***Omega: BIB 109***

***1st Peter – Always Be Prepared***

***Lesson 9***

***I. Offering Up Spiritual Sacrifices***

🡪 This lesson builds upon the idea of the priesthood of the New Covenant. The relevant text is two verses from chapter two of Peter’s first letter...

***1st Peter 2:5,9.... “5 You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ…***

***9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”***

🡪 Our previous lesson focused on the purpose of the priesthood. We saw that the task of priests is to offer sacrifices, and that the purpose of such sacrifices is to bring sinners into a saving relationship with God. In many ways this is summed up in the word\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

🡪 In this context the word “sacrifice” is not about “making sacrifices” in the sense of giving up something. For some people this kind of sacrifice is usually associated with the Lenten season, or with New Year’s resolutions, when pious people voluntarily decide to forgo something they enjoy or cherish in the interest of good health or spiritual growth. This is of course a valid kind of sacrifice.

🡪 But the sacrifices associated with priestly work are something different. Here the word is about “offering up sacrifices” as acts of worship to God.

* The Aaronic priesthood offered up mostly physical items: specified animals, the fruit of the ground.
* But Peter specifies that the sacrifices offered up to God by NT priests are spiritual, rather than physical. We are to offer up “spiritual sacrifices.”
* What are these spiritual sacrifices? Hebrews 13:15-16 Psalm 51:15

1. Two Types of spiritual sacrifices...

 A. The Sacrifice of Good Words: Words of Witness

 B. The Sacrifice of Good Works: Works of Service

***A. The Sacrifice of Praise: Words of Witness***

1. Hebrews 13:15... “the sacrifice of praise” – the fruit of the lips. We should think of this as words spoken in some way. These are comparable to the “thank offerings” under the Mosaic Law.

 A. Psalm 27:6... KJV “The sacrifices of joy.”

 B. Psalm 107:22 and Psalm 116:17

2. In OT times sacrifices of spoken praise and thanksgiving were not intended to be substitutes for the physical sacrifices of animals and grain, but were meant to accompany the latter as a sign of the sincerity in which they were offered.

3. In the context of Hebrews 13:15... God is now saying and telling us to forget the sacrifices of bulls and goats, and just offer up the shouts of joy themselves, the “fruit of the lips” praising God for the One True Sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

 4. So.... where are these sacrifices to be offered?

A. The OT thank offerings were made in the tabernacle or temple. In NT times, however, we do not have such a physical headquarters for worship, or a physical building equivalent to the OT temple.

B. In fact, the church itself – the people of God – is the NT equivalent to the OT temple.

C. We are the living stones that are being built up as a spiritual house for carrying out our work as priests.

D. It is true that we do have church buildings, but these are not comparable to the OT temple.

E. It is true that we as the church do come to these church buildings to sing songs of praise to God.

“We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord!”

F. The problem though, is that this is not enough to enable us to do our priestly work. By itself this does not fulfill the real purpose of priestly sacrifices, which is to bring sinners into a saving relationship with God.

5. Such a consideration – reaching the lost – has led some congregations to design their weekly church services around the purposes of making Christ and his church attractive to unbelievers. Everything about the services is intended to be “seeker-sensitive,” or to be appealing to non-members on their own cultural level.

A. One problem with this approach is that the members themselves usually do not get the kind of spiritual food that enables them to grow to Christian maturity. (Ephesians 4:11-16 and Hebrews 5:11-6:3)

B. Another caution should be the fact that almost everything the NT itself says about the gatherings of the church in the apostolic era shows that the assemblies were designed to meet the needs of Christians.

6. Shouldn’t the “sacrifices of praise” be offered out in the world if evangelism is the end-goal of these sacrifices?

 A. The proclaiming of the excellencies of God...

 1. These should be a witness to the world.

2. We should offer up praises to God for how He has saved us!

3. These spiritual sacrifices are our personal testimony as to how good it is to be a Christian. This is our evangelistic testimony, wherein we praise God for saving us, with the purpose of leading others to salvation,

7. We must realize that priesthood is that we do OUTSIDE the church building, when we are mixing with the world of unbelievers. To be able to offer the sacrifice of praise in such situations, we must concentrate upon overcoming our fear of talking about our faith, and developing more gratitude for our salvation.

 ***B. The Sacrifice of “Doing Good and Sharing”: Works of Service***

1. These priestly sacrifices are basically what we call benevolence. One dictionary defines benevolence first of all as an attitude: “the desire to do good to others.”

A. Benevolence is more than an attitude, it also includes a specific kind of actions or deeds.

 B. A 2nd dictionary meaning puts it, “an act of kindness.”

2. Benevolence means giving help to those who need it. It is exactly what Hebrews 13:16 means by “doing good and sharing.”

3. Good priests must offer these kinds of spiritual sacrifices, which we may call works of service.

A. Such as random acts of kindness as the opportunities present themselves.

4. Not only on the spontaneous individual level but also as part of the church body which should be active in planning benevolent activities.

A. A large part of NT teaching on giving has to do with giving for benevolent purposes.

 1. Acts 4:32-5:11 & 1st Cor. 16:1-4 & 2nd Cor. 8, 9

B. Every congregation should have a strong benevolence ministry

 5. Three kinds of benevolence:

 A. Emergency Benevolence...

 1. Galatians 6:10... Opportunity.

 2. Luke 10:30-37... “Let us do good to all people”

 B. Brotherhood Benevolence...

1. Gal. 6:10... “especially to those who are of the household of the faith,” to our fellow believers.

2. As resources indeed do have a limit – If we have to choose – helping fellow Christians in need is our priority; it is our primary responsibility of benevolence.

3. Sometimes we miss the point... Cottrell Page 157.

 A. Matthew 25:31-46 & James 2:13-17 &

1st John 3:17-18

B. Brothers and Sisters!

 C. Evangelistic Benevolence...

 1. Matthew 5:16... “Let your light shine before men...”

 2. 1st Peter 2:12... “They may observe your good deeds.”

3. Local congregations should participate in benevolent acts directed at the world for the purpose of showing them the love of Christ and attracting them to Him for salvation.

4. Church Outreach and Impact the Community Events: Christian Priests – these are your opportunities!

A. These spiritual sacrifices are not just to help the needy with their physical needs, but for the main purpose of winning them to Christ. We must always be clear, when we are offering such sacrifices, that we are doing this in the name of Jesus Christ![[1]](#footnote-1)

 5. Brainstorm examples of evangelistic benevolence:

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1. Entire Lesson pulled from: Studies in 1st Peter – Dr. Jack Cottrell. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)