

A Different Take On: Sacrifice

It is very easy for Christians to get the wrong perspective on sacrifice because there's a lot of teaching and literature on the topic. Even though it's not a popular topic among the modern populist believers of today, it is biblical.

If we take an OT view of personal sacrifice, as opposed to ritual sacrifice, we get the Old Covenant (OC) idea of it. For example, if it's better to obey 'God' than to sacrificeⁱ (mercy?ⁱⁱ), we may consider that we shouldn't sacrifice anything for him because he prefers obedience. That would be a mistake. Sacrifice in that OT reference is concerning ritual sacrifice, not our personal sacrifice under the New Covenant (NC).

See the mistake in transferring ideas between covenants?

Looking at sacrifice under the NC, we are told that we should be a "living sacrifice"ⁱⁱⁱ which is what Father desires and pleases him. This infers that we sacrifice ourselves, which doesn't make sense if Jesus was made sacrifice for us, in place of us.^{iv} Why would we repeat what only needed to be done once?^v The answer is made clear when we understand that Jesus' sacrifice was for our sanctification (i.e. it made holy and righteous).^{vi}

Sacrifice also has the NC concept of 'self-sacrifice', that is, of giving up something of our own for others. This is the meaning Paul put on 'sacrifice'.^{vii} It's the meaning of Jesus' statement that to follow him we have to take up our cross,^{viii} which is what he was wanting the rich young ruler to do.^{ix} He qualified his statement by saying he meant "deny yourself"^x, just like he did when he allowed himself to be sacrificed (crucified^{xi}). He was wanting us to disown our lives,^{xii} and give it up or surrender it to Father (The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ)^{xiii} as his own possession.

Then there's the spiritual sacrifices we offer up through our role as priests.^{xiv} This is our spiritual service to the Trinity which we do by denying our personal desires to carry out.

So, what's the different perspective that we should have on our sacrifice?

The call to sacrifice by denying ourselves is the sticking point I want to address. We can go overboard with it, like Roman Catholic priests who flagellate themselves as punishment for their sins.¹ A more modest extreme of self-denial for them was to become a hermit² or live in monastic solitude³.

Among evangelicals (which I used to be), self-denial can manifest as giving away all your savings to the poor, and living in a hut or 'on the streets'.⁴ That's taking Jesus' advice to the rich young ruler literally, instead of understanding his intent. Jesus was actually telling the young man to demonstrate in his life that he wasn't loving money any more.^{xv} Jesus' call to the man should not be adopted as the way we all have to live under the NC.

Our sacrifices should be a joy because it's what we are doing for our Beloved. In that regard, it should be him who shows us what to sacrifice and the level to which we are to do it. If we make our own decisions, we'll sacrifice for the wrong reasons or we'll get the balance wrong. We may even end up living in or guilt if our decision doesn't originate in our oneness with him.

Here's his wonderful invitation to enter into sacrifice with him and for his purposes:

"For everything you give up, I bless you with much greater. Though it may feel like a sacrifice now, it cannot compare to the joy I will give you in exchange."

1 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flagellation#Christianity

2 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermit#History

3 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_monasticism

4 – We have had personal experience of people doing this.

I offer you a life of abundance, joy, and grace. A life of eternal blessing that begins here on earth. But more than anything, your devotion to me is rewarded with something much more profound than anything earth can offer.

You will experience more of my tangible presence because you will be free from the entanglements of earthly distraction.”⁵

Here’s more of his messages on the ‘up-side’ of our personal sacrifice:

“When you have truly given yourself to Me and have become part of the Kingdom of God, you will sacrifice your right to live according to the dictates of your carnal nature in order to demonstrate life in the Spirit. The fruit will be evident.”⁶

“To those who have been faithful to stay on course, your diligence and hard work will be rewarded. I know the sacrifices you have made in order to serve without complaint. Your patient endurance has not gone unnoticed.”⁷

“I see you and know what you have been through and the sacrifices that you have made. You have been faithful all the way and not wavered from your commitment and dedication to Me,” says the Lord. “Your strength and courage have not gone unnoticed.”⁸

There’s a great deal we don’t really comprehend about life in the Kingdom. So, why not spend more time asking Father questions to get his mind on things, rather than blindly accepting the religious teaching of others. That way, you’ll be operating in a way he desires sons to function, and it’s the right way to stay on course with him.

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(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)

References are on the next page

5 – EXTRACT: Brian & Candice Simmons (3-10-2021) “Word for Sunday, October 3” [distributed e-newsletter]

www.facebook.com/BrianAndCandiceSimmons/photos/a.455084724569714/4367003746711106

6 – Marsha Burns “Small Straws in the Soft Wind” February 26, 2022) ft111.com/smallstraws.htm [ARCHIVE: ft111.com/straws2022.htm]

7 – Marsha Burns “Small Straws in the Soft Wind” August 19, 2022) ft111.com/smallstraws.htm [ARCHIVE: ft111.com/straws2022.htm]

8 – Marsha Burns “Small Straws in the Soft Wind” April 8, 2022) ft111.com/smallstraws.htm [ARCHIVE: ft111.com/straws2022.htm]

- i – 1 Samuel 15:22
- ii – Quoted as ‘mercy’ by Jesus in Matthew 12:7 (most likely from the Aramaic version of the OT)
- iii – Romans 12:1
- iv – 1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 5:2
- v – Romans 6:10
- vi – Hebrews 10:10
- vii – Philippians 2:17; 4:18
- viii – Matthew 16:24
- ix – Mark 10:21
- x – Mark 8:34
- xi – Matthew 20:18-19
- xii – Mark 8:34 (TPT)
- xiii – Romans 1:7; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3
- xiv – 1 Peter 2:5
- xv – Mark 10:21