

## **Sacrifice Dost Thou Want - Kindness**

**Reciprocating God's Kindness Outward to Others**

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As many of you know, Sharon and I took a recent Caribbean cruise that took an unexpected turn right after we left. Sharon came down with what we thought was seasickness. I thought, Okay, not ideal, but she will get over it. But as the night progressed, that pain grew more intense and she was literally crying, unable to walk as we transported her to the medical center by a wheelchair. Now the doctor ran some tests and concluded that she was likely suffering from appendicitis and he started treatment immediately. He was very concerned and I was very concerned since appendicitis ran in the family, we know of several family members that have had to have their appendix out. It made sense, especially because of the location of the pain.

However, we are in the middle of the ocean, and the seas were too rough for a helicopter transport. The only option was to wait 36 hours to arrive in San Juan, Puerto Rico where an ambulance would be waiting.

Now I have had some health challenges as of late, but this one was far more difficult. We had no CT scans, no ultrasounds to really know what was going on. We were transported back like 100 years as the doctor used the old finger prodding method [on her abdomen] to try to figure out what is going on. I am like, really? That is all you got, man? That is all you got?

I spent most of those 36 hours in the room with Sharon, listening for that beep of her heartbeat monitor, praying for God to ease her pain and to heal her, and to give me the strength that I really needed. Whew! I knew God was in charge. We know He is in charge, but you cannot help in those situations to fear the worst, right? And losing Sharon was real and it was more than I could bear at the time.

And then, one by one, the support came in. A text here, an email there. We could feel God's Spirit comforting us through the prayer of His saints. Sharon's pain started to get better. We were very thankful for that. And with

each text that we received, each contact, we became more encouraged and more strengthened.

As we have examined lately, sacrifice is the one thing God wants the most from each of us, each and every day. And we are going to continue this theme here today.

From the beginning, God instructed mankind on His requirements for proper sacrifice. Jesus Christ's sacrifice was foreordained before the foundation of the world. For thousands of years, millions, likely billions of physical animals were sacrificed as a mere shadow of what would come, a reminder to us of our required daily living sacrifices.

Jesus Christ, God the Son, came to earth to demonstrate God's way of sacrifice. His sacrifice is first, substitutional, and second, representative of what we must do each day.

First, Jesus Christ's sacrifice is substitutional, a once for all, perfect sin and trespass offering, which He did for us so that He could open the door to our relationship with God. Thereby, God the Father and God the Son Jesus Christ can dwell with us and fill us with Their enabling Spirit.

Second, Jesus Christ's living sacrifices while here on earth are representative. They are an example of the daily burnt, grain, and peace offerings that we must do each and every day through our living sacrifices. Jesus' sacrifice replaced the need for the animal sacrifice and that is the only thing that was really stopped, right? The need for ongoing sacrifice, the need for ongoing daily work of sacrifice replaced those animal sacrifices, which were just a shadow of what was to come.

Now Paul tells us in Ephesians 5, we are to be imitators of God and walk in love—sacrifice—as Christ also has loved and sacrificed for us and given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. It is through our daily sacrifices to God and the service to God first—daily whole burnt offerings of our mind, our time, repentance, obedience, prayer, study, praise—that we put to death our carnal nature, and thereby

God starts to come into our lives and dwell with us and bring us His Spirit that enables us then to perform our daily sacrifices to God in the service to man, our daily grain offerings.

These offerings are when we sacrifice our egos and we put to death our selfish carnal mind so we can put others first and ultimately create peace. Only when the two are done together, right? Our daily burnt offerings in worship and service to God, our daily burnt offerings in worship to God in service to man. Only when they are done together, and when we have the proper attitude and do them together, can we have the perfect communion with God and fellow man that was represented by the peace offering. It is a beautiful picture here that points back to the Levitical sacrifices.

Now as we examined the last time, our entire Bible is literally centered around sacrifice, with far more scriptures about sacrifice than anything else. But the problem is we do not often see them because the scriptures about sacrifice are somewhat hidden because they do not all use that English word, sacrifice.

Now Zach recently mentioned something to me, the concept of a contronym. I had never heard of a contronym. This was new to me. I am not that strong in English (sorry Mom, I know that is hard for an English teacher to hear). A contronym is a word having two meanings that actually contradict one another. (I see Richard knows exactly what this is.)

Examples include (and Zach used this one) cleave. In Old English, cleave means to cling together, while today we use a cleaver to chop or split apart meat. Other examples are clip. We can attach or cut off by clipping. Dust can mean to remove dust or add dust.

But I believe Satan's most effective deceptions is found in modern translations of the Bible that use the English word love as representative of godly sacrificial love. Satan did not have the authority to edit the Bible, to edit the Scriptures, so he did the next best thing. He influenced the meaning of the English words that are used in the Bible. And the English word love today means nothing. It is a mere emotion or feeling, no action or obedience

required. The English word love is a contronym to God's standards, as we see it used to represent even the sinful action of lust and making love. Think about that.

Most modern translations use the watered-down meaningless English word love to describe God and God's way throughout the entire Book. And voila! we have the modern Christian mantra, right? No need to do any work, no need to take any action, no need to sacrifice and obey, just believe and feel the love and know Jesus. How brilliant, and how evil and deceptive.

Please turn with me to Matthew 22. Now we can tie right into today's Berean and Brother Craig's message. God clearly says,

**I John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

**II John 6** This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.

Yes, God's love always requires the sacrifice of obedience, and God's love also requires a lot more sacrifices.

Now, is it by accident—get this—that the original King James translation often uses the English word charity instead of the English word love? Think about that for a second. Charity is a much better English word for godly love as it more closely resembles the required action behind it: the work of daily sacrifice. Charity is in fact the giving of something valuable to us for the benefit of someone else. Charity, yes, is a better English word, but I contend by far the best English word we have for godly love is sacrifice.

And when we replace the carelessly-used modern English word love with the word sacrifice, we get a much more accurate description of godly love which is always backed by the action of sacrifice.

Reading now Matthew 22, verses 36 through 40 where I am going to substitute once again sacrifice in the place of the English word love as we get started here.

**Matthew 22:36-40** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love [sacrifice for] the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.' And the second is like it: 'You shall love [sacrifice for] your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Now, as John Ritenbaugh taught long ago, the first and second great commandments are representative of the burnt and grain offerings respectively.

Please turn to Colossians 3, verse 14. And as you turn, I am just going to read a couple more, substituting sacrifice for the English word charity that is found in the original King James translation.

**I Timothy 1:5** Now the purpose of the commandment is charity [sacrifice] from a pure heart.

**I Peter 4:8** And above all things have fervent charity [sacrifice for] one another, for charity [sacrifice] will cover a multitude of sins.

**I Corinthians 13:13** And now abide faith, hope, charity [sacrifice], these three; but the greatest of these is [sacrifice].

**I Corinthians 16:14** Let all you do be done with [sacrifice].

Fits really well.

**Colossians 3:14** But above all these things put on love [charity, sacrifice], which is the bond of perfection [or perfectness as it reads in the King James].

Sacrifice is a bond of perfection. It is how we become at one with God, by responding to His sacrifice that He first made for us in obedience to His law, and it is how we overcome our selfish carnal nature to become like God in our sacrifices given to each other. But sacrifice requires costs, the action of giving up something valuable to us for a greater benefit. It requires a denial

of something that we want, a loss of something we value, and/or a suffering that we would most likely rather avoid.

It is interesting that all of the fruit of God's Spirit in Galatians 5 is really the fruit of humble sacrifice when you peel it back. In Galatians 5:13, Paul tells us, in fact, we have been called to love, that is, sacrifice, to serve one another. He goes on,

**Galatians 5:14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this: you shall love [sacrifice for] your neighbor as yourself [and we can tie right back to Matthew 22].

Now our young adults probably recall the Bible study at the Feast when we looked into the fruit of the Spirit, kindness. And we are here in Colossians 3, so let us go back to verse 12 as we turn our focus for the remainder of this message to that foundational fruit, the daily sacrifice of kindness.

**Colossians 3:12** Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.

The Greek noun used here in and in Galatians 5:22 for kindness is *chrestotes*. It is a Greek noun, used 10 times, translated goodness, kindness, good, and gentleness. Interesting; kindness and gentleness go hand in hand. It is from the Greek adjective *chrestos*, used to describe God's character, meaning to be employed, useful, good, gracious, kind, gentle, mild.

Reading on now.

**Colossians 3:13-15** Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against you, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on [sacrifice], which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful.

So Paul reminds us, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, God took the first action here, brethren. God took the first action to call and sacrifice for us

when we did not deserve it. He urges us therefore to put on, imagine put on for a minute. It is like we are getting dressed, we are putting on our pants, our shirt, our coat, right? It is not something that is just there. We have to work to put something on and that is what it takes to put on kindness.

*Kindness is the feeling of compassion in action.* Kindness includes the right thoughts, words, gestures, and deeds. Kindness reciprocates God's sacrificial love to us outwardly to others. Kindness is something that we have to work to put on, to develop, and we can only do it when we have God's enabling Spirit in us.

Only when we are bonded through humble daily sacrifice and obedience together with God, are we able through His indwelling Spirit to perform daily acts of sacrifice and service to fellow man through our kindness, kindness that controls our mind to always think positively of others and to be on the lookout for opportunities to serve and do good works. Kindness that bridles our tongue and never complains.

I am going to get on a soapbox here. Complaining is a big problem in the church, brethren. Complaining is unkind, complaining is self-focused, complaining is hypocritical, and it is anti-God. And since God is sovereign and over everything, complaining is actually a verbal expression of a lack of faith to accept an imperfect circumstance as our opportunity to learn and just zip it. (All right, off the soapbox now.)

God's fruit of kindness never speaks evil of anyone else, full stop. When we talk negatively about anyone else for any reason, we are unkind and we are anti-God. Full stop.

God's Spirit of kindness readily gives to anyone in need. It does not keep score, does not worry about who gave the last time or who said what the last time. It gives whatever is needed, whatever that person needs at that point in time. God's Spirit of kindness forbears, forgives, and readily accepts the loss of self-esteem to always keep the peace.

Now Paul tells us in verse 15, this is how the peace of God actually rules in our hearts. This is what we were called to do in one body, he says. Only together, through our daily burnt offerings in service to God first, and our

daily grain offerings in service to man, all done for God, by the way. Both the service to God is done for God, our service to man is done for God, and ultimately, you know what? It is all done for ourselves because it is all for our own good. It is how we overcome our stupid, carnal, selfish mind. And thereby, we are able, with the two together—the burnt offering and the grain offering—to produce the results of the peace offering. Peace with God and peace with each other.

Kindness is a fruit of God's Spirit. It is an attribute of His Spirit. Think about that. Kindness is an outward attribute. It is how we show that we are like God, right? And it is enabled through His Holy Spirit. Kindness is not some magical thing that just mysteriously happens because we are obeying God's law.

Yes, we have got to obey God's law, but like all sacrifices, kindness takes work to put it on each and every day. Now get this, because this is important. Everyone in the world can show acts of kindness. We see examples of this, right? Somebody paying it forward at Starbucks or whatever it might be, but they are almost always done with an underlying intention of trying to get something back or returning a kindness that was done to them.

Only those with God's indwelling Spirit, only those who are performing the daily burnt offerings get the empowering Spirit to perform kindness that is done regardless of whether it is deserved or whether it is undeserved, unmerited. Kindness done without any expectation for something in return. Kindness done without trying to keep score of who did what or who said what. We must always remember our acts of sacrifice are in response to God's great act of unmerited sacrifice and kindness in our life.

First, God's unmerited, undeserved sacrifice comes to us. It is extended to us. We did not do anything to deserve it. It is unmerited. We then yield, if we are yielding to the calling, and we respond with our merited, deserved sacrifices in service and devotion and thanks to God, which is representative of that whole burnt offering, all of our mind dedicating to what God wants, not what we want. And then we are enabled and empowered to become like God, to give unmerited, undeserved sacrifices to others—truly not looking for anything in return, truly not keeping score, not caring about the score.

We are not doing it for the score. We are doing it for God. We are doing it so that we can overcome our stupid, carnal, selfish mind, our evil heart.

Please turn with me to Isaiah 54, as we go back and we examine God's kindness that comes to us first.

**Isaiah 54:8** "With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," says the Lord, your Redeemer.

**Isaiah 54:10** "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed."

Please turn to Ephesians 2 and as you turn, I will just read a couple more back here.

**Nehemiah 9:17** But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness.

And in Psalm 31:21 and Psalm 117:2, we read,

**Psalm 31:21** Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness.

**Psalm 117:2** For His merciful kindness is great toward us.

You should be in Ephesians by now. I need to get there. Here we go.

**Ephesians 2:7-8** That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

So we see the linkage of our kindness directly to God's kindness and forgiveness first given to us.

Over to two chapters now to Ephesians 4. Paul starts here again with the words,

**Ephesians 4:1-3** I beseech [beg] you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, bearing with one another in love [sacrifice], endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We can tie back to Colossians 3. It is a perfect tie back. Sacrifice is the bond of perfection that creates peace with God and peace with fellow man. It is through those daily sacrifices that we create peace. And as Brother Clyde reminded us recently, blessed are the peacemakers, God tells us.

We are picking up now the end of the chapter, in verse 29.

**Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

**Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Paul is saying true kindness arises from our spiritual transformation and submission to God, especially in challenging situations. Kindness for God's called is not optional, brethren. It is a necessary response to the forgiveness and compassion that we have all received from Him. Kindness is not something that is earned. It is freely given as a fruit of God's Spirit.

Over now to Luke 6 as we double click on this. And remember the difference between God's fruit of kindness and the world's kindness is God's fruit of kindness is given to everyone, both to those that deserve it and to those that do not deserve it. Let us pick that up in in verse 35, it makes it very clear.

**Luke 6:35** "But love your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil."

Again, we see kindness describing God's character. He is kind. And so must we be kind in all our interactions with each other and fellow man. We must be kind to the unthankful and the evil. And wow, should we be thankful that God is kind to the unthankful and the evil, for all of us here today once fit that bill and sometimes still do things that fit that bill of being unthankful and evil. And God is kind and merciful to us because that is who He is, brethren.

We can tie this back to Ephesians 2:7-8. The exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us. When we were unthankful and evil in our carnal hearts, God extended His kindness to us. Over to Romans 2, where we see this repeated.

**Romans 2:4** Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Now that word goodness there is the same Greek word that we have been looking at for kindness throughout all of these scriptures, *chrestos*.

Let us hit one more, this time from Brother Peter.

**I Peter 2:3** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Again, same adjective here for kindness, right? Let us skip to verse 5.

**I Peter 2:5** You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Peter is telling us if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Tasted, interesting. If we have tasted that the Lord is kind to us, then we must, as His holy priesthood, follow our High Priest's example to offer up spiritual sacrifices of kindness that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Now, if we ever have trouble extending kindness or forgiveness to anyone, the problem is not the other person. The problem is in our relationship with God. We are simply not giving Him our complete daily burnt offerings of our humble mind and therefore we cannot truly taste and acknowledge how undeserving we are of His kindness, forgiveness, and His ultimate sacrifice for us that was given when we do not deserve it. We are, in essence, the unprofitable servant.

When we really understand the fullness of God's great mercy and kindness, we are empowered by His Holy Spirit to exhibit the daily sacrifice, the humble sacrifice of kindness to everyone and anyone regardless of what may or may not be deserved. We respond to His unmerited sacrifice of kindness to offer up spiritual sacrifices of kindness, both to those that are deserved and to those that are undeserved, or unmerited.

Brethren, when we were on that ship in the ocean, we had no life support systems and I could really see the doctor's concern. We knew that if Sharon's appendix burst, it would likely be her death. But we tasted the kindness of our great God and His Family, and we were sustained, protected, strengthened through what was the longest 36 hours of our lives.

When we arrived in San Juan, the transport to the hospital was very quick. The wait at the hospital, not so quick, as Sharon was stable now and they were on holiday staffing levels. But after a long day of tests and waiting, they confirmed it was not appendicitis after all, but an ovarian cyst that had burst causing intense pain and toxic fluid that just happened to be on that same right side of the abdomen. Now we are still waiting further tests, so we appreciate all of your prayers and concerns to confirm it is not cancerous and we appreciate prayers for God's will and His strength and healing.

We have learned a lot through this experience and we are thankful all the more for God's merciful, lovingkindness, the power of prayer, and the little

acts of kindness extended by our brethren each and every day. Now I have often prayed and do pray for our brethren each day that are in need. But I do not always send a note of encouragement, a text, a call, a card. I have even given myself an out in the past, an excuse to say, "Oh, I don't want to bombard them with all these messages from so many people. I'm sure they are just getting overwhelmed."

But I am here to tell you I got it all wrong. Each card, call, email, text of encouragement, strengthens each other as we produce the fruit of God's lovingkindness through those daily sacrifices, sacrifices of kindness that produce the bond of perfection, peace with God and fellow man. Many acts of kindness do not take a lot of time, brethren. They do not take a lot of effort, but the fruit of kindness is especially sweet tasting to those that receive it at a time of desperate need. It is a major factor for producing unity.

We have all received so much unmerited kindness from God the Father and Jesus Christ. Each and every day we have the opportunity to follow Christ's example, to be a daily living sacrifice, extending His kindness to us out to others regardless of what may be deserved or undeserved. Kindness requires our daily personal self-sacrifice to develop a heart attuned to the needs of others so that we can be ready to reach out with an act of kindness when the opportunity arises.

Please turn to Romans 12 where we are going to conclude here shortly.

As God's elect, we are called to be a shining light to this world, so we must work harder to exhibit His fruit of kindness. It could be a friendly greeting or a smile. It might be encouraging words, a card, call, email, text, or post. Or it could even be letting someone in a long line of traffic when they have selfishly passed dozens of cars in the never-ending Highway 521 road construction. I am not complaining. I am very thankful, my friends that work for the state. They give me an opportunity to test my patience each and every day.

But when kindness is given without an expectation for something in return, those daily acts of kindness are gradually transforming each of us. Each act of kindness transforms that selfish carnal mind into a selfless, godly mind that produces God's fruit of the Spirit. Sacrifice is indeed the bond of

perfection. So as Paul exhorts in I Corinthians 13, charity, that is, sacrifice suffers long and is kind.

And reading now,

**Romans 12:10** Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.