

Offerings (Part Five)

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Given 28-Feb-87; Sermon #BS-OF05

All through this series on the offerings, I have been trying to emphasize to us that Christ is the object of the law, that He is the one who is being described here primarily in the offerings. He was the one who was the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. It offered to us a view into the character of Jesus Christ that is perhaps not available in any other place in the Bible in such a concentrated way.

Once you begin to understand what the offerings are talking about, there is really a bundle, a tremendous depth of information that is contained in Leviticus 1 through Leviticus 5. And we might even go to Leviticus 7 or so with the information that is pertaining to the offerings.

But I also continually want to emphasize and re-emphasize that we cannot allow ourselves the liberty of detaching *ourselves* from these things and so I am going to begin in Romans the 15th chapter, verses 1 through 5 today because of something that it says in verse 4.

Romans 15:1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

I want you to notice the emphasis on not pleasing ourselves. Certainly that is evident in the burnt offering and the meal offering especially. Christ did not do things to please Himself but He gave Himself in complete devotion to God in the burnt offering and He did the will of God. And in the meal offering, He gave Himself to God in behalf of man. And so what was done was done for others, not to please Himself, but was done to please others.

Romans 15:2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

The meal offering especially applies right there having to do with the keeping of the last six commandments if we do things to please others. You might also attach to this Philippians 2:4, that each man ought to look on the interests of others, not just on his own interests as well.

Romans 15:2-4 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it was written, "The reproaches of those who reproach You fell on Me." [This has very much to do with the sin offering, which we will get into in just a little bit.] For whatever things were written before were written for our learning. . .

Here we are in the book of Leviticus. We are dealing with the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, we are dealing with the letter of the law. Or are we? No, we are not dealing with the letter of the law. That was put there for our learning. We are New Covenant, New Testament Christians. But what was written there back in the Old Testament was for our spiritual edification. Remember how we covered a verse, I think it was ever-so-briefly, but in Hebrews the 10th chapter, "The Law having a shadow of good things to come." It is not the reality but it is the shadow of good things to come. There is an awful lot there.

Remember, shadows always lead to the reality. There cannot be a shadow without a reality. You and I have to be very deeply concerned and interested about the reality. The reality is Jesus Christ. But those things,

Romans 15:4-6 . . . were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to [or in the same way as] Jesus Christ, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is really the intent that I have anyway in going through these offerings. It is that we might learn, that we might see a pattern of attitude and obedience and standards that are so much higher than maybe we ever

believed before of what God wants us to strive to attain. As I mentioned before, we may not ever attain them, but I am sure that God wants us to strive for those things, to try to do the very best we can.

In I Peter 2 is another scripture that is exceedingly important to a proper understanding of this series.

I Peter 2:5 You also, as living stones, are being built up [notice that we are being built up, we are not there yet, but we are being built up] a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

It might be a good idea for you to look at the word "house" a little bit differently than the common way. We think of a structure, a building. But house here could just as easily mean a dynasty, like the house of David is a dynasty, the family of David. So we are being built up as living stones into a spiritual house, a spiritual dynasty, a spiritual family, one that we know is going to last forever; a holy priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

There you have it pretty strongly that we are a priesthood. This is especially important in regard to the sacrifices because those sacrifices were the activity of the priesthood back under the Old Covenant. They went through that whole routine, the whole ritual physically. God does not have us going through the ritual physically but He wants us to understand the spiritual concepts, the spiritual teaching, because we are a spiritual household. And so there is very much there. So please do not allow yourself the liberty of detaching yourself from this and say, "Well, that's really interesting information. It's nice to have. But of what value is it?" Well, it is of very great practical, spiritual value.

When we left off last time we were in the book of Malachi so we are going to go back there. In the book of Malachi, we were talking about the peace

offering. And in the book of Malachi, there is a chastisement from God for the priesthood in the days of Malachi because they were carrying out their responsibilities in an irresponsible way. He says,

Malachi 1:6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? [God says, "Where is My respect?"] says the Lord of hosts to you priest who despise My name."

As I mentioned to you the last time, I did not think that the priesthood had come to a deliberately reasoned conclusion that the worship of God was something that was unimportant. But yet they were showing it in their activity. You see, they were showing it in the way and in the attitude that they were carrying out their responsibility. That is what I am concerned about here, the spiritual aspect of this thing. Now, they were not doing it very good physically, the real problem was in their heart. The real problem was they were distracted by other concerns.

Now, the concerns may have been their normal everyday family work-a-day activity. We have those things too. It may have been, I was going to say earning a living, but that would not fit them because they did not have to earn their living in the normal way. And so I think I will just leave it broadly at just the normal everyday activities. And so they carried out their responsibilities in kind of a lackluster, a half-baked way, and they came back and God says,

Malachi 1:6-7 "Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' [He says] "You offer defiled food on My altar."

You remember also the basis of the picture, the metaphor that is being used here, the whole base of this type is that God is eating a meal, that the sacrifice that is made on His altar is a meal that He consumes. The fire, of course, literally consumes it. But the idea, the picture is that He is consuming it. And as a result of eating, then He is satisfied. He is content. Even in the same way when we eat, we have a sense of well being because we are full and we feel that everything is sitting well with it. So He said, "You offer defiled food on My altar." The altar was His table.

Malachi 1:7-8 "But you 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? And when you offer the lame, 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.

Well, the implication is of course he would not. And of course neither did God accept their offerings either.

Now, God is very concerned about our attitude. He is less concerned about what we do than He is about our heart. Remember again, I mentioned this to you about David. How that this one commentator said that in the books of Samuel, we see David the man, we see all of his flaws. We see him scheming to kill Uriah. We see him lusting and committing adultery. We see him not rearing his children properly. We see him making governmental mistakes. We see him being afraid of intrigue that was within his government, coming from maybe Joab or his son Absalom, and maybe later on Adonai. So we see David the man.

But in the book of Psalms, we have an insight into David's heart, and God considered what was in the heart the real man. We are going to see a little bit more about why when we get to the sin offering. Because David too was encompassed with human nature. And that is something that we are going to have to be dealing with all the time and human nature can break out from time to time. So the sense of the idea here in the book of Malachi in this first chapter is to offer the best that you can.

Now everybody is not the same, everybody has different abilities, different intelligence levels, we have different skills, we have different attitudes about things, we have been reared in different kind of circumstances. So we have different things to overcome. Now here is the ideal on the one hand, which is Jesus Christ as is shown in the offerings. But on the other hand, here are we, we do not come anywhere near the ideal, but yet God wants the trajectory of our growth to be up this way as much as possible. But the way, in reality, that it actually goes is like this. You see, we go up and down.

Is God overly concerned about the depths? No, He is not concerned about the valleys. He is concerned about the general trajectory that is always on the upswing and that is coming up toward the ideal, which is Jesus Christ, and thus grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Because that converted heart, that divine nature, that is the real man that God is interested in. What He sees on the outside is what Paul describes in Romans the seventh chapter. It is not I that sin, he says. It is the sin that dwells within me." But God wants us to be turning our effort toward being the very best offering, the very best sacrifice that we possibly can.

Now that produces something and that is what the peace offering represents. When we are striving to grow and we are striving toward more perfection, we begin to see that there is something that is produced and what is produced is peace. As I explained to you last Sabbath, that word peace does not mean an absence of trouble. It does not mean simply tranquility. It has a range of meaning, so many that various translators interpret that word differently. And so you can look in different Bibles and they will have different names. Some will call it the thanksgiving offering, others will call it the peace offering, others will call it the saving offering. And what is intended is to show a whole range of benefits that come about as a result of devotion to God in man's behalf. That will produce something. It is the prosperity that comes from keeping the commandments of God, of being guided by the Spirit of God.

Let us go to Isaiah the 53rd chapter and we will see another insight into this satisfaction that comes from sacrifice. I mentioned that sacrifice is essential in the keeping of the law of God. We would think that knowing that there is something that is so good and something that will produce so many good things that we would want to do it. You see, human nature lies within it. And it says in Romans 8:7 that the carnal mind is enmity against God. And if we do not watch out, it will get the upper hand on us. And so it has to be controlled by the exercising of the Spirit of God, by using the mind of God to control human nature.

And as I mentioned, how the offerings show that no amount of oil, no amount of the Holy Spirit will do away with human nature. No matter how much of God's Holy Spirit that He would give to us, it will not do away with

human nature. There has to be a complete and total change that will come at the resurrection of the dead. So human nature is going to always be an ever-present force that is at work within us. And the sacrifice comes in when we *deny* human nature its outlet in words and in deeds. So we cut it off. Jesus said, "If your eye offends you pluck it out, if your hand offends you cut it off." That would be quite a sacrifice.

Now, we know that is not the real problem. That is not the real answer. He was just illustrating that there is sacrifice involved in overcoming sin. There is sacrifice involved in keeping the commandments, and what we are sacrificing is the flesh.

Once you begin to see some of these principles, boy, they just all fit together so beautifully. There are so many verses in the Bible about the circumcision of the flesh. The circumcision of the heart; boy, that would be painful. I saw our son circumcised and he cried, he bawled like crazy. It was not an enjoyable thing for him—and neither is the circumcision of the flesh. There is sacrifice, there is pain involved.

Here in Isaiah the 53rd chapter, which is the chapter about the Lord's Servant sacrificing Himself.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him [Does not the word pleased indicate the satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment?]; He has put him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

Peace, satisfaction that comes from making the offering.

Now, the peace offering shows us that God is satisfied because man is in communion with God. The peace offering shows us that man is satisfied because he knows he is accepted by God, that he is in fellowship with Him and sharing with Him. The priest—Christ—is satisfied because as the common friend of estranged parties, He is happy in seeing them sharing because of His work. See, everybody is shown in the peace offering to be in communion with everyone else.

You remember in Luke 22 where Jesus said to His disciples just before He gave His own life, at that meal He said, "With desire, have I desired to eat this sacrifice with you"? He was looking forward, not to the pain of the sacrifice of His life, but He was looking forward to what was going to be accomplished as a result of His sacrifice. That as a result of His sacrifice, He knew that there was going to be peace between man and God. He knew that there would be a family that would be born of God. And so His sacrifice was going to make that possible.

I hope that you are getting the point because I am going to keep repeating it over and over again until we understand that God is showing where peace comes from. I do not care whether it is peace in a family, peace in a business, peace in a state, peace in a nation, peace over the whole of God's creation. It is something that is produced through sacrifice. And for us, that means the sacrificing of ourselves in the keeping of the commandments of God, of fighting human nature and holding it in check is going to produce peace. It will produce peace in your family, men and women, when we really learn to love one another. And sacrifice is the essence of love.

There are other things that are produced too. Let us go back to Psalm 119, verse 165. You see, it is the peace offering that shows the consequences of keeping God's law, that it takes sacrifice to keep God's law because human nature does not desire to keep God's law. Does he not say in the book of Galatians that the two are at war with one another? That the Spirit strives against the flesh?

Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.

Now, if we look at the other side of the coin there, what he is saying is that no one who breaks God's law can have peace, not the kind of peace that God is able to give. Remember, I showed you there is a difference. Remember John 14? Jesus said, "My peace I give to you. . . . Not as the world gives peace." The world is able to produce *a* peace but it is not the peace of God.

So what this verse is saying is that no one who breaks God's law can have peace. They may have some tranquility from time to time, but they are not

going to have the peace of God. It seems as though there is almost something that occurs naturally within a person. They begin to produce within themselves a fear of being caught, exposure. A fear that they have to hide what they have done to justify themselves, like Adam and Eve did. God is showing you there in very simple terms, the consequences, what results from breaking His laws. If they were at peace with God, they would not have had to hide themselves. If they had a good clear conscience, they would not have had to have lied and passed the buck on to one another.

No one who breaks God's law can have peace. But God's law kept, on the other hand, will produce peace, the peace of God that He is able to give.

On the other hand, the verse also says, you cannot cause one who is keeping the law of God to stumble. He means stumble and fall away from God. Boy, that is a great one right there if you understand the encouragement that comes from that! Nothing can make you fail, no external circumstance. Because *if you are keeping the law, God is going to give you His peace* and you are not going to be turned aside by any form of materialism. Not only that, you are going to be assured yourself because you are going to know within yourself. Because the other thing is going to be produced. Instead of having fear, fear of exposure and the guilty conscience, you are going to be assured because God's Word says in I John 3, "By this we know and our hearts are assured before God because we keep His commandments." Boy, I will tell you, what a confident life you can live by doing that.

Let us go back to a New Testament scripture that is the parallel of what we just read there in Psalm 119:165, "Nothing causes them to stumble." I want to go back here and I John 2 because I want you to see the place that John put it in his letter to these people, in the context.

I John 2:8-9 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

Think of that in relation to the meal offering. That one represents the keeping of the last six commandments. Hating your brother would be breaking the commandments in relationship with him, lying to him, stealing from him, committing adultery with his wife, lusting after what he has or whatever.

I John 2:10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

How about that? Is that not a parallel of what it just said in Psalm 119:165? That if a person keeps the law of God, there is nothing that can make that person stumble.

Now John chose to use it in in a practical sense applied directly to our relationship with our neighbors. Ask yourself this question, what is your attitude toward your neighbor? I am talking about spiritual applications here. What is your attitude towards your neighbor? Is it one of negligence? You just take them for granted? Do you neglect to do good in their behalf? Do you neglect to pray for them, to try to help them? Sins of omission, see. When the opportunity arises to do good for them, we just let it pass by and so we neglect to do it. Is that keeping the last six commandments?

How about another one. Do you look upon your brother with contempt or your neighbor with contempt? In this case, you are kind of looking at him as being a fool. The guy has no brain, he has no sense, a foolish person. Is that good? Is that keeping the last six commandments in his regard? How about looking upon your neighbor as a nuisance? I am not saying here that your neighbors are not this way. They may be a nuisance. They may be people that might be worthy of contempt. I am just wondering, though, if there is not a more positive way that we might be able to look at these people. We tend to look upon people as as a nuisance in the sense that they are an unfortunate necessity. "Well, they are there, but eh [*shoulder shrug]." Somebody that you always have to help and so we may do some good to them, but it is done grudgingly.

How about another one. How about if your brother is your enemy? That is going a little bit further. What do you do if your brother is your enemy? Well, you are always competing with him so you are always trying to get the

best of him before he gets the best of you is the attitude. Is that keeping the last six commandments?

You see my whole concern here is to ask questions so that you and I will understand where peace comes from or why maybe we have a lack of peace. I am particularly concerned if this neighbor that we are talking about here, your brother, is also your mate. Or happens to be your mother or your father. You think old people are not treated with contempt now? Shunted off into nursing homes, convalescent homes, and whatever, where the state or some other organization can take care of them. Is that treating, honoring, a father or mother? Or is that somewhat contemptuous? What is that going to do to relationships? Is it going to produce peace?

Well, that is what God is telling us. He is showing us what produces peace. You want a sense of well being? You want prosperity in every sense, not just monetarily. Do you want a sense of well being spiritually as well? Here is where it comes from.

So John says, "He who loves his brother abides in the light." Do you know what he is saying? There he is saying that love creates its own illumination. I will make that a little bit more practical. He is saying that if we will just sacrifice ourselves in love, that it has a way of producing solutions to relationship problems. That if we will just lay ourselves out in sacrifice, that sacrifice will produce its own illumination. And when you have illumination, you know the way to go. The hard part is to sacrifice, to get ourselves to do it, to pluck out that eye or cut off that hand to keep ourselves from the sin.

Now, this brings us to another factor in the peace offering. So we are going to go all the way back to Leviticus the seventh chapter, verses 31 and 32. And then from there, we are going to go to Numbers the 18th chapter.

Leviticus 7:31 'And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons.'

I told you that this was the brisket and how did they waved it before God. And what that wave consisted of was with the offeror holding the brisket in his hand, and then the priest laying his hands on the hands of the offeror and they just go toward the altar as though they are making a gift to God, and

then they come right back to the priest. And that signified that though it was offered to God, God was giving that portion of it back to the priest. So it was waved before God and given back to the priest. And so God made a gift of it.

Leviticus 7:32 'Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings.'

Back in verse 31, "but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons." I want to begin to focus in on sons. These are our brothers and sisters. Remember, we are a priesthood.

Let us go back the Numbers the 18th chapter, a little more specific instruction regarding this that we are talking of.

Numbers 18:8-11 And the Lord spoke to Aaron, "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering they render to Me, shall be most holy to you and your sons. In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you. This also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance for everyone forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

Now, it did not just go to the sons of Aaron, which might be construed as meaning just strictly the priests. But it went to the sons and the daughters, which indicates the family of the priests. I am sure included in that was also the wife of the priest but that was all that God needed to put in there so that would be clear to us.

Again, remember I Peter 2:5 and 9, that we are a holy priesthood. Now, what he is talking about here is that we, the church, are to eat of the food of the altar. Spiritually, of course, this is the Word of God that we are to eat of. The altar represents God's table and we are to eat of that. What that means then, since we are eating from the table of God, of the offerings of the children of

Israel, that we are, as a priesthood, in communion with God. And we are seen here as doing or having a portion in the work of the priest. It shows, then, that we have a claim on the sacrifice.

Today, all who have communion with God, all who have fellowship with God, all who are in union with God (I want to put this in as many ways as I possibly can so that you can get the picture), must share that communion with God's priests and with His children, which is the rest of the church, your brethren. If you brought an offering you shared in that offering.

Let us look at a very visible example of this back in the book of Acts. It happened on the day of Pentecost, in that period of time, shortly after.

Acts 2:41-43 Then those who gladly received His word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer. [See the communion that is going on there? Fellowship, breaking of bread, and in prayer.] Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

It seems as though there is a connection, does there not, between the signs, and the wonders, and the fellowship, and communion, and the eating together, and the prayers.

Acts 2:44-47 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people.

A question: can we feast with God and ignore His other guests? He that is in communion with God must also be in communion with *all* who are in communion with God. You see our oneness? We are all eating of the same sacrifice, we are all eating of the same meal, we are all being fed of the same Spirit. And God expects that we share what we have with one another.

Now, we have never come in this era of the church to the extent that we see in Acts the second chapter. But I am telling you beforehand, we may indeed come to that place. But in the meantime, what we are to do is to open up our homes in hospitality to one another and share, not only food, but the spiritual things and our experiences in life with one another, and to pray with and for one another, drawing us together into a oneness, a family.

What must we do to share in and contribute to this unity? Remember, Christ is the object of the offering. He is the example. Paul said so in direct relation to the offerings in Ephesians 5:1-2, that we are to follow Christ as a sweet savor, as a sweet aroma to God. Now, what Christ did to bring us into oneness with the Father, so do we also have to do to help others to become in oneness with the Father. We have to offer ourselves in sacrifice in the same way that Christ did as burnt offerings and as meal offerings, keeping the commands of God with all of our hearts, completely devoted to God.

Now in John 15, some of Jesus' final words to the apostles. He says,

John 15:12-13 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [That sets an awfully high standard, as we are seeing. He really laid his life down. He gave up all.] Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

What will that produce? It produces peace. We keep going around in a circle. It produces unity, it produces oneness with God. Now, it might be good to interject something here in regard to the word "love." *Phileo* love is a love that springs from the anticipation or the sense of pleasure that one gets from the object loved. It is a love that springs from a sense of pleasure that one expects or one gets from the object of one's love, that one loves. And so it is the kind of love that we can have within a family because we anticipate that they are going to please us.

Now, the *agape* love is a love that springs simply from the preciousness of the one loved. That is how precious they are to us. It does not depend on what we expect to *get* from the other person. We simply love them. That is all. So the *agape* love therefore indicates that the action taken for the benefit of the object loved is not necessarily pleasurable. Therefore, sacrifice is

involved. You have heard the old saying that you say to your kids, "This hurts me more than it hurts you." And yet we do it as an act of love, not because we are irritated because we love the person. That is the kind of sacrifice that God is looking for, not from what we can get from it, but simply because we love the other person. You see, that is reason. It is not an emotional response, it is something that is reasoned.

You can also add here I John 3:14-23, where again, John shows how to lay down one's life. He shows it in more practical terms.

Let us go back to Leviticus the seventh chapter

Leviticus 7:20 'But the person who eats the flesh. . .

We were just talking about us sharing in the food of the altar. And we found there that it not only went to the priest, but it also went to the priest's family as well, to his sons and to his daughters. Now, the subject is you and me eating of the flesh of the altar. What did we say spiritually the flesh of the altar is? It the Word of God.

Leviticus 7:20 'But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to the Lord, while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people.'

What God is saying here in effect is that it is one thing to be a priest. It is another thing entirely to be a clean priest.

Leviticus 22:1-3 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they may separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel [Remember the holy things. In this case, the holy thing would be the breast and the thigh that was given to Aaron to and to his sons.], and that they do not profane My holy name in those things by what they dedicate to Me: I am the Lord. Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things with the children of Israel sanctify to the Lord, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the Lord.'"

He is saying, "I am a holy God, and those who serve Me are also going to be holy." We read this back in the New Testament in the book of I Peter where Peter says, be you holy because He is holy. Holy means sanctified. Holy means different. Holy means clean. There are a number of connotations that you can put on it. God is saying that I am a clean God and I want those who serve Me also to be clean. Now, what manner of thing would render a person unclean?

Leviticus 22:4 'Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. And whoever touches anything made unclean by a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen.'

Remember, we are dealing here with a carnal people, so God put things into physical terms and He is using disease here to signify, to be a type of something that is spiritual, even as the altar has a spiritual connotation, so does the Tabernacle have a spiritual connotation, the priesthood has a spiritual connotation, the sacrifice does. All of these things have spiritual connotations to them.

Now, what about this leprosy? It has a spiritual connotation and of course, it is a despicable and horrible disease physically. Well, obviously, I think that it is a symbol of, it is a type of a spiritual disease, is it not? Now, leprosy can be seen, it is visible from the outside, it can be seen in the disfigurement of the person's body. And in some cases, apparently, there are even running sores with it. I think obviously, then, leprosy represents a sin that is obvious, something that can be seen by any observer in the outward conduct. In this case, it was the priesthood. But remember, we are the priesthood.

I was telling my wife last night that I thought that this thing about a man who has had an emission of semen is unclean. Did you hear the latest now is that they have discovered that AIDS can be transferred through the semen of a *donor*, that there does not have to be any contact. And so the AIDS virus is right in the semen, the lady is impregnated, she may be clean of AIDS, but it comes right in with the semen. And I thought it was interesting that there, many, many years before, God warned about an uncleanness there.

Leviticus 22:5-6 ' . . . or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be—the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water [the Holy Spirit].'

The leprosy indicates in type a sin that is easily seen in the conduct of a person. The other thing, the creeping thing, those things that are less obvious, those things that would be sins of attitude, something that might not be easily seen on the exterior conduct of a person, nonetheless, render a person unclean. What is he talking about here? He is talking about disfellowshipping. He is talking about excommunication. That person is not fit to eat from the Word of God. They should be excommunicated from the congregation until they have cleaned up their act and then they are once again able to feed on the Word of God.

Let us go a little further.

Leviticus 22:6-7 'The person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water. And when the sun goes down he shall be clean, and afterward he may eat of the holy offerings.'

God is even showing here that that person eats in the dark. They are away from the light of God's throne. They are no longer in communication with Him until communication is restored, until communion is restored when the person has gotten rid of his uncleanness, gotten rid of that sin. This has awesome ramifications to it. And it is an awfully good thing that God looks on the heart. It is an awfully good thing He is merciful and full of grace and that we are surrounded by the sin offering (we are going to get into next) or we would never be acceptable before God. Because we have so many creeping things and we have so much leprosy, we would never be acceptable in His sight so that we could eat from His table.

I hope as we approach Passover, that you will come more and more to appreciate and really discern the Lord's Body and realize what a tremendous thing has been done in our behalf so that we can approach before God surrounded by the work of Jesus Christ.

Let us go I Corinthians. One thing I might mention here—and I think it is an important thing—that is, that even though the priest was unclean because of his defilement, whether it be the leprosy or whether it be the creeping thing, something that was internal, he was still a priest. That is comforting. Even though he was excommunicated until he cleaned up his act, he was still a priest and he was still within the covenant. You can get that by reading through that again. I did not choose to cover that.

But that is a comforting thing that though a person is cut off from the Body, God still looks upon them as a part of the Body until they take their sins so far that their mind is seared and repentance is impossible. And if they will repent, if they will clean up their act, if they will wash themselves with the water of God's Word, then they will be admitted back into the communion of God's Family. So even though they are cut off, he still remains tied to God as a part of that priesthood and that God will work with that person to bring him back.

Let us go to I Corinthians chapter 5 where Paul talks here about a person who is guilty of some sexual immorality. And it says,

I Corinthians 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

You see, because there is still a connection. That though they are out of communication with the Body that God remains tied to them so that He can save.

I Corinthians 5:13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

In this case, a priest who has spiritually a running sore, leprosy or some kind of an attitude problem, maybe it does not show on the outside quite so much but nonetheless is there, and it is destroying his communion with God and corrupting the rest of the Body with its leaven.

II Corinthians 6:14-17 [he says] Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? [What fellowship has the clean with the unclean?] What communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

You will be back in communion with Him or you will maintain the communion with Him.

So it is one thing to be a priest. It is another thing altogether to be a clean priest, a priest who is not defiled by being spotted by this world, by its attitudes and by its ways of doing things. So he shows there is a temporary exclusion and the person ate in the dark, that if he cleaned up his act with water, that is, of God's Word, then he was received back into communion with God once again.

Back to the book of Leviticus again in chapter 7.

Leviticus 7:11-18 'This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the Lord: 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 finely blended flour mixed with oil. Besides the cakes, as his offering he shall offer leavened bread 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.

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 free will] or 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; the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. And if any of the 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 the person who eats of it shall bear guilt.'

Now, there are a couple of things here in conclusion to the peace offering that needs to be understood. A person could give a peace offering for three reasons. They are listed here. One, is for praise or thanksgiving. Two, was at the conclusion of a vow that was successfully concluded. You will find Paul made an offering in the book of Acts. And I think it is undoubted that he made the peace offering because he had a vow. And then three, as a free will offering, just as something that you want to give to God.

The first one, the thanksgiving offering, was most frequently done as thanks for blessings received or blessings expected. Now, I know that when I anoint people, I frequently at the end of the prayer, will say to God, "Thank you for the healing." It has not even occurred yet, but I thank Him in advance because I expect it. He promised to do it so I thank Him in advance. It is a matter of faith of knowing that He will not go back on His Word. It is impossible for Him to lie and so He will come through. And so I give him a peace offering in a spiritual form in terms of a prayer. Thank Him in advance.

So that is basically what the thank offering was for. It was to thank Him for blessings received or for blessings expected. Now, you do not make the thank offering trying to twist His arm. You do not make deals with God in that way, it does not get you any points with Him at all. It is a matter of faith. You fully expect Him to come through because of what He is, not because of what we are.

Then the vow. That is pretty obvious. The conclusion of a dedication of oneself or some service that he has offered himself to, or she has offered herself to, in the service of God. I am going to dedicate this portion of my life to such and such a thing.

The free will offering is very interesting. And it indeed, I think, is directly tied to the thanksgiving portion of it. But it has a connotation to it that I think that we need to understand. When you think of Christ's sacrifice to God, in what terms do you think of it? Do you think of it in terms of being a service that He rendered to His Father? As a duty that He performed because He was commanded to do it? He had a responsibility that He carried out because it was part of a plan? Or do you think of it in terms of an offering to glorify God? There is a difference.

I will tell you this: that it is very likely that most of us will think of Christ giving His life. I do not mean just the death portion. I mean, the whole thing, the time that He gave up His glory of being God and became a man, and the whole 33½ years to where He finally sacrificed His life. We have a very strong tendency, a drive within us, that wants to think of that in terms of Him carrying out a commandment. Well, of course, He did that, but He really did it to glorify God. He volunteered, it was a free will offering. And that is such a much higher view of His love, both for His Father and for you and me, that it just puts the carrying out of a duty back in the shadows somewhere.

Now, the unfortunate thing is that most of us have a tendency to look at the keeping of the law of God as a duty we perform. We do not look upon it as an offering of our life because we want to bring honor and glory to God. The one, we are giving our life to God in the sense of, well, it is commanded, I am going to do it. The other, we are giving our life to God as a living sacrifice because we love Him.

Obviously, the first one precedes the second one. The one we do in our spiritual immaturity, the other we do when we have grown up and we begin to perceive what Jesus said in Luke 17:10-11 where the disciples said, "Lord, increase our faith!" And He said, you have to go above and beyond what is required. Just keeping the commandments just barely cuts it. But you begin to grow when you offer your life in sacrifice to God for His glory. See, there

you are not out to get anything for yourself. You just want to bring honor to God. That is a real thank offering. That is something that is freely given, not something that is forced by the requirements of a stern God. That is one that perceives His nature, His holiness, His love, and is trying to imitate that love, which is not tied, in this sense. They are just doing it as a duty because it is commanded. Certainly it is commanded. That is where we have to begin and that is what we understand first.

I think that we will probably stop right there because that is enough for today. And really, I think that that concludes the peace offering. The next time that I speak, I can go into the sin offering and the trespass offering, I believe, in the same day because, in one sense they are very similar. In another sense, they are very definitely different and that difference can be shown very quickly. And from there, we will go on to a summary of the offerings as a whole.