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Sermon Notes

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The Sacrifices of the Christian Life

Hebrews 13:15-16

There is a single verse that sums up the dynamic of the advance of the Christian church...
John 12:24

John 12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.

The story of Christianity has been one of the history of SACRIFICE... the ultimate sacrifice was made by Jesus Christ, whose selfless love in dying for us all is the ground for every gift you've ever received or ever will receive from God—Christ's sacrifice has freed you from sin, and made you perfect in God's sight and will usher you through this hostile world to a place of feasting at the wedding banquet in heaven.

But the verse speaks a universal principle which Christians in every generation and in every nation have followed: denying self, dying to self, living to bless others, living to serve others, seeking nothing out of the act except the joy of glorifying God and blessing someone else

- Every missionary that ever said goodbye to family and friends and crossed miles of ocean or burning desert sand or rugged mountain ranges or frozen tundra or steamy jungle to lay down his/her life for some lost tribe of people has lived out SACRIFICE
- Every Christian who ever braved the lethal dangers of the plague, risking life in the face of a terrifying infectious disease to nurse the sick and care for their disgusting bodily needs has lived out SACRIFICE
- Every mother who has put in long hours to pray for her children or teach them how to live or train them in their basic life skills or to nurse them in the middle of the night or to discipline them in their sin or to love them when they were most unlovable has lived out this SACRIFICE
- Every humble servant in a local church who has denied himself or herself sleep, has pushed the limits of bodily endurance to do a ministry to the poor and needy in an urban setting, who has cared for those who can never repay in this world, doing it all in the name of Jesus and for the sake of the gospel as lived out this SACRIFICE
- Frankly, every act ever pleasing to God has been done by Christians in the spirit of self-denying sacrifice: every prayer prayed, every dollar given, every hour

spent in ministry, every worship song sung, if any of them were pleasing to God have been fragrant SACRIFICES... costly acts of loving self-denial

I love the words of David Livingstone, the courageous pioneer Scottish missionary whose exploratory work opened the way for missionaries to penetrate the African interior with the gospel. This is a man who endured immense pain and suffering for Christ:

He was once attacked by a lion on the mission field crushing his shoulder to the point that its mobility would be hindered for the rest of his life. Livingstone married and deeply loved Mary Moffat, but because of the difficulty of travel and various sicknesses he would spend more than half of his 18 years of marriage separate from his wife. The couple lost a child to sickness on the mission field, and later Livingstone also lost his beloved wife to sickness on the mission field as well. During his time in Africa Livingstone once went 3 years with no correspondence from his family because the letters were unable to get to him.

But for all of this, on December 4, 1857 he spoke to the students of Cambridge University about his years of missionary service:

For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay?... Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in, and for us. **I never made a sacrifice.** Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which HE made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us.

- **“I never made a sacrifice...”!!!**

I. More Lessons from the Sacrificial System

A. Animal Sacrifice Ancient, and Established by God

1. The animal skins in the Garden of Eden
2. The animal sacrifice of Abel
3. The animal sacrifices of Noah

4. The animal sacrifices of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
 5. The animal sacrifices established in the Law of Moses
- B. Lessons Leading to the Cross... Lessons Concerning Atonement for Sin
1. All sin deserves the death penalty
 2. The death penalty can be paid by a substitute
 3. The substitute cannot be an animal
- C. Lessons Leading from the Cross... Lessons Concerning a Life Well-Pleasing to God
1. A "sacrifice" is something costly

1 Chronicles 21:24-25 But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing." ²⁵ So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels of gold for the site.

2. A sacrifice must be given by faith and in love for God

Isaiah 1:11 "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

3. A sacrifice must be the best we have to offer
 - a. "without blemish"... points to Christ's sinlessness, but also to the quality
 - b. God's statements to Israel through Malachi

Malachi 1:8-11 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty. ⁹ "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"-- says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁰ "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹ My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

II. A New Sacrificial System: In Christ, "In Spirit and In Truth"

A. A New Altar Established: Eternal, Spiritual, in the Heavens, Established Through the Blood of Christ

1. The New Altar Declared

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

- a. This is the culmination of the meditation the Author has been giving us on the end of the Old Covenant sacrificial system
- b. That Old Covenant system was based on the blood of bulls and goats, and the flawed, sinful Levitical priesthood
- c. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has entered the world as a man; incarnate by the Holy Spirit, He has become a Priest in a new order, the order of Melchizedek; He died once for all, offering His blood once for all, to cleanse His people perfectly of their guilty consciences, of their sins before God
- d. In this way, the Old Covenant animal sacrificial system was ABOLISHED in Jesus, made OBSOLETE:

Hebrews 8:13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

- e. In the place of that old animal altar was a new spiritual altar, established in the heavenly realms, by which we are all able to offer our new sacrifices
- f. This is the altar from which those who have rejected the New Covenant of Christ have NO RIGHT TO EAT; we eat (feed on) the nourishment God gives us in Christ as we offer our new sacrifices
- g. The “eating” is spiritual nourishment; just as the worshipers in the Old Covenant feasted on the meat from the animals that were sacrificed, so the New Covenant worshipers feast on the spiritual meat that is Christ

2. The New Altar Described

- a. This altar is heavenly, not earthly
- b. It is spiritual, not physical
- c. It is the culmination of Christ’s sacrificial offering for us
- d. It is described in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 8:3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne.

Revelation 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake

Revelation 9:13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God.

e. The altar is the PLACE ON WHICH the sacrifices are made and offered to God; the platform by which they are made

f. So our text makes it plain that Christ is truly this platform:

Hebrews 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice

B. New Covenant Changes: freedom IN sacrifice... not freedom FROM sacrifice

1. Purpose: Christ's once for all sacrifice ends forever the sacrifices of atonement; free from guilt forever
2. Access: no restrictions anymore; free to come right into the throne room of grace by the new and living way opened for us, the body of Christ
3. Objects: Animals no more accepted; free from the physical challenges of the animal sacrificial system, free from the blood of bulls and goats
4. Place: No one place of worship required... free from the requirement to travel physically to the one place God had chosen to put His name
5. Person: No one tribe (the Levites); no one man (High Priest, son of Aaron); we are ALL free to offer directly to God through Christ our sacrifices
6. Time: No set times or sacrifice... no yearly calendar, no legal requirement for morning and evening sacrifices... free to offer to God continually a sacrifice any time the Spirit moves us

Hebrews 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice

7. BUT: not free FROM sacrifice... Hebrews 13:15-16 (among other NT passages) teach us that the principle of sacrifice is still very much in force in our New Covenant life in Christ

C. Answering Charges that Christians Have No Religion

1. The Old Covenant Jews were steeped in their physical religion, centered around the animal sacrificial system and the temple/tabernacle

2. They made the charge that “Christians” had no temple, no, altar, no animals, no blood, therefore no sacrifices, no worship, in short, no religion
3. The author to Hebrews shows here that we have a very lively, powerful, rich, continual sacrificial system based on the finished work of Christ on the cross
4. He harmonizes with other NT writings which also use sacrificial language to describe the lives of Christians
5. Today I want to draw them all together in one place and list

D. Sacrifices Listed

1. The sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart
2. The sacrifice of faith in Christ as the once-for-all atonement
3. The sacrifice of our bodies to God in service
4. The sacrifice of our earthly comforts in witnessing
5. The sacrifice of praise—the “fruit of lips” that confess His name
6. The sacrifice of good works to benefit others: time, energy, money, possessions given to the needy

III. Sacrifice #1: A Broken and Contrite Heart

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

- A. This is Foundational to Everything That Follows
- B. A New Covenant Worshiper is Constantly Mindful of Forgiven Sin
- C. The Finished Work of Christ is Ever Before Us... as is a Sense of HUMILITY and BROKENNESS over sin

1 Timothy 1:13-15 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst.

- D. This is the Basis of Our Deep Humility Before God

Hebrews 12:28 ...let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe

E. Application

1. Learn to cultivate this humility before God; Paul said he was the worst sinner on the face of the earth; and when he wrote 1 Timothy 1 he was already an apostle, forgiven completely, joyful in his salvation... but still mindful of all God had done to forgive him
2. So... go to God with deep reverence and humility; offer Him the sacrifices David said God will always accept: a **broken and contrite spirit**;
3. God always delights in broken-hearted humility:

James 4:6-10 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Peter 5:5-6 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ ¶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

4. If you want to begin your day of sacrifice, start here:

HUMBLE YOURSELVES UNDER GOD'S MIGHTY HAND

5. Allow the Spirit to uncover your sins and show them to you; be broken-hearted over them and grieve over them; confess them fully and freely
6. THEN...

IV. Sacrifice #2: Faith in the Completed Work of Christ

- A. Understand the Once-for-all Completed Work of Christ
- B. No Works of Yours Can Ever Atonement!!!
- C. The Atoning Sacrifice You Offer is not Really Offered BY You; Christ Already Offered it FOR YOU
- D. The Sacrifice Here: appropriate by faith the finished work of Christ on your behalf
 1. Say, "Lord, I have just recounted to you all my sins and failings; I have allowed my flesh to rule me, I have followed the ways of this world and of the

ruler of the Kingdom of the air... Satan has deceived me and I have fallen into his temptations; I am guilty of sin before you; but THANKS BE TO GOD you have already FULLY ATONED for my sin”

2. As you allow the once for all finished work of Christ to be appropriated again for your new wave of sins, allow your guilty conscience to be cleansed by that blood
3. Revel in this... allow it to wash over you; this is not your sacrifice, but God the Father’s and God the Son’s sacrifice... you “offer it” back to God only by your personal FAITH by which you eat of it and absorb it and stand under it
4. THESE FIRST TWO SACRIFICES ARE VITAL before you think to do anything in service to God; lest you become arrogant and forget

E. Understand: All Following Sacrifices are Made THROUGH CHRIST’S FINISHED WORK

Hebrews 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice

1. Lest we become arrogant about all the sacrifices we have made or are about to make, starting with these two heals us!!!
2. We are deeply humbled by all of our past sins, and all of the remaining sinfulness still within us
3. It is only through Jesus that we are able to offer to God anything that He will accept
4. These first two keep us humble as we launch into the next four sacrifices, for which we could become arrogant

V. Sacrifice #3: Our Bodies in Constant Service to God

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

A. Romans, Not Hebrews: But the Principle is Here

1. To present your bodies means to offer them to God for Him to command
2. Paul’s earlier teaching in Romans 6 was foundational

Romans 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

3. The idea: I AM YOURS FULLY TO COMMAND... every member of my body stands ready to serve you; I will sacrifice myself, my life, my health, my time, my all for you, God, through Jesus Christ
4. The main idea is one of HOLINESS: separate from sin, separate UNTO God for His sacred service

B. Hebrews has same kind of concept

1. Hebrews 9:14 speaks of the cleansing power of Christ's blood

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

As Jesus, through the Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, so now we, cleansed by His blood, are able to OFFER OURSELVES to serve the LIVING GOD

This is as close as we can get to saying the same thing: our bodies, holy and acceptable to God, are now OFFERED in SERVICE to God

2. Hebrews 12:28

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe

The same idea: ACCEPTABLE SERVICE... ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP... Romans 12 tells us it begins with the presentation of the body to God holy and acceptable for service

C. Application

1. Do this every day: begin by presenting your body to God in service
 - a. Say, "Lord, you shed your blood at the cross and BOUGHT ME with a price... I am no longer mine, I am now yours—your bondservant—I am yours to command!! I am delighted about that, Lord, because you are a perfectly good master and everything I have is yours. Especially my body!
 - b. "So, Lord... take my life and use it; take my body and fill me and use me; take my hands—let them work for you today; take my mouth, let me speak the very words of God today; take my feet and let me walk where you want me to go to today. Take my mind—let me think your thoughts

today; take my heart—let me love what you love and hate what you hate today. Take my stomach, and let me only eat what you would have me to eat today.

c. “Lord, here and now, I offer my body to you as a living sacrifice.”

2. Having done that at the beginning of the day, so do it throughout the day... as often as you want to take control back

VI. Sacrifice #4: Our Earthly Comforts in Witnessing for Christ

Hebrews 13:13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

A. Be Willing to Stand Under the Cross of Jesus Christ and Suffer With Him

1. As we discussed last time, the “camp” or “city” represents earthly COMFORT: societal approval, good paying job, comfortable lifestyle; approval from neighbors and coworkers and family members
2. The Hebrew Christians had to be willing to TURN THEIR BACKS on all this and go outside the camp where Jesus was hanging on the cross
3. The text specifically mentions “disgrace”... it commands us to stand under His cross and share in the disgrace that they put on Him
 - a. The word can be translated “reproach” or “abuse”
 - b. It refers to insults, hatred, rejection, heaped on Jesus as He was hanging on the cross
 - c. It refers to the SHAME the world tries to heap on Christians
4. This is a HUGE SACRIFICE... willingness to turn your back on the comforts of this life and serve Christ

B. Motivation is Clear: FAITH IN THE ETERNAL REWARDS

Hebrews 13:14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

1. And we are to rejoice in this... not be frustrated or angry or complaining
2. Verse 15 flows right from verse 14:

Hebrews 13:14-15 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. ¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name.

3. As we rejoice in the eternal rewards given to those who suffer earthly deprivation, we are bringing great glory to Christ

C. What is the “Sacrifice”?

1. Give up what you cannot keep to gain what you cannot lose

Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

2. Be willing to sacrifice earthly comforts
 - a. American comfort industry is the greatest in the world
 - b. Bodily comforts: climate controlled rooms, smooth roads, fast food, well-organized grocery stores, readily accessible Wal-Mart; upholstered car seats, highly engineered beds with perfect springs and cushions; high-paying jobs that reduce suffering and maximize return
 - c. Relational comforts: the good esteem of family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow citizens
3. Be willing to SACRIFICE these by a clear, open life of witnessing to Jesus
4. The word “confess” could refer to witnessing as much as to worship

Hebrews 13:13-15 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. ¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name.

5. So, simply WITNESSING for Jesus, confessing His name in public can be a great sacrifice if people begin to ridicule you and pour out reproach on you

D. Application

1. Ask God to begin weakening your love for earthly comforts
2. Ask God to give you opportunities to stand outside the city gate and bear Jesus’ abuse
3. Speak up for Christ at work: look for ways to enter the more personal lives of your coworkers
 - a. Talk to them about their families... listen to the struggles they are having
 - b. Pray for people who speak of marital troubles or medical issues

- c. BUT at the key moment, be willing to share the gospel with them as God provides opportunity
- d. Expect that it is GOING TO COST YOU SOMETHING!! Don't be surprised when you get bypassed for promotions or shunned at company picnics; make sure that it's not for being lazy or a meddler or an obnoxious self-righteous "bible-thumper", still less for a political party and its worldly agenda
- e. Make the sacrifice of OUTREACHES
 - i) Be willing to step out in faith to go on our neighborhood outreaches
 - ii) Be willing to bear the reproach of Christ in inviting people to church or sharing God-Man-Christ-Response
- f. Make the sacrifice of MISSIONS
 - i) Daily prayer for missionaries
 - ii) Servant hearts toward them—care packages and e-mails and various forms of servant-support ministries
 - iii) Short-term mission trips

VII. Sacrifice #5: Praise—the “Fruit of Lips” That Confess Christ

Hebrews 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name.

A. Simply Put: Worship... the FRUIT OF LIPS

1. Having done the first two sacrifices, we are able to worship God for His mercy
2. This refers to the praise and worship that God deserves for His salvation of us
3. This is an EXHORTATION TO DUTY: “Let us continually offer TO GOD A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE...”
4. This is precisely why He saved us to begin with

Ephesians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1:4-6 In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Ephesians 1:11-12 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined ... in order that we... might be for the praise of his glory.

5. God saved us so that we might glorify Him

Psalm 50:15 call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me

Psalm 50:23 He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God

B. We Redeemed Have ABUNDANT Reasons to Praise God Through Jesus

1. We are commanded to do it CONTINUALLY... implying that the salvation we have received is so infinitely worthy that we should never run out of reasons to thank God for it
2. We are commanded to do it THROUGH JESUS... it is especially when our minds think about Christ and what He did that the sacrifice of praise can flow
3. Think of the infinite blessings of the gospel
 - a. Full forgiveness of sins
 - b. Cleansing of a guilty conscience
 - c. Adoption into the family of God
 - d. The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit
 - e. The total security of His sovereign power protecting us from all attacks
 - f. The blessing of spiritual gifts and ministries that enable us to serve God every day in eternally productive ways
 - g. The blessing of the family of God, of brothers and sisters who love us and pray for us and hold us accountable
 - h. The blessings of the Bible—its astonishing truths unfolded to us by the Holy Spirit directly in our hearts and through gifted teachers
 - i. Prayer: The freedom of access we have to the throne of grace anytime
 - j. The Promises: Like “*I will never leave you nor forsake you...*”

C. Think also about Jesus... who paid for it all

1. Not one of these blessings was free, but all were INFINITELY COSTLY

2. Jesus accepted our sin, our defilement, our guilt on Himself
3. He absorbed the infinite wrath of God for three hours on the cross
4. The sky grew dark over His head; the ground shook beneath His bleeding feet
5. The soldiers gambled for His clothing; He became thirsty and suffered intense agony
6. He cried out

My God, my God... why have you forsaken me?

This very same God who said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”... the price tag for that was being left and forsaken by God Himself

7. This meditation should be sufficient to bring forth praise
- D. It is only THROUGH JESUS that our sacrifices are acceptable to God
1. It is only THROUGH JESUS that we can continually offer this praise
 2. Apart from Jesus, even our sacrifice of praise would be unacceptable
 3. Jesus’ blood cleanses even our BEST SACRIFICES
- E. “Fruit of Lips”
1. This praise must not only be in our hearts... it must also be spoken
 2. We are supposed to OFFER the sacrifice of praise to God
 3. It is something that must be given... not held back

Psalm 145:1-3 I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. ² Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. ³ Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

4. It is something that must be spoken, and sung and even shouted... it must be EXPRESSED, not just thought silently inside

Psalm 9:1-2 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. ² I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 27:6 at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

5. Of course, the lips MUST express the true passion of the heart or it is worthless

Matthew 15:8 *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

6. And amazing that God even desires anything that comes from lips of sinners like us

Romans 3:13-14 *"Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."*

7. But this is the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, that we can offer up the fruit of lips that confess His name
8. Our task as believers... is to use our mouths CONSISTENTLY to praise Jesus

James 3:9-11 *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?*

F. "Confess His Name"

1. The Greek word means to say with God what He has said about Himself
2. It is to respond with the right doctrine that He has given us... He has instructed us by the gospel; so our lips CONFESS HIS NAME
3. The name of Jesus, our savior

Romans 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

4. We praise Jesus by hearing the gospel with our ears, believing it in our hearts, and confessing it back with our lips

G. Application: Let us CONTINUALLY Offer the Sacrifice of Praise

1. Continually: throughout our lives, every moment of every day, you should be speaking praise to God through Jesus Christ
2. Praise Him in the morning, praise Him at the noontime, praise Him when the sun is going down
3. Praise Him when your heart is breaking at some earthly trial, praise Him when your heart is swelling with joy over some earthly blessing

4. Praise Him when surrounded by believers—in small groups, or in congregational worship
5. Praise Him when the song is your favorite; praise Him when it's not your favorite!!
6. Praise Him genuinely and knowledgeably: confess back to Him what the Apostle Paul says in Romans and Ephesians what He's done for you... learn solid doctrine so your sacrifice of praise can be full and rich
7. Praise Him like Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail... in the most painful circumstances... that's when the praise is really a SACRIFICE

VIII. Sacrifice #6: Good Works—Sharing Earthly Resources with the Needy

Hebrews 13:16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- A. The Offering of Our Lives into Good Works is the Outcome of the Living Sacrifice Mentioned Earlier

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- B. "Do Not Forget"

1. Our flesh drives the needs of others far away from us
2. We are so selfish naturally, so self-focused, so self-centered
3. The author commands us not to forget to do the good works God has ordained
4. We are surrounded by needy people every day of our lives... either needy spiritually or needy materially

- C. Religion Cannot Be Merely Vertical... God Demands It Go Horizontal As Well

1. The Scribes and Pharisees made long prayers and gave a tenth of their spices, but they neglected JUSTICE, MERCY, and FAITHFULNESS... they failed horizontally
- 2.

- D. Share With Others

1. The Greek word refers to the holding things in common... being a conduit of material blessings as God enables

2. God has ordained even within the Christian church an unequal distribution of wealth to draw us together... the wealthier Christians sharing with others the many blessings that God has lavished on them

1 Timothy 6:18-19 Command [those who are rich in this world] to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

3. Take the example of the early church...

Acts 2:44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common.⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Acts 4:34-37 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

4. 1 John is clear about this as well

1 John 3:17-18 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

5. This is a life of sacrifice... and God LOVES IT

E. With Such Sacrifices God is Well-Pleased

1. This is an amazing statement!! God is delighted with such sacrifices
2. When people sacrifice some aspect of their lives so they can share with others, God is delighted with it
3. This is pure and faultless religion that God accepts... looking after orphans and widows in their distress
4. How is it a sacrifice? It is COSTLY... you choose not to be selfish and hoard your goods for your own and your family

IX. Review and Summary

Six sacrifices Christians must offer:

1. The sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart
2. The sacrifice of faith in Christ as the once-for-all atonement
3. The sacrifice of our bodies to God in service
4. The sacrifice of our earthly comforts in witnessing
5. The sacrifice of praise—the “fruit of lips” that confess His name
6. The sacrifice of good works to benefit others: time, energy, money, possessions given to the needy