

“BIND THE SACRIFICE EVEN TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.”

Psa. 116:12; 118:27

The ten lepers whom Jesus cleansed over 1900 years ago, being told to go and show themselves to the priest, found as they went that they were cleansed. One of them in gratitude returned to Jesus and thanked him, but the others went on their way. Jesus said to him who had returned: “There were ten cleansed, but where are the nine?” And he who returned was a Samaritan.

Today there are thousands of Christians like the nine lepers, but very few like the tenth. They are glad that Jesus did so much for them, but they are not willing to go out of their way for him, not willing to sacrifice for his sake. The tenth leper went out of his way to return thanks.

What are his benefits to us, mentioned in our first text? Everything which we have that is worth having, all the good that we know, all that we hope for: for life, though now fallen, yet what we have we owe to God; these bodies, our eyes and ears, and all the good things that we hear or see; our minds and all our good thoughts. We owe for every mouthful of food, for clothes, for homes. God gave man the ingenuity to build houses. We owe for the gift of his dear Son. How much would it cost us to give the life of our child for our enemy? Then how much more it would have cost him none can conceive; he could not have given us anything dearer. We owe for the Bible. All that we owe to others is not to be compared to what we owe God.

The spirit which would do nothing for God, when he has done so much for us, is a despicable one. We cannot estimate our indebtedness to him, for the better we know him the greater our debt appears. What then can we render unto him for all his benefits? We never can fully repay him. Let us consider, for example, the case of Mr. Smith who owes Mr. Jones \$100,000, and all he has in the world is his little home and his store, which together amount to not over \$500. Mr. Smith certainly cannot pay the debt, and he recognizes that fact. So he goes to Mr. Jones and says: “Mr. Jones I owe you \$100,000, but I cannot pay it, for all my possessions

do not exceed \$500 in value. But to show you that I would pay it if I possibly could, I will do the next best thing. I will turn over to you all my property, worth about \$500, as part payment of my debt. That is all I am able to do." Mr. Jones answers: "I know you cannot pay the debt and so I will consider this amount as payment. Yet as I do not need the property I will put it under your care to be used in my service, you being the steward."

We have given all to God, all that we have and are and hope to be. We belong to him; our time, money, hands, intellect are all his. Yet he has not actually taken these, but has put us as stewards over our former possessions. He now has the right to say what shall be done. He restores our goods to us to be used in his service.

What then may we give? (1 Cor. 6:19,20; 10:31.) 1 – Our body (Rom. 12:1). Once we chose our paths, and what our hands should do; we said what pleased us or what was bright and popular. But our life, and hands and feet, our tongue are now his. We should not say anything which we would be ashamed to say if he were visibly present.

2 – Our mind (1 Cor. 6:20). Once we were very careless about our thoughts, now we strive to think of the things that are pure, good, lovely. We have no right to think of things displeasing to him. Christians are ashamed to offer God any less than all they have. Our life, though imperfect, is his and would be if it were 100,000 times better than it is. The Christian has nothing for he holds it all for the Lord, yet by faith he possesses all things. Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. The head controls the body, directs its every movement. This is what it means to be a member of his body; he controls us. Our consecration affects all our life and possessions. It is a very narrow way and we have to look to our footsteps. A man can ordinarily walk along a plank 6 inches wide without difficulty, but if he were intoxicated a 20 foot sidewalk would not be wide enough for him. So if we are clear, single-eyed we may walk that narrow way, but if we become intoxicated with the deceitful riches and pleasures of this world, we will not be able to walk it. "Many are called but few are chosen."

It will not be an easy, popular way. From the world's standpoint it costs much in the way of sacrifice, difficulties, persecutions, self-denial and cross-bearing. We can live godly according to the estimate of the world, but it is a different thing, and not so easy to live godly in Christ Jesus. He often wants us to do things which may cost the loss of earthly possessions, or poverty or hardship. Here comes in our second text. Who can live such a life, and how?

“Bind your sacrifice even to the horns of the altar.” There were four horns on the brazen altar and hence four cords. If we bind our sacrifice with these four cords we can do anything which comes before us. (Phil. 4:13.) The horns were to keep the sacrifice in place, the latter being bound with cords to the horns. It was easy to bind a dead bullock, but not so a living one. Ours is not a dead sacrifice, but is very much alive. When we begin to sacrifice we feel the hot coals burning away some of our pleasures and comforts.

1 – The cord of love (1 John 4:18). Love has no fear. When a child is taken ill with a dangerous disease the mother does not fear for herself, but is willing to risk her life for the love of the child. We are willing to sacrifice the most for whatever we love the most. It is always a question of which do we love the most. How much do we love God? More than our neighbor? Then we would not consider what our friends and neighbors would have us do, but would say of God, “What would thou have me to do?” We must love him better than the approval of the world. If we love him with all our hearts then we will serve him with all our heart. Some trials cause us to shrink, but love for the Father and for Jesus comes to our aid. Let us love not in tongue only, but in very deed and truth. How much are we willing to sacrifice for God? Are we in the Truth only, or also of the Truth? If we are only in the Truth, then what we have is only knowledge, but if we are of the Truth then we have gained the spirit of it also. Many waters cannot drown love (Cant. 8:7).

A chord is something specific, and is made up of a number of strands. This cord being love, the strands are: love for God, love for the brethren, for our neighbor, for the world, for our enemies. The strength of the cord depends upon the way in which the strands are introduced and woven together. We distribute tracts because we love our brethren who are yet blind. God loved the world while yet it was in sin (Rom. 5:8), hence we also should love them. Many sacrifice much to enable the physically blind to see, how much more would we sacrifice to help our spiritually blind brethren?

2 – The cord of Faith, Trust, Confidence. The strands of this cord would be: faith in the precious promises of the Bible having reference to the present life. We remember Paul’s thorn in the flesh, and how God’s grace was sufficient for him, so that he could say that he gloried in his infirmities most gladly (2 Cor. 12:5,10). What do these promises mean to us? They are given for us to feed and live upon. If our next trial is 1,000 times greater than any previous one, grace 1,000 times greater will be given. The Bible gives us grace. In the dark ages by these promises God enabled even the women to suffer tortures.

The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want. We often think that we want better health, etc., but God knows best. We have nothing to fear; let us remember God's care over his own in the past: The passage of the Red Sea; Daniel and the lions, and the lessons of our own past lives. Let us realize that it is only God's grace which has made us as good as we are. How can we show him that we are thankful for his grace? By accepting and using the grace in the way he sends it. (Jas. 5:10,11.)

3 – The cord of Hope. The strands here are the precious promises of the future life. Our light afflictions work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. If others sacrifice willingly for earthly blessings, how much more should we be willing to sacrifice for the heavenly glories.

Let us suppose that a certain man lived between two railroad stations. The road to the nearest was smooth and easy to travel; while the way to the other was not much used, and was covered with stones, was muddy and very hard to travel. One morning the man received a message stating that if he would be at the nearest station to meet a certain train a man would restore to him a \$1 bill he had borrowed some time ago. And as he was getting ready he received another telegram asking him to meet another wealthy man at the distant station at such a time, who would hand over to his use \$1,000. Have we any doubt as to which way the man would go? Would we not think him very lacking in discernment if he preferred the easy road with the one dollar at its end, to the rougher one with the \$1,000 at the end? So we should be willing to sacrifice if only restitution were offered, but when such an incomparable glory is held out shall we draw back because of the roughness of the way? Surely we would then be devoid of judgement.

4 – The cord of Joy. The strands here are the present joyous and blessed experiences. No followers of earthly pleasures ever enjoyed a small part of what we enjoy. We exchange things worth nothing for those worth everything, dirt for diamonds, poor friends for friends worth having. By our loss we gain far more than we had before. We receive now a hundred fold for what we have left, even though we left fathers, mothers, sons or daughters. This does not mean that if we leave a house we will get a hundred houses, etc., but we get something worth a hundred times as much. Grace will be multiplied unto us. We must do the adding and God will multiply blessings and favors. We should count the cost not only first, or last, or in between, but every day, for we learn daily to count more correctly. At first we overvalued what we would lose, and undervalued what we might gain; the cross was then so heavy, but it is lighter now.

We cannot estimate the value of the reward. There is a reward now for every act of faithfulness, besides our future glory. We cannot see our cross if we are continually nailed to it. The more we pay our Lord the more we shall see that we owe him, until it reaches out into an eternal debt of gratitude.

So let us pull the cords tight, even if they do cut the flesh. What will it matter? For the toils of the road will seem nothing when we come to the end of the way.



My Sacrifice

Laid on thine altar, O my Lord divine,
Accept this gift today, for Jesus' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring, within my trembling hand,
This will of mine—a thing that seemeth small;
And thou alone, O Lord, can'st understand
How, when I yield thee this, I yield mine all.

Hidden therein thy searching gaze can'st see
Struggles of passions, visions of delight,
All that I have, or am, or fain would be—
Deep loves, fond hopes and longings infinite.
It hath been wet with tears, and dimmed with sighs,
Clenched in my grasp till beauty hath it none.
Now, from thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
The prayer ascendeth—'May thy will be done!'

Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail;
And merge it so in Thine own will that I
May never have a wish to take it back;
When heart and courage fail to thee I'd fly.
So change, so purify, so like thine own,
Make thou my will so graced by love divine
I may not know or feel it as mine own,
But recognize my will as one with thine.

— *Author unknown*