

## Offerings (Part Four)

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We are going to get back on track with the offerings of Leviticus 1 and 2 and today we are going to begin going into the offering in Leviticus 3. But I want to begin this sermon back in the book of Matthew and kind of pick up the theme from the other two offerings. Beginning in verse 36, where a lawyer came to Jesus and he said,

**Matthew 22:36-40** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love 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 your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

As I was showing you in the previous sermons, that the first two offerings of Leviticus have to do with the complete and total devotion of Jesus Christ: in the first one, the burnt offering in His devotion to God that is shown to you and me in the keeping of the first four commandments, and the second one in the meal offering His devotion to God in the service of man in the keeping of the last six commandments. So in the book of Leviticus, the offerings that are given there, the first one shows the keeping of the first four commandments and the second one, the keeping of the last six commandments in relation to man.

I want to make sure that we do not miss the teaching that is here for you and me because, as it shows us very plainly in Romans 10:4, that Jesus Christ is the object of the law. It says there that He is the end of the law. And the word "end" there is not being used in the sense of being the conclusion of or the finishing or the doing away with. But rather it is used in the sense of being the object of the law, that to which it points, its purpose. And so Jesus

Christ is described by the offerings, that is, His complete and total devotion, His character, the way that He lived His life, is shown in very specific terminology in the keeping of those offerings there.

We find also with the second one that He was as devoted to God in the service of man as He was devoted to God in the service of God. And so we find that Jesus Christ *is* the burnt offering. Jesus Christ *is* the meal offering, but He was the firstborn of many brethren. I took you through Hebrews the second chapter, verse 10 where it uses a word very plainly and clearly, the Greek word Archegos, that is translated in the King James, the captain of our salvation. The word means captain. It means founder, it means leader, it means pathfinder, it means scout, it means someone who goes on before and blazes a trail that others are expected to follow. And so we find in I Peter 2 that we are to follow in His steps. We are to emulate what He does (or did) and we are to do in our life to the very best of our ability what He did in His life.

And so we find then that the object here is that we study the law with the intent of applying it as specifically as we can in our life here in the New Covenant, this spiritual covenant that we have made with God.

I thought it was very interesting and timely that Mr. Tkach in his latest "Brethren and Co-worker" letter made this statement about three or four paragraphs into the letter. He says,

I can't stress enough that when our ways please God, He will bless us. This is the work of God, not the work of man. God is patient and merciful with human shortcomings and sins, but He wants us to be turned toward Him with our whole heart, truly striving to overcome. Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37. A lawyer of the Pharisees had asked Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And Jesus replied, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" Such intense, sound-minded devotion is what the lives of each of His people should reflect.

That is, of course, where we come into the picture here. There is no use really going through the offerings of the book of Leviticus if all we are going

to learn from it is, well, this is the way Jesus Christ was. Indeed, that was the way He was. But indeed, we are to *follow* in His footsteps to the very best of our ability. And so our lives have to become, within our abilities, a complete and total burnt offering to God. And we also have to become the meal offering as well.

I would like you to begin this sermon with me in the book of Colossians in chapter 3, verse 17, which I feel kind of ties these four sermons together.

**Colossians 3:17** [Paul says] And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Now, I feel that this verse sums up without a doubt what is a major point of the burnt and the meal offerings and that is that they were offered together. You recall how we read there in Leviticus 2 that the burnt offering was put on the altar and then the meal offering was put right on top of it, which teaches you and me that you cannot have one without the other. The burnt offering and the meal offering are done in tandem. And the same goes in practical application in a spiritual life. It is impossible to say you love God and hate man. It is impossible, to God, for you to say you hate men and love God. Remember how John covered that in the book of I John. How he said that if a person says that he loves God and hates his neighbor, that person is a liar. That is an impossibility. The burnt offering and the meal offering go together.

Here in Colossians 3:17, that is what he is saying; that whatever you do, he means in every aspect of life: on the job, in the home, in the church, in college—it does not matter where you do it—he says, "do all in word and deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

**Colossians 3:22-23** Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. [How are we to work? Fearing God.] And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not to men.

You see, in the Christian's life God is never very far from his mind. God is *always* the reason we do things—complete devotion to God in the burnt sacrifice, complete devotion to God in service to man in the meal offering. And so God, even in service to men, is not out of the picture. The offering, if you recall, was made to God in behalf of men.

**Colossians 3:23-24** And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ.

I will put together these verses with Matthew 22, beginning in verse 37: Love God, love neighbor. Where is your closest neighbor? It is your mate, it is your children, it is your parents. Your closest neighbor is right in your family. And so God is showing that He primarily intends, first of all, that love be exhibited to Him, and then to man through the family, and then to the church, and then to the outside world.

Is it possible that one of the major reasons that we have so many marital problems, as you have probably been told, year after year, whenever the church administration takes a survey of what the ministry is saying are the major spiritual problems in their congregation, that the one that is always at the top of the list is marital problems. Is that so because we are not really loving our nearest neighbor, we are not really a meal offering, we are not really a burnt sacrifice to God, and as a result, we do not have the spiritual power to make these things work within our marriages? It is no wonder there is trouble in society if they cannot even be worked within a family.

We have to do every task as though it was something that is offered to Christ. We cannot separate our spiritual life from our secular life. But the whole of one's life is an offering to God as a sacrament.

Sacrament is a word that we do not use very much in the Worldwide Church of God [where this message was originally given]. We kind of tend to think of that in terms of maybe the Catholic Church. But a sacrament is a rite ordained by Christ as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace. That is what the dictionary will tell you. It is an outward and visible sign of something that is inside of you.

And so what we see are the actions of men, but what is on the inside is a complete and total devotion to God. Our sacrament ought to be a sign of our devotion to God.

So when we translate this again into practical things, it means that we do not work for pay, we do not work because of personal ambition, we do not work to satisfy a pleasure that we feel burning within us. We work for the Lord Christ. Our reasons for doing things are to satisfy Him and to satisfy God.

Now, back in the book of Leviticus (hold your finger in the New Testament because we are going to be coming right back very quickly), the 21st chapter. We will pick up a verse there and then we are going to go back to the New Testament and then come right back to Leviticus 21 again.

**Leviticus 21:1** And the Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people.'

I read that for one reason. I want you to see that the general topic that is going to be covered in this chapter is something that is addressed to the priests.

With that in mind, let us go back to I Peter 2 and read a verse that we read the last time that I spoke Now, here he is speaking to the congregations of the church.

**I Peter 2:5** you also [that is, members, brethren], as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The key here is that we are a holy priesthood. That instruction back there in Leviticus 21 is for you and me to take spiritually. Certainly it was for the priesthood back there to be taken literally and physically. But we are to take the spiritual instruction that is there because we are a holy priesthood, a spiritual priesthood, and we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Again (just a little tiny digression here), you will recall in the meal offering that there were leaven cakes that were offered and that those leaven cakes; it was the flour that would ordinarily go into a meal offering, but they had leavening put in them, and as long as the leavening was in those cakes, they could not be offered on the altar. They were allowed to be waved before God, but they were not accepted on their own. They could not be burned on the altar. They could be eaten by the priest, but they were not burned on the altar. And the reason was, they had leavening in them and leavening represents sin and the cakes represented the church.

What that means is that the church is *not* acceptable to God except because of what surrounds it. Now in the offering, what surrounded it was the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, and the peace offering. Those things made the offering of the cakes acceptable, but they still could not be burned on the fire—that is important—because they had sin in them.

Back to Leviticus 21. Keep that in the forefront of your mind that we are a spiritual priesthood and it is our responsibility to offer up spiritual sacrifices and we are to show forth the praises of God (that is in verse 9, which we did not read there. I Peter 2:9).

**Leviticus 21:6** 'They [meaning the priest] shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.'

He is pointing out the importance of our responsibility of keeping our lives as sinless as possible. We are holy, we are sanctified, we are set apart for a responsibility. We make the offerings of the Lord.

He says there, "the bread of God." Bread is symbolic of food. It is what a person eats. Now, the bread of God here was not literally bread in the way that you and I know it, but rather it was whatever was burned on the altar. And most of the time that was meat. It was a bullock, it was a lamb, it was a goat. Sometimes it was grain, but most of the time it was meat. But it is called here the bread of God.

Now, that is important to understanding these things because bread represents food and food represents satisfaction. You know how it is with you physically, that if you come home after work, worn out, tired, kind of depressed, you are a little bit down, and you come into the house and you smell something very nice cooking on the fire. You sit down and you have a nice meal and you rise from that table satisfied. Your hunger has been taken away. And now there is a sense of well being. You feel good, your stomach is warm, your stomach is full, and you are kind of at peace with the world for a while. And there is a feeling of abundance, a sense of well being, peace.

**Leviticus 21:8** 'Therefore you shall sanctify him [that is, the priest], for he offers the bread of your God. [there it is again] He shall be holy to you, for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy.'

You get the impression here, do you not, that God is very concerned about the spirituality of His priesthood and that He does not want a priesthood that is defiled by sin, but He wants a priesthood that is holy because they are handling the offerings of God.

**Leviticus 21:16-17** "Speak to Aaron, saying, 'No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God.'

Now today, we are going to be looking into the peace offering. We are not going to get completely finished with it, but it is a very interesting offering. I will tell you here, even before we go any further, that it is to me anyway, the most abstract and the most complex of all of the offerings that are given here in Leviticus 1—5. And hopefully, I can clear some of those abstractions up, take some of the complexities out, and make it practical to you in a spiritual way.

Men do not even know exactly what to call it. You will find in looking in various commentaries and other Bible translations, that it is called the peace offering, the fellowship offering, the recompense offering, the thanksgiving offering, the saving offering.

There are a couple of reasons for this, one of which is the word itself, that is translated in my Bible, "peace." It is not the normal word that you and I would use for peace. It is not called the shalom offering. It is another word that is derived from that same root, but it has much wider application. It reaches into areas of life that we would ordinarily not consider to be things that have to do with peace. But they do have to do with peace. And what they are, as we are going to see as we go along, *they are all factors that have to do with living an abundant life*. Remember that.

Now, the burnt offering and the meal offering were offered together. Let us go back to Leviticus 3 and read the first five verses and we will see something here regarding the peace offering and how it ties together with the burnt offering and the meal offering.

**Leviticus 3:1-5** 'When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.'

Let us begin the explanation here. Back in verse 2, something that I want to pick up that is important as we go through the entirety of the sermon. It is a little phrase and I think that most of us would probably just pass right by. We might get a little jiggle in our brain out of it but not even realize what an important factor it is in understanding this. It says,

**Leviticus 3:2** 'He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle.'



Why not in the back of it? Why not at the side of it? Why does it have to be at the door? Well, here is the reason:

The Tabernacle, typically, was what? Symbolically, typically, it represented God's house. That is where He lived. And what was the door? Well, that is where you went in and out to get into the presence of God or to leave the presence of God. Now, the animal that was offered was brought to the door. It was not actually taken into the house of God, but it was brought to the door to show something that is important to you and me and that is, the peace offering showed a person giving thanks to God for something. You will find it in other portions of the Bible called the thank offering. Remember I told you, it was called the thanksgiving offering as well as the fellowship offering. And so it is called a thank offering because one of the major reasons for giving this offering was to thank God for blessings received.

The bringing of the animal to the door and slaying it there was an admission on the part of the offeror that the blessing had come from God, that He was responsible, therefore, the mercy or blessing was seen as coming from God out of the Tabernacle through the door. Therefore, with the animal being brought up to the door, it shows the offeror making his offering in prayer or whatever, and his prayer going back through the door and into the house of God and into His presence. So it was an acknowledgment that the offering came from God through the door. And it was an acknowledgment that the thanks was going back from the offeror through the door and on up to God.

Jesus said in John 10, "I am the door." That has very important significance to you and me both spiritually and materially. It is very important to our life.

Let us go back (hold your finger there in Leviticus 3), to Philippians 4. Do you remember that we just read in I Peter 2 that we are a spiritual priesthood, a holy priesthood, that we offer spiritual sacrifices to God? How? Through Jesus Christ. We are a people, we are a church, filled with sin. And therefore what we offer to God is not acceptable except because of what surrounds it and what surrounds it is all that has preceded it. That is, the work of Jesus Christ that has preceded us and made our offering to God acceptable.

Now, on the other hand, He is our High Priest. He is sitting before God. He is intervening for us. He is, as we might say, responsible for the administering of the Spirit of God and all the gifts and everything that go with it. And so then, the gifts come from God through Christ, through the door, and on into His church.

**Philippians 4:18-19** [Paul writes] Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you [look at this], a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Interesting that he should mention that their offering to him was a sweet-smelling aroma. Sounds very much like the sacrifices of Leviticus 1, 2, and 3.

Back to Leviticus 3. Remember the door, remember that we are as a holy priesthood. Do not let the door get very far from your mind either because that is going to be important as we go along here.

**Leviticus 3:5** And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, . . .

Now we see its relationship to the other two offerings that preceded it. The first thing that was done in the morning was that the fire in the altar was rekindled. Remember, it was never allowed to go out. But during the night, it would have a tendency to die down. But in the morning, it was part of the priest's responsibility to rekindle the fire and get it into the place where it would be sufficient for burning and offering. Then the burnt offering was made and it was put on top of the altar. The meal offering went right smack-dab on top of the burnt offering; they cannot be separated, they have to be offered together. You cannot separate your worship and devotion to God from your service to man. They have to go together. You cannot do one without the other. You cannot just keep *part* of the commandments—you have to keep *all* of the commandments. There has to be devotion to God and service to man.

Then on top of those two went the peace offering. Now we do not have the time to show you because we are trying to accomplish a very great deal in a short amount of time. But the Bible does show that the peace offering did not have to go immediately on top of the other two offerings at the same time. But rather it had to be put on top after the other two. But it could be an hour later. It could be immediately after, for that matter. There apparently was no designated time. It did not have to go on there right away. It could be done either right away or it could be done later, but it had to be used on top of the other two.

That is important because the whole thrust of the peace offering is to show the effect of being devoted to God and also being devoted to God in the service of man. The effect, the consequences, what is produced by keeping the commandments is peace. You want to know how to produce peace? In the offerings God is telling you.

Now, remember the word peace here does not just mean tranquility. (We will get to that a little bit more.) That is why they cannot arrive at a consistent name for this offering because the word connotes a great deal more than it does just peace. It connotes *abundance* in every area of life. It can connote prosperity, it connotes good health, it connotes being at peace with your neighbor, of course. It connotes being thankful for blessings received or blessings expected. It connotes, also, salvation, but not in the sense of Christian salvation, entering into the Kingdom of God, but simply being delivered from some kind of difficulty or trial. There is a great deal that rides on the making of this particular offering.

Let us go to Leviticus the seventh chapter. We already read there in Leviticus 3 the parts of the animal that God was to receive. He received those pieces that a man would not normally eat. The entrails, the fat that surrounded the entrails, the kidneys, the fat that was around the kidneys, the fat that was around the liver, those kinds of things. But what about the rest of the animal?

**Leviticus 7:11** 'This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the Lord: If he offers it for a thanksgiving. . .'

We are going to see that the peace offering is divided into actually three varieties of offerings: one called thanksgiving or praise, either one; another one is called a vow offering; and another a voluntary or a free will offering. So now He is giving directions regarding if you make a thanksgiving or a praise offering, a peace offering.

**Leviticus 7:11-14** 'If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of a blended flour mixed with oil. [This is the meal offering and you make a meal offering with the peace offering.] Besides the cakes, as his offering he shall offer leavened bread [here comes a leavened one] with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering as a heave offering to the Lord. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.'

Now we begin to see a difference here with the peace offering. We see that the priest is now sharing in this offering. He did have a small share with the meal offering. With the burnt offering nobody got anything but God, complete and total devotion. With a meal offering the offeror did not get anything but the priest got a portion of the offering. The rest was burned on the fire. Now with a peace offering, we find that God gets the fat, but now we find that there is a meal offering being made with a peace offering and a portion of that meal offering goes to the priest.

I need to describe something here just very briefly, just to help you to understand. It is called a heave offering. Now we are going to come across a wave offering in just a bit and there is a difference between a heave offering and a wave offering. They may seem the same to you but they are different.

When you say the English word "heave," the idea you probably get in your mind is somebody picking up a whole side of beef and slamming it up on top of an altar. That is not what the word means. It merely means to lift up. That is all. And what it actually pictured was the offeror picking up a piece of meat and handing it to the priest. It was his, it did not go on the fire. It went to the priest, it was his.

Now, the wave offering, a little bit different here. We are going to find a little bit later as we fill the pieces in that a wave offering was made of what we call today the brisket. It is called in the Bible, the breast. The brisket was considered to be the very finest of the meat that was in the animal. When the animal was cut up into pieces, the priest took the brisket and he brought it back to the offeror. He put it into the offeror's hands and then he surrounded his hands or held his hands underneath the offeror's hands, sort of like the laying on of hands. He held his hands and the offeror's hands were on the piece of meat and then they made a motion, a wave toward the altar.

What did that signify? It signified a giving of it to God. See, the very best portion of the animal went to God, but God gave it back to the priest. You waved it toward the altar and then you brought it right back, and then the offeror took his hands off of it and it now belonged to the priest. So it was a gift, then, from God to the priest, it belonged to him. It was the best portion, but God gave it back to the priest.

**Leviticus 7:15-16** 'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten.'

So if it is a thank offering, the offering has to be eaten exactly that day. If it is a vow offering or a voluntary offering, a free will offering, it can not only be eaten that day, but the next day as well. But if you leave it up to the third day and you eat it, you lose the good of the offering, as God says here.

**Leviticus 7:17-18** 'The remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. [It is not burned on the altar, it is burned on an ordinary fire.] And if any flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it; and that person who eats of it shall bear guilt.'

**Leviticus 7:28-32** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying" 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the Lord shall bring his offering to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offering. His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the Lord. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved [here is the brisket] as a wave offering before the Lord. And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. [A gift from God. The very best portion went to God, but it was given back to the priest.] Also the right thigh [This is a rear rump, the second best portion of meat on the animal, also went to the priest.] you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings.'

Let us gather this all together. The fat, the entrails—those things that we would not ordinarily eat—those things were burned on the fire. That was God's portion of the offering. The brisket and the right thigh, that went to the priest. The rest of the animal belonged to the offeror.

We just saw in verses 15 through 17, depending on what kind of an offering it was, the animal had to be eaten either that day or the next day. Now, that meant that there was a whole two sides of beef, two front quarters, one hind quarter, and that person had to get rid of that animal at the most within two days. So what did they do? They had a big feast. It is no wonder that the peace offering was the most popular of all the offerings. There were more peace offerings made than any other kind. That is no kidding. According to Jewish records, everybody wanted to make peace offerings because everybody wanted to have a party. And that was God's intention.

Now get the point here. The point is God receives His portion on the altar and it burns up and it is a sweet aroma to Him and He is happy. He is satisfied. He feels contentment. He is at peace with those with whom He is in communion. The priest gets his part and he is happy too because he has something to eat and he eats his meal and he feels good and he is happy because God is happy and because the offeror is happy. Then the offeror is happy because he is having a big to-do with his friends. And you see

everybody is happy. Everybody is at peace. Everybody is enjoying an abundant and good life.

That is the point of the offering. *Everybody is at peace, fellowshiping with one another over a beautiful meal*, see, which pictures the abundance that is produced by keeping the commandments of God.

What He is saying is this: that if you will devote yourself to God as a burnt offering, and if you will devote yourself to God in service to men as a meal offering, what you are going to produce in your life is an abundant life—peace, prosperity, good times, good health; thankful, praiseworthy attitudes, everything good that you can think of.

Now, there are two factors that are at work producing peace. We are going to probably spend the rest of the sermon on this because we are kind of going to deviate away from the peace offering. It is always going to be lurking in the background. But we have got to make this thing practical.

There are two factors at work producing peace. One, is the work of Christ for us and resulting fellowship with God and the gift of His Holy Spirit, that is, God's nature to us. Now, that is all one point. They are all tied together. One is the work of Christ for us and the resulting fellowship with God and the gift of His Holy Spirit, the imparting of His nature to us as a result of all that went before. Remember, Christ is *the* burnt offering. Christ is *the* meal offering. Christ is *the* sin offering. Christ is *the* trespass offering. Christ is *the* peace offering.

We will tie this all together. Remember the two leaven cakes. The firstfruits offering and the leaven cakes that were offered with the meal offering, they were allowed to be waved before God, but they were not allowed to be offered on the burnt offering because they were corrupted by sin, by leaven. And so the only thing that even makes those leaven cakes acceptable to God is what surrounds it: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. That is, the work of Jesus Christ. So therefore, the leaven cakes, the church, the individual, is acceptable to God through Christ.

The second one of those two factors is our use of the Holy Spirit in doing acts of love to God and to man.

Now, the first of those two is exceedingly more important than the second. That is, the work of Christ that has preceded us and surrounded us. But the second is also important as well because if we do not yield, no peace is produced, Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but we have a responsibility as well. And our responsibility is to allow God to lead and to guide us.

Let us go back to John the 14th chapter. Here, we have Jesus in the last days of His life. Actually, the last day of His life. And this is one of those things that I see more and more facets of it. It just really makes me appreciate God and the detail with which He did everything. It seems as though He was thinking of everything. I want you to look at this verse and then think of when it was said.

**John 14:27** "Peace [Christ says to His disciples] I leave with you, My peace I give to you; . . ."

We are talking about a peace here that comes to us as a gift. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you." We are talking here not about a peace that we can produce even by yielding to the leadership, the guidance of God's Spirit. But rather we are talking here about a gift.

**John 14:27** ". . . not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Now, Jesus uttered this at the end of His life, before He made the sacrifice of His life. He made this after He had completely and totally devoted His life to God. All 33½ years He was a burnt offering and He was also a meal offering during that period of time. And now He was qualified to give peace because that is what is produced.

Again, remember this word peace does not just mean tranquility, it does not mean the avoidance of trouble. It does not mean a refusal to face things by escaping. It does not mean the kind of satisfaction or pleasure or tranquility



that we get that is momentary because something physical has satisfied us. But rather we are talking about a peace here that does not depend on external circumstances.

What it means in practical fact is that Christ wants to give us a peace that we can have in the midst of the most extreme difficulties that a human being may be required to go through. That a person can be going through something that will test and try him right up to death's door, and maybe through death's door, through a terrible sickness, an affliction that the person has. It could be a peace that comes upon a person as a result of a severe financial trial, problems within the family, you name it. There is no problem that is not covered by this. And Christ is saying that He is able to give a peace that will enable a person to have this attitude regardless of circumstances all around him.

This is an absolutely necessary adjunct to faith. A person can say He believes God and be nervous as all get out. Anxiety is an indication of fear, is it not, and an absence of faith. What if you really had a peace that Paul says passes all understanding? Well, let us chase this out a little bit further. Let us go to Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 1. Paul says,

**Ephesians 5:1** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that it is a [no sound]. . . With the burnt offering, with the meal offering, and the peace offering, they were the only offerings that were sweet smelling to God because no sin was involved in them. Now, I want to draw *your* attention to it because Paul says, "Therefore be [imitators] followers of Christ as dear children." What are we supposed to follow? His sacrificial attitude in His lifetime of devotion to God and in service of man.

The timing of Christ's offer of peace to His disciples came at the end of His life but before the sin offering was made on the day of Passover that followed shortly after that. This means of course, that we have to make every effort to walk in His steps, to follow our Archegos, to do the things that He did. Now, God is merciful and He does not require of us that we do exactly

as Christ did because what we bring to Him as a way of an offering is already polluted because of the sins that have preceded it. But nonetheless, because of the work of Christ that has preceded us, our meager offerings that we make to Him and the way that we live our lives are acceptable to Him. And so He wants us to strive with all of our being, to do the best we can with what we have been given, in the circumstances we find ourselves.

Now that is going to be different for every individual because everybody does not have the same abilities. Everybody is not the same age. Everybody is not the same sex. Everybody does not even have the same quantity of God's Holy Spirit. Everybody is a little bit different, but God does expect us to be followers of Christ and do the best we can with what we have been given.

There is another thing here that is very important. It says in verse 2, "and walk in love [that is, live your life in love], as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us." This giving of Himself for us, again, was not His death on the stake. He gave His life *in His* life, in the activities of His life, for us. This is very interesting, this "for us." It means "instead of us." It means "in our behalf." It can even mean "as us."

That is a rather dangerous one theologically, because that is the one that the Protestants have picked up on and they have gone so far as to say that Christ has lived a holy life for you and me. In other words, we do not have to live a holy life because He has already done it. But if that were true, why would Paul say to be a follower of Him? It is really not very sound reasoning. It just gives them a justification for not keeping the commandments. It is really spiritual short-sightedness to an extreme and deadly in its results, in its consequences.

But it does mean that what Christ did He did in our behalf, He did so that what we are able to offer God will be acceptable to God. And so what it means in practical fact is that when He was outside of the camp, bearing sin, He did it for us. If we had to do it ourselves, we die. The wages of sin is death and there is no future. So God had to find some means in which His law would be satisfied and He did it through a vicarious sacrifice of someone who was qualified without the blemish of sin. So now we do not have to die that spiritual death because Christ did it for us. When He was judged, He

was judged for us. He became sin for us in order that He might become the sacrifice because He had no sin. But our sins were put upon Him and He literally became sin for us. All of that would have been vain if He had not lived perfectly before that.

And so what Paul is saying here is that He lived a sinless life for us, in our behalf, so that when the time came that God would call us, we could then be acceptable in His sight because of what has preceded us. Something to be *extremely* grateful for, if you grasp it, if you begin to understand and realize the hope that this fills your heart and mind with. It is certainly something worth making, if you were in the old time, worth making a peace offering over, a thanksgiving offering to God, because He has supplied this means for us to have fellowship and communion with Him, which we could not have on our own.

Go back a couple of pages to Ephesians 1. Are you beginning to see that we have peace because of what has preceded us? We are able to receive this gift of abundance that comes from Christ as a gift.

**Ephesians 1:4-6** Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Before we were not acceptable. God had closed the way of the Tree of Life. It was something that we did not have access to. We did not have communion with God, we did not have fellowship with God—but now we do. And as a result, we are accepted in the Beloved. Even this term "in the Beloved" can mean that we are accepted with the church, you see, as a part of the body. Or it can also mean in the sense of being accepted in the inner circle of God, His deepest, closest friends.

That is the overwhelming thought of the peace offering: man in communion with God. We are accepted in the Beloved, we are accepted in His circle of closest friends as a result of what has preceded us. Now, that is worth making a peace offering yourself!

Now, let us go back to Philippians chapter 4 again. Just a couple of verses. Paul says,

**Philippians 4:4-5** Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

That word gentleness there means forbearance. I think that the King James says, let your moderation be known, but gentleness is a little bit better. Forbearance is even more specific. One translator has translated it, sweet reasonableness. Sounds sweet. "Let your gentleness be known to all men." Can you be gentle if you are filled with anxieties? Can you be gentle if your temper is on edge? If you are angry, can you be gentle with those around you? If you are at war within yourself or at war with others, you cannot be gentle. You are going to strike out.

**Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing. . .

The Greek means not even one thing to be anxious for, not even one thing because anxiety indicates fear and fear means that there is a lack of peace.

**Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything [now, here comes the solution] by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving [the peace offering, the thank offering], let your requests be made known to God.

Now let us go back, in our minds anyway, to the beginning of chapter 3 of Leviticus. The offering was taken to the door, was it not? And at the door, the person slew the animal. This is what he was going to offer to God. It was recognition that the blessing or the mercies that had been received from God had come from His house through the door to the individual, who was now coming back to God to thank Him for the blessing, to thank Him for the peace, and was sending it back through the door by means of his prayer.

Remember, we are a spiritual priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to God acceptable through Jesus Christ. You do not have peace. Maybe you have not been making any peace offerings. Maybe you have not been going

before the door of the Tabernacle and sending up God thanksgiving prayers for what blessings you already have. Jesus says, "Peace I give to you. . . not as the world gives." How does the world give peace? It gives peace momentarily and temporarily through material things. And they do satisfy for a little while but pretty soon our nature wants something new once again. But God is able to give people things that do not wear out the good is always there.

**Philippians 4:6-7** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will [he is saying that that peace is going to come back out through the door as a gift to you] guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus [he even names the door].

It is interesting. That word guard, where it says that peace will guard your hearts and minds, it literally means in the Greek that it will stand there like a sentinel, protecting you from anxiety. Now, this can only be given because one is in communion with God. If we did not have communion with God, if we did not have fellowship with God, we would not have the opportunity to come before the door and lift up our request to Him and let the peace of God guard our hearts from the anxieties that we have.

Again, I want to tie this back. We cannot get away from the peace offering showing the consequences, from showing the effects of the keeping of the commandments of God. It is showing the effects of complete devotion to God and devotion to God in service to man. That if we will do that, what it will produce is an abundant life.

Let us go to another place in Colossians 3 again, one of those verses that we did not read when we went through here before. But in Colossians 3 and this time in verse 15. Let us go back a few verses and just pick up the feeling of the context.

**Colossians 3:12-15** Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved [we are accepted in the Beloved], put on tender mercies [let your gentleness be known to all men], kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering [Why do you need those things? It is

because of our relationships with other people]; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule [my Bible says the word in the Greek means be the umpire]. . .

What does an umpire do? An umpire makes decisions on a baseball or softball diamond. An umpire is somebody that decides. Now, Paul was saying here that in your relationships with other people, whether it be in the family or whether it be in the broader family in the church, he said, let the peace of God be the umpire in your hearts, that same peace that is guarding your heart and guarding your mind. Oh, what a precious gift that can be given to us *if* we will devote ourselves to God as a burnt offering, as a meal offering, and offer the peace offering at the door, lifting up those spiritual sacrifices to Him.

**Colossians 3:15** . . . and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

The thank offering, acknowledging to God the benefits that you have received from Him, going to the door and letting Him know that you know that He is responsible for these benefits and that He has provided them.

Let us go to Romans 8.

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus [notice there is no sense of foreboding], who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Here, we are introducing the second factor that has to do with the producing of peace. Notice, there is no condemnation, no sense of foreboding, no guilty conscience to those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit; that those who follow the guidance, the leadership of God's Holy Spirit are going to have a sense of well being. There is not going to be a guilty conscience. There is not going to be depression that lasts for very long or a sense of discouragement or disappointment. I do not mean that we will not have it momentarily, but it will pass away because the peace of God is

there guarding the person's heart. Certainly we will have discouragements and disappointments. But because the peace is being given as a gift and because it is being produced by the person yielding to God's Spirit, it is going to guard that person and not allow him to come into a root of bitterness.

Now, with that in mind, let us go to I John 3 and let us pick it up in verse 18.

**I John 3:18-19** My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. [He is saying there, let us not love merely by word, but let us add deeds to that as well. And this will be a consequence.] And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

The word "know" means, as I told you before, a sexual experience within marriage. And so he is saying that we know by experience that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. When you are assured you are confident, you are upbeat, you are positive.

**I John 3:20** For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

What if you do sin and your heart condemns you and you have a guilty conscience, you know that you have not done things the way that you should, that you have not lived up even to your own expectations. Your attitude has turned bad and you feel as though you are on the outs with God and you wonder how you can even crawl before His throne and be accepted. That happens to all of us sooner or later.

He says, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart. He is saying the worst that we are, the worst that we have ever been, the worst that we have ever done, the worst attitudes that we have ever been in, the most murderous and hateful, suicidal or depressing thoughts that we have ever had, God already knows them and He has not booted us out yet. He still accepts us. He accepts us because of Christ. We are laden with sin and that offering could be waved before God, but it could not go on the altar because God would not eat it because it was sinful. But it can be waved before God

and accepted because of the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offerings—of Christ. And it was therefore acceptable.

So John says, Look, there is no need to stay away from God. He certainly does not want us to be that way. We have communion and fellowship with Him. And your heart is condemning you. Well, God already knows those things. Go ahead and get on your knees and go through that door again with your prayers anyway, because He knows all things.

**I John 3:21-22** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

The burnt offering and the meal offering.

Now that can be very encouraging if you will just understand it. I read in preparing for this sermon something that I mentioned in North Hollywood this morning that I still have to think it through, but I will pass it on to you for what it is worth. But I think it is a good thought, and that is, what we read about David.

You know, we might say David, the typical man, the typical human being. What we read about David back in I Samuel, that was David as he appeared on the surface. That was the David that everybody would see if they were coming in contact with him day by day. The David that we see in the Psalms, that is what God saw. That was the *real* David. Remember what he said to Samuel. "God looks on the heart."

That is what John is talking about here. God looks on the heart, and He accepts us regardless of the things that we do as long as the attitude is *always* to remain in communion with Him and in fellowship with Him as a part of His Family. But He is patient and merciful. He wants to see us grow and overcome and become more like His Son. And He is not willing to shove us aside because we have committed a sin or two and we have fallen out of the



way. But God is looking on the heart and He knows the intents and He also knows that sin is still there. And so He accepts us, not because of what we are, but because of what has preceded us. See, the work of Jesus Christ.

Keeping the commandments of God is not easy. We want good things from God and it says we receive those good things because we keep His commandments. But keeping the commandments is difficult because of human nature, because of carnality. And that is where the pain comes from in keeping the commandments. It comes from trying to get rid of carnality and trying to overcome it and trying to beat it to the punch, you might say, and do the act of love rather than the act of selfishness that will result in a breaking of the commandment. And so virtually every time that we are going to do an act of love, there is going to be the tug, the pull of selfishness to keep us from doing it, and so sacrifice is always going to be involved in acts of love. I mean, the *agapao* love of the Bible. Sacrifice will not always be part and parcel of *phileo* love, but it will be part and parcel of the *agapeo* love of the Bible. (Probably talk about that the next time.)

That is why Jesus used those illustrations, About if your hand offends you cut it off. That would be painful! If your eye offends you pluck it out. He is showing that there is going to be pain, there is going to be sacrifice involved with overcoming sin, overcoming carnality, being devoted to God, and being in service of man. But that is what produces peace. It is knowing that we are keeping the commandments and doing those things that are right in His eyes. You see, that is our part. His part has already been done. He is willing to give us that gift, but we have to fulfill the second part of that and yield to Him, yield to the guidance of His Spirit.

Now, what are you looking to for satisfaction? What are you looking to for abundance? What are you looking to as a recompense from God? What are you looking to for peace and a sense of well being? God shows us in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in a simple illustration of a young person who tried to get his satisfaction through materialism. The story is simple and the understanding of it is not complex either. An illustration to show regardless of a person's wealth, regardless of how a person spends his life in materialism, it will only produce a momentary satisfaction and the person will end up bankrupt spiritually. And so the prodigal son's conclusion is, "I will go back to my father." He at least knew the right thing to do.

That is the point of that parable, to show that peace, that real abundance cannot come through material things. It comes through fellowship with our Father, and that is what the peace offering represents. God, man, and the priest all eating together, fellowshiping together, communing together, having a good time together, sharing life together in abundance.

Let us conclude in Malachi 1. The Parable of the Prodigal Son shows that a person always has to return to spiritual values for peace and real abundance. In the book of Malachi, we find a very interesting situation where the priesthood had gone astray and God sent Malachi as His messenger to let them know what it was that God found to be abominable in their activities. And he says here in verse 6, please connect this to yourself because of I Peter 2:5 and 9. We are a spiritual priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices to God. What is it that we are going to give to God that is going to be acceptable, that is going to be able to go through the door?

**Malachi 1:6-7** "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? If I am a Master, where is My reverence? says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' You offer defiled food on My altar."

Leviticus. 21, the priests handle the food of God. That is you and me. The food of God is His Word. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." "A man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." God has given the responsibility of disseminating His Word all over the earth as a witness right now. And very specifically right to the church, to those whom God calls out. How are we meeting that responsibility? Are we offering defiled bread on God's altar? Are we really making this the primary thing in our life? Or is it something secondary, something that God gets bits and pieces of from time to time when we can spare Him the time. Are we really giving of our best to the Master?

**Malachi 1:7-9** "You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.' And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? [The offerings had to be without blemish.] And when you

offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" says the Lord of hosts?

I think not.

Now, I do not believe that the priesthood had come to the deliberate and reasoned conclusion that the worship of God was unimportant. I do not think that they had done that. But in their attitude that they showed in the performance of their responsibilities, they did reveal their heart. They had to reason it out. They had just slid into lethargy and laziness, into just thinking that any old thing would do. That we do not want to have happened to us.

The worship of God and the responsibility that He has given to us is not something that can be done in that kind of an attitude. It does not show the attitude of the burnt offering or the meal offering, and it will not produce any peace. It will not produce an abundance because God will not send the blessings out through the door.

Now, let me reread, in conclusion, what Mr. Tkach said, "I can't stress enough that when our ways please God, He will bless us. This is the work of God, not the work of men. God is patient and merciful with human shortcomings and sins, but He wants us to be turned toward Him with our whole hearts, truly striving to overcome. Such intense, sound-minded devotion to God is what the lives of each of His people will reflect."

Well, that is what the peace offering shows. It shows God well-pleased to be in communion with His priest and with His people. And it shows the people, the offeror, well-pleased to be in communion with God. And it shows the priest to be well-pleased because his two friends, God and the offeror, who were formerly at odds with one another, are now sitting down to a meal. And there is peace and abundance and everybody is happy because the commands of God are being kept.