

Becoming a Living Sacrifice

By Bryan Ellis (20150523)

This article is the final installment in a series. To read the first four installments, go to <http://www.thinkingfire.com> and look for the “Big Picture of the Bible Series”.

By trusting God’s grace, mercy, and love a believer participates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Once this is complete the believer is now a Christian and has been added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). Realize that the Christian is a forgiven sinner. The Christian is no longer to be controlled by sin, the world, and temptations but by Christ living in the heart (Galatians 2:20). Romans 6:2 states that once we have died to sin we cannot live any longer in it. Christ’s blood paid the price for our sin therefore He now owns us (1 Corinthians 6:20). As our owner He can demand us to act as He wills. Unlike human owners, Christ is always looking for our good and trying to help us live with Him eternally. He is not fickle and does not have pride that causes Him to react in a harmful way. In fact, He is interceding for us with the Father to help Him understand our frail human condition (Romans 8:34).

Faith is still the key factor to overcoming sin and accomplishing the will of Christ. Romans 12:1 states that we should present ourselves as a living sacrifice. We should be holy and acceptable unto God. By accepting the offer of Christ’s sacrifice we have become a new creation that God has ordained to walk in good works (Ephesians 2:10). Doing these works in no way makes God owe us salvation but failing to do His will is falling away (Hebrews 6:6). The point of these works is to help us live a life that grows closer to God and shines as a light in a world of darkness.

Starting to walk with God by entering into a relationship with Christ is just the beginning. God’s Word is powerful enough to change the vilest sinner and convert him into God’s child. What we start through participation in the sacrifice of Christ we must continue by growing. Peter states that we should add to our faith virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (1 Peter 1:5-7). Few of these are characteristics that the world values and many today think of these as weak or cowardly. Jesus expects us to grow and produce fruit. Some other passages that relate to this topic are 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:2, and Hebrews 5:12. Those who do not grow are condemned and chastised.

Each and every Christian has a role to play in building God’s kingdom. We are “lively stones” (1 Peter 2:5) working together to build up a spiritual house as a holy priesthood. Each Christian is a priest. Priests under the Law of Moses worked for God. They accomplished the sacrifices for the people, taught God’s will to the people, and were expected to be examples of godly living. We are to do the same. Our every action should be to glorify God in our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20). Every moment of life belongs to Christ so we should always do His will. There is no room for “Sunday only” religion, hypocrisy, unrepentant habitual sin, continued association with the ways of the world, etc. Paul says to overcome the world and be transformed (Romans 12:2).

God’s grace and mercy are still there. In fact, by accepting the sacrifice of Christ and becoming His special possession we have an even greater access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). We are still human and we will still sin, but we can ask for forgiveness and God promises to provide it. This is the most important relationship one can have because it is the only one that will last through eternity.