

Sacrifice Series 2:

**AN
ACCEPT-
ABLE
SACRIFICE**

AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

March 23, 2014

Sermon in a sentence: Let us follow Jesus's example in making sacrifices that please God.

Scriptures: Rom. 12:1; Deut. 24:19-21; Deut. 26:12-13; Mark 12:41-43; Is. 1:17; James 1:27; 2 Cor. 8:1-4; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 13:16, 15; Ps. 107:21-22; Ps. 116:17; Lev. 7:13 (1 Cor. 5:6-8); Lev. 22:23

It is quite clear that sacrificing our lives in an attempt to save others from eternal judgment is pointless. We have all sinned, so we are ineligible to act as a substitutionary sacrifice for anyone else. Thank God, this is not something we need to worry about. Jesus took care of this need at Calvary.

There is no way for us to reciprocate the sacrifice Jesus made for us. He does not ask us to do so, but He *does* provide wonderful ways for us to show our heartfelt appreciation to Him. We do this by living sacrificial lives in the service of others.

Romans 12:1 NASB Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

Our "service of worship" to God is demonstrated in our sacrificial service to those around us.

The Four Chaplains, also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains" were four [United States Army chaplains](#) who gave their lives to save other civilian and military personnel as the troop ship [USAT *Dorchester*](#) sank on February 3, 1943, during [World War](#)

II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own **life jackets** when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.

The relatively new chaplains all held the **rank** of **first lieutenant**. They included **Methodist** minister the Reverend **George L. Fox**, **Reform-Rabbi Alexander D. Goode** (Ph.D.), **Roman Catholic priest** the Reverend **John P. Washington**, and **Reformed Church in America** minister the Reverend **Clark V. Poling**. ...They met at the Army Chaplains School at **Harvard University**, where they prepared for assignments in the European theater, sailing on board USAT *Dorchester* to report to their new assignments.¹

Scripture is very helpful as we seek opportunities to sacrifice, in ways that are pleasing and acceptable to God. We need to sacrifice holistically – of our goods and of ourselves. Matthew 25 highlights a number of ways to do this, along with OT scriptures like Deut. 24 and 26:

Deut. 24:19-21 NASB “ When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20“When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. 21 “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

Deut. 26:12-13 NASB “ When you have finished paying all the tithes of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13 “You shall say

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Chaplains, accessed March 18, 2014

before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred *portion* from *my* house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments.

Even the widow in Mark 12 got into the mode of sacrificial giving, despite her own great personal needs.

Mark 12:41-43 NASB And He sat down opposite the treasury, and *began* observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. ⁴³ Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "**Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; ⁴⁴ for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.**"

Sacrificial giving of our time, our talents, our labour, our love, our compassion, our energy, our intercession, and our care for others is all acceptable to God.

Is. 1:17 NASB Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.

James 1:27 NASB Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Let us not forget the example of the Macedonian saints who wanted to be a blessing to the saints in Jerusalem:

2 Cor. 8:1-4 NASB Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. ³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, ⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints....

The level of their sacrificial giving was duly noted, appreciated, and accepted by the Lord.

Gal. 6:10 NASB So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Heb. 13:16 NASB And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

And let us not forget the instruction of the previous verse, which highlights the last acceptable sacrifice we will discuss today:

Heb. 13:15 NASB Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

To those whom the Lord has delivered, the Psalmist says:

Psalm 107:21-22 NASB Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men! ²² Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful singing.

Psalm 116:17 NASB To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the LORD.

Everybody has an opportunity to offer these acceptable sacrifices to God. You don't have to be perfect to enjoy this privilege – it is open to all!

In OT times, if someone came to the tabernacle or temple to offer a 'peace offering for thanksgiving', or a freewill offering, certain key laws regarding sacrifices were suspended. For the peace offering, leavened cakes could be brought (Lev. 7:13), "With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread." even though leaven typifies sourness, fermentation and the insidious working of sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

1 Cor. 5:6-8 NASB Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Also, for freewill offerings, imperfect animals could be used (Lev. 22:23), which was strictly forbidden for any other type of sacrifice ("In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted *member*, you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted....")

In other words, for freewill sacrifices of peace and thanksgiving to God, He will gladly accept whatever we have to offer, without regard to our perfection, or the perfection of our offering. We do not have to compare ourselves to anyone else and feel inferior in our sacrifices to Him. *Any* thanksgiving to God from a grateful heart is acceptable to Him.

Therefore, let us be diligent in offering acceptable sacrifices to God that please and honour Him.



George Fox, 42, Methodist



Alexander Goode, 31, Jewish rabbi



Clark Poling, 32, Reformed Church in America



John Washington, 34, Catholic

