

The Christian Sacrifices of Goodness and Generosity

Hebrews 13:16

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

The Temple sacrifices of the Old Covenant ended with the death of Christ on the cross. He "put an end to sin" (Dan. 9:24). If there are no more sacrifices to be brought (i.e. "grain, goats, and such"), then can it be said that the followers of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant bring to God no sacrifices of their own?

No. "Let us go forth with him outside the camp, and *bear His abuse*" (v. 13) – *the sacrifice of His passion*.

No. "Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God" (v. 15) – *the sacrifice of His praise*.

No. "*Let us do good and share what we have for such sacrifices are pleasing to God*" (v.16, Open Bible).

In this text there are two additional sacrifices mentioned, and a statement about God being pleased.

I. God is pleased with us because *we are in Christ by faith and He makes us like Christ in life*.

Very few original things I say are profound, but this first point is one of those things. Read it again. I freely admit that when I err on what it means to please God, I always err on the side of faith in Him. "*Without faith, it is impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 11:6). But I am reminded that the Scripture also teaches a corresponding truth: "*I will show you my faith by my works*" (James 2:18). As it is said: "*Faith without works is dead*" (James 2:26). The evidence you are in Christ is that you are like Christ. A crippled boy was once hurrying to catch a train. Carrying gifts under his arm, he was struggling with his crutches. Suddenly, a man bumped into him, knocking his parcels in all directions. The man then paused and scolded the boy for getting in his way. Another gentleman, seeing the youngster's distress, quickly picked up the scattered gifts and slipped a dollar bill into his pocket, saying, "*I'm sorry! I hope this makes up for your trouble.*" As the grateful boy watched the kind older man walk away, he cried out, "*Sir, are you Jesus?*" "*No,*" replied the man, "*but I am one of His followers.*"

II. God is pleased when we offer to Him the sacrifice of doing good and giving generously.

What are these good things? There are not specifics. It's simply doing good. Notice these two things:

A. Don't neglect doing good ... neglecting gives the indication that something is present. To not neglect doing good means that *you are prompted* to do good. This is the mark of a Christian. Do not neglect those promptings. "*Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers*" (Hebrews 11:1-2). There are hundreds of ways to do good for people around us.

B. Don't neglect sharing ... this word translated *sharing* is the Greek word "*koinonia*." It is translated "fellowship" twelve times, "sharing" three times, "participation" and "contribution" once each. There is really no English word that corresponds to the depth of this word. The closest is the word "common." It means that what you have others possess in common with you.

III. God is pleased with these sacrifices because they are reminders of His Son.

A. They honor the death of His Son ... Titus 2:14 says, "*Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.*"

B. They display our belief in His trustworthiness ... "*Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for God says, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you'*" (Heb. 13:5).

C. They give evidence that you and I are His handiwork ... (see I Cor. 1:31 and I Cor. 15:10).

When we do good and give to others we demonstrate "*we are His workmanship*" (Eph. 2:10).