

Upcoming Events

Establish Master Calendar for 2019

Corporation meeting: Budget/Financial Report

Business Meeting: Today at 4:30 p.m.

Ladies Bible Class: January 20

Final Preparations: Last Saturday in February 2019 meeting

Hebrews class Thursdays at 11:00

Quotes About Sacrifice

“Nothing great was ever accomplished without making sacrifices.” Anonymous

“To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift.”
Steve Prefontaine

“Sacrifice is a part of life. It's supposed to be. It's not something to regret. It's something to aspire to.” Mitch Albom

January Birthdays

5 John Aguiar 14 Juanita Small

January Anniversaries

8 Bob & Debbie Pescador

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Mike McKnight

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An Appeal to Sacrifice

By Jon Mitchell

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2

What first jumps out at me is the **“appeal.”** Paul (and therefore God, since Paul was writing under inspiration – 1 Cor. 14:37) is *appealing* to us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. God doesn't force us to do anything (Josh. 24:15). Rather, *He* appeals to us. What love! What consideration!

What next gets me thinking is that Paul is making this appeal to us **“by the mercies of God.”** That tells me that not only are we forgiven by the mercy of God, but even our obedience of God, our spiritual growth and progress, our walk with Him, only happens due to His mercy. That makes sense, when you stop and think about it. We all have sinned, after all (1 John 1:8), and we deserve death for our sins (Rom. 6:23)...not the opportunity to serve and glorify the One whom we have wronged. Again, what love! What consideration!

What is the appeal? To present our **“bodies”** as **“a living sacrifice.”** In other words, *All To Jesus I Surrender. None of Self and All of Thee.* Christianity is not just a weekend activity or an extra-curricular activity. Our Christianity is not our alter-ego, and

it does not revolve around our lives. No, our lives revolve around our Christianity. The kingdom and the righteousness of God come first, above everyone and everything else (Matt. 6:33; 22:35). Christian, is our life like that? Do we want to be **“holy and acceptable to God”**? Guess what we have to do?

What is our **“spiritual worship”**? He was just talking about dedicating our entire lives to God. Does that mean all of our lives consists of worship to God? No, because the Greek word translated “worship” here could also be translated “service.” (Plus, consider this. Are we worshiping God while we’re sinning? While we’re sleeping? While we’re eating? There’s no biblical example of anyone doing that, and the more examples we think of the more absurd the notion becomes. Worship in spirit and truth [John 4:24] consists of purposeful actions which He has commanded us to do in praise and honor to him [Col. 3:16; 4:2; Acts 2:42]). So here’s what God’s really telling us. Do we want to really be “spiritual”? Do we really want to serve God? Dedicate our entire life to obeying His revealed will in the Word of God. That’s true spiritual service.

In order to do that, we can’t be **“conformed to the world.”** Ask ourselves this, Christians. How different from the world are we, really? God’s not talking about not liking tacos because our non-Christian neighbor likes tacos. God’s talking about not watching porn like the majority of this country does. God’s talking about not cussing or gossiping like the majority of the people around us do. God’s talking about dressing modestly at all times when we’re in public...unlike most people in our society. God’s talking about our Facebook “About” page having “Christian” under the “Religion” section...and not having dirty jokes, foul language, and immodest pictures in the “Status” section...get the picture? Would the people we work with, go to school with, and hang out with be surprised to see us with a Bible in our hand, or if they got an invite to come to church with us, or to see us with bowed head in prayer? If so...why is that?

In order for us to not be conformed to the world, we have to **“be transformed.”** How? **“By the renewing of our mind.”** We have to change the way we think. We have to change our worldview, our priorities. How do we do that? Read Psalm 1. Want to be like the man described in verses 1 and 3? Want to not be like the people described in verses 4 and 5? We have to be like the man described in verse 2...every single day. Do that...with an open and honest heart (Luke 8:15)...and we’d be surprised at how quickly the transformation starts to occur. Don’t, and we’ll just keep on being a Christian-In-Name-Only...and we won’t like what happens to us on the Day of Judgment (Matt. 7:21-27; Heb. 10:26-31).

(Here’s a test. If we’re truly interested in transforming our mind and are unfamiliar with Psalm 1 and the other scriptures I’ve cited thus far, we will have already turned to them in our Bible or looked them up on the Internet by now. If we just nodded our head and moved on, we have a ways to go before we’ll start to look different from the rest of the world. This is real, people. It’s not going to happen to us by accident, and not without dedication and hard work. Just sayin’...)

If we work very hard at transforming our mind (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11), guess what we’re doing? We’re **“discerning what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”** We won’t have to wonder about where God stands on things, or what would Jesus do. We’ll know, because we are storing up God’s will in our heart in order to avoid sin (Ps. 119:11; Heb. 5:12-14). Not only that, but we will be finding out what Proverbs brings out time and time again...that doing things God’s way really is the good way, the acceptable way, the perfect way.

This is what Christianity is all about, folks...