

Hebrews 13:1-17

“Sacrifice: for you, from you”

12<sup>th</sup> Sunday af. Pentecost

September 1, 2019

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

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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. Don't we? Let's take a look:

**Case 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.

**Case 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.

**Case 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.

Three scenarios; three views of sacrifices...

**[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.

It was offered to God as a way to atone for, to make up for,

to 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 smoke and fire.

And many of the Old Testament sacrifices were made:

to bring forgiveness for sin and

to take away the people's guilt.

**[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!

Let's begin to see what his sacrifice looks like.

- The altar is made of wood, and it's in the shape of a cross.
- On that cross, blood is shed—Jesus' blood.

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.

But notice the irony, the reversal.

On the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was made in the temple.

- It was then burned outside the holy places, in a defiled, unclean place.
- Jesus was sacrificed outside, in the unclean, defiled place, so that we could enter the holy place of God's presence.

The writer of Hebrews says, "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.

Sacrifice for you... and now... sacrifice from you...

**[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; AND  
the sacrifice of doing good.

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 at *Culver's*.
- Telling someone about Jesus at work.
- Shaking hands and sharing “the peace of the Lord” with one another other during the worship service.
- Speaking God's blessings to someone who sneezed – “God bless you!”
- 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.”** (We are going to hear a lot about this in the next year!)

**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.”**

**Vv 7, 17: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. . . . Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”**

Here the author of Hebrews is specifically speaking about your pastor.

But we need to remember all of our leaders – pastors and parents,  
those at church, home, and in the state.

**[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

As a result,

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

FIRST sacrifice for you and THEN sacrifice from you! Amen.

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REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

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