

Hebrews 13:1-17

August 28, 2016

“Sacrifice: for you, from you”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pentecost 15

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Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

We have a good idea what sacrifice looks like. Right?

**Number 1:** A baby is born. It takes time to take care of that child. Middle-of-the-night feedings. Diapers to be changed. And diapers are expensive! Sacrifices are made in time and money.

**Number 2:** Two marines are in battle. They have taken cover in a ditch. A grenade lands between them. One looks at the other, smiles, and jumps on it. He sacrifices his life for the other soldier.

**Number 3:** A man in a Muslim country becomes a Christian. He will sacrifice his family, work, freedom, and maybe even his life for his faith.

These are scenes that show what sacrifice looks like.

That’s three looks...

**[Old Testament Sacrifices]** But let’s go back, way back, thousands of years.

Making a sacrifice was a huge part of the temple worship in Old Testament times.

In the centuries before Jesus was born, the Jews made sacrifices,  
lots of sacrifices.

They sacrificed all types of animals:

bulls, sheep, goats, lambs, doves, and pigeons.

They sacrificed grain and crops.

They had sacrifices to give thanks,

sacrifices for peace, sacrifices to go with prayers,

and especially sacrifices to take away sin and guilt.

In fact, the most important day – in all of Jewish life –

was a day of sacrifice for sin and guilt. It was the Day of Atonement.

On that day, a goat was sacrificed, and its blood was taken into the holiest place in the temple. It was offered to God as a way to atone for, make up for, bring forgiveness for the people’s sins.

You can imagine what a sacrifice looked like on that day.  
Blood, lots of blood, on the altar, staining the wood and stone.  
Blood on the ground.  
Blood sprinkled on the ark of the covenant.

And then, the body of the goat was burned outside the city.  
The goat was burned outside the sacred place.

What did a sacrifice look like in Old Testament times?  
Lots of blood and fire and smoke.

[*For You*] But then the day came  
when all those animal and grain sacrifices were no longer needed.

The day came when one sacrifice was made that made all those other sacrifices obsolete.

The day came when Jesus made a once-for-all-time sacrifice. Sacrifice for you!  
— The altar is made of wood, but it's in the shape of a cross.  
— On that cross, blood is shed—Jesus' blood.

But notice the irony, the reversal.

On the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was made in the temple.	Jesus was sacrificed outside, in the unclean, defiled place,
It was then burned outside the holy places, in a defiled, unclean place.	so that we could enter the holy place of God's presence.

He did this to take away the sin of the world.  
His sacrifice was to atone for our guilt.  
His sacrifice made us AT – ONE with God.

Jesus sacrificed his life so that we might live eternally with him.  
On the altar of the cross, his blood was shed so we would be clean in God's eyes.

The writer of Hebrews says, "*Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood*" (v 12).

If you go to Jerusalem today, the traditional spot where Jesus was crucified is inside of Old Jerusalem, but you see, the walls have been moved.

The walls for King David's city are not the same walls for King Solomon's city,  
and they are not the same walls for King Hezekiah's city.

And they are not the same walls for Jesus our King's city.  
And they are not the same walls today.

***“Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood”*** (v 12).

We come into God's holy presence only  
because Jesus has made us holy, sanctified us, by his holy blood shed on the cross.  
Jesus' sacrifice is the only one that makes all those animal sacrifices  
in the Old Testament mean anything at all.  
Jesus' sacrifice is the only sacrifice that sanctifies us before God.  
Jesus' sacrifice is once-for-all and for all times.

<p><b><i>Sacrifice for you... and now... sacrifice from you...</i></b></p>
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[***From You***] The time for making sacrifices is not over.

Oh, it is over for gaining forgiveness, for being clean and sanctified in God's eyes.  
Those sacrifices for forgiveness and atonement are done.  
We can't add any sacrifice to what Jesus did on the cross.

But other sacrifices are still to be made.

Listen to vv 15–16 of our text:

***“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,  
that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do  
good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”***

We still make sacrifices to God:

the sacrifice of praise with our lips;  
the sacrifice of doing good and sharing what we have.

Two kinds of sacrifice – lips and doing good...

Praise with our lips:

- Hymnals open, and we're singing together.
- The words of the Creed are spoken out loud as we confess our faith in the triune God.
- Heads bowed before a meal to say thank you for the food when eating.
- Shaking hands and sharing "the peace of the Lord" with one another other during the worship service.
- Saying "Thank you, Lord!" throughout the day for the wonderful gifts he gives us daily.

I'm sure you can picture in your mind what the sacrifice of praise with our lips looks like in so many other ways.

Now for the sacrifice of doing what is good.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a list of good things to do, ways to give of our time and money, to sacrifice of ourselves, in the way we live.

**V 1: "Let brotherly love continue."**

**V 2: "Show hospitality."**

**V 3: "Remember those who are in prison."**

**V 4: "Let marriage be held in honor among all,  
and let the marriage bed be undefiled."**

**V 5: "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have."**

**[Conclusion]**

Are you getting a picture of what our sacrifices look like? I sure hope so!

The writer of Hebrews has summarized it well.

Jesus made the once-for-all sacrifice for us on the altar of the cross. He sanctified us.

And now...

We live lives of sacrifice with our words  
and by doing what is good in God's eyes.

Sacrifice for you and from you! Amen.

*Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Amen!*