are is related to what we are doing
 - Standing: Psalm 122:1-2 vs Psalm 1:1
 - Walking: Isaiah 52:7 vs Isaiah 59:7
 - Cars are modern-day extensions of our feet, can also be offered in service
2. Figuratively, our "walk" is our life:
 - The faithful "walk with God", are blameless: Genesis 5:21-24, 6:9, 17:1
 - God's Word gives direction to our walk: Deuteronomy 5:32-33, 8:6; Psalm 17:4-5, 119:105; Isaiah 2:3
 - New life in Christ should be reflected in a new walk: Romans 6:4; Ephesians 2:10; the old walk no longer acceptable: 1 Corinthians 3:3; 1 John 1:6-7

B. Hands – instruments of service

1. What are hands for?
 - Originally, for useful work: Genesis 2:15. Corrupted & used for sinning: Genesis 3:6
 - After the fall, still for work: Genesis 3:17-19, 4:2; also for worship: Genesis 4:3-4. Again misused--Abel's hands killed a firstling (4:4) but Cain's killed his brother (4:8)
2. Hands are not for:
 - Idleness: Proverbs 24:33-34
 - Serving ourselves: Ecclesiastes 2:10-11; Jeremiah 1:16
 - Doing harm: Psalm 26:9-10, 55:20; Matthew 17:22-23, 26:50-51
3. Hands are for serving:
 - Jesus' example: Matthew 8:2-3; John 13:12-17
 - The Samaritan of the parable used his to serve his enemy: Luke 10:30-37
 - Works should let our light shine: Matthew 5:16
 - Jesus' parables depict people active in doing. Implication for us: give both literal physical assistance, and more broadly let all our works be in service to God.
4. Hands are for doing good: Matthew 5:38-48, 12:11-12
 - Doing good is what Jesus did: Acts 10:38
 - Doing good is a pleasing sacrifice: Hebrews 13:16 It's what we're made for & supposed to do: Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 6:10; Mark 14:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:15

C. We are saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), but what we do matters

1. Our works set us apart from the corrupt world around us: John 3:19-21
2. Our works reveal the state of our heart: James 1:19-27, 2:14-18; Romans 2:4-8,13
3. People who have been changed, and have gone from death to life, use their members accordingly: Romans 6:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The Offering of My Will

A. Doing the will of the Father

1. Some prophesy (give their mouth) and do mighty works (give their hands), but do not do the will of the Father: Matthew 7:21-23
2. Works alone do not save us, no matter how mighty: 1 Corinthians 13:2-3
3. Ananias and Sapphira made a commendable contribution, but their hearts weren't in it: Acts 5:1-11
4. The Pharisees were zealous in good works, but missed the weighty matters: Matthew 23:27-28

B. Making the Father's will mine--the example and teachings of Jesus

1. Jesus taught that we should want God's will to be done: Matthew 6:10
2. Therefore outward gifts are unacceptable if not accompanied by the real desire to give: 2 Corinthians 9:7
3. Jesus proved that he genuinely wanted to give his will to God: John 4:34, Luke 22:42
4. As a result, God accepted him and told us to listen to him: Mark 9:7
5. Back to the basic principles of sacrifice (see page 1). Our works, like the sacrificial animals, aren't the point--they don't enrich God. But willing giving is required.

C. We have trouble living up to the ideal

1. Romans 7:14-25 - We are carnal, sold under sin.
2. Paul says he can will what is right, but can't do it. What if we can't even will it?
3. We are faulty, but God can deal with that: Jude 24

D. The mind (intellect) must be put to work first

1. For many religion is an emotional experience, and fades. For others it is a comfortable feeling of security.
2. True religion is hard work--physically, mentally, morally: James 1:27
3. We can't be transformed without the renewal of our minds: Romans 12:2. This means changing our thinking.

E. What can I fill my mind with, to begin the renewal?

1. God's love, which moves us to love: 1 John 4:19
2. The big picture. Pleasures and worries of this life will end; God's people will remain forever: 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 12:25-29; 2 Peter 3:10-14
3. The peace of Christ: Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; Philippians 4:6-7
4. Sort the random thoughts that come into your mind. *Decide* what to think about, rather than take whatever comes: Philippians 4:8-9

F. Once the will has been given, it becomes clear that the gift of the body in service is absolutely reasonable: Romans 12:1