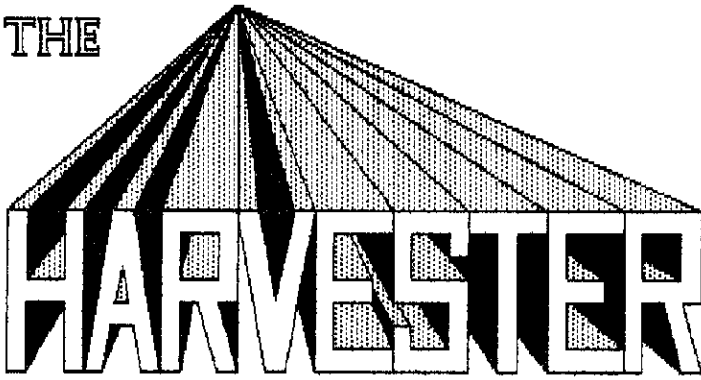


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

SEPTEMBER 1998

No. 153

A LIVING SACRIFICE

The first verse of the 12th chapter of Romans says: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

I don't believe that very many people realize the full significance and meaning of this one verse. What motivates us then to live right? If Christ forgives our sins, and we are no longer under the law, then why not continue to sin, and let Christ keep on forgiving? Paul tells

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Birmingham, AL 35215-4106

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us that such a thing is unthinkable. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom. 6:1,2). Christ died to save us from our sins. His forgiveness is for the purpose of making us hate our sins.

We cannot be servants of sin, and servants of Christ (Rom. 6:13-23). We must choose one or the other. It is not possible to live in sin and please Christ. This does not mean that we can entirely overcome all our sins, and place ourselves beyond the need of His mercy. But it does mean that there are two essentially different ways of life: the way of Christ, and the way of sin. At heart we belong to one or the other, but not both.

Christ, the perfect example of the law of God, furnishes us with the motive and supplies us with the power to struggle on unto the attainment for ourselves of that perfect holiness which, through His grace, shall ultimately be ours.

We are to restrain and conquer all the sensual appetites and lusts and consecrate our thoughts and ability to the service of God. It means to turn our lives over to Him and let Him have full sway. *"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."* (Acts 20:24) Let God have full possession, not

only for your spirit and soul, but of your physical body as well. Yield every member up to Him.

It also means ceasing to struggle, but to cast all upon Him (Matt. 11:28-30) who is able to keep you from falling (Jude 24). This is indeed a life of self denial. This is what it means to be not one's own, a heart rending lesson. But this is a hard thing to learn, that in everything from this moment, forever, we are not only NOT to get our own will, but we are to desire NOT to get it. To will and be controlled by another wholly and unceasingly, this is indeed dying to this world.

The sanctified body can be called a living sacrifice because its natural life is not consumed like an ordinary sacrifice but is presented to God, alive from the dead. There is a death in every sacrifice, and in this sacrifice a death unto sin, out of which arises a new life of righteousness unto God (Rom. 8:1-14). So the living sacrifice is that in which, though the natural life is not lost, a new life of holiness is gained.

Under the Mosaic Law, animals free from blemish were presented and devoted to God; under the new dispensation a nobler and more spiritual service is to be rendered, not the sacrifice of animals, but the consecration of ourselves. *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."* (1 Cor. 6:20)

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Ray McManus
1208 Lafayette Hwy
Roanoke, AL 36274
Phone: (334) 863-5537

God will only accept those services which you find in His word. When our bodies are kept free from sin and actively employed in doing God's will, then as offerings they are acceptable to Him. It should be our highest aim to please Him because the fact that we do please Him is our highest reward.

To be transformed (Rom. 12:2) is to be changed from the pursuit of worldly ends, by renewing the mind and by directing it by gospel motives into new channels for spiritual ends. The mind instead of being fashioned after the world, is to be changed in belief, desire, and purpose as to lead a life unlike the world in the things mentioned above. The renewed mind induces a new life fashioned after Christ.

If we present our bodies a living sacrifice for the cause of Christ, we can rest assured that God will make everything that might happen to us to work for our good (Rom. 8:28).

CHARLIE KIRBY (deceased)
taken from The Lifeline, July 1981

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was Abraham to call his wife after God changed her name?
2. Where was it Paul's ambition to preach the gospel according to Romans 15?
3. After the resurrection, what breakfast did Jesus serve the disciples?
4. Who said, "But I am a worm, and no man"?
5. In Exodus, what brought the plague of locusts into Egypt?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. How many times did Gideon use the fleece as a sign from God? TWICE (Judg. 6:37-40)
2. Who sent Pilate a message telling him to have nothing to do with Jesus? HIS WIFE (Matt. 27:19)
3. What name is above every title that can be given? CHRIST (Eph. 1:20,21)
4. In Isaiah's prophecy of the Day of the Lord, how many women will pursue each man, wanting to marry him? SEVEN (Isa. 4:1)
5. What book of the Bible opens with a description of what the swarming, creeping and stripping locusts have done? JOEL (Joel 1:4)

THE MEASURE OF A STRONG CHRISTIAN

Many times we measure a Christian by his church attendance, participation, and leadership qualities. The drawback of this measurement is that it tends to measure only the outside person. A person could have all of the good qualities that we could see, but be a spiritual destitute on the inside! Hypocrites can live very comfortably within these measures. Brethren might remain in "spiritual immaturity" if this is the only measure given them. So, what then is the measure of a strong Christian?

Notice these characteristics that are of a SPIRITUAL nature ...

Gal. 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

... and these about the "inner man"...

Col. 3:12-16, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also

ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Though these qualities are of the inner man, notice how they will carry over into our personal relationships. They will also carry over into our roles in our congregations.

Let's be sure to develop our "inner man," and encourage others to do the same. And let's not rely on the measure of the outer man.

This statement of the Lord to Samuel still applies today:

1 Sam. 16:7, "...Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

CHAD PRINCE
311 Golden Crest Circle
Birmingham, AL 35209

**PEOPLE ARE SO ANXIOUS TO TALK
ABOUT CLOSED DOORS THAT THEY
FORGET THE OPEN DOORS.**

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Aug. 31 - - Sep. 3	Junction City, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 4 - 6	Marrowbone, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 7 - 11	Lily Church near London, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 11 - 13 (Fr - Su)	Fayetteville Rd Church Fairburn, GA 7:30pm E.S.T.	Kevin Mills (Georgia)
Sept. 14 - 18	Oak Grove Church Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 28- - Oct. 2	Westwood Church Ashland, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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HOW CAN A MAN BE BORN AGAIN? (John 3:4)

1. Man must **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 8:24; Mk. 16:16; Acts 16:32)
2. Man must **repent** of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19)
3. Man must **confess** the name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9,10)
4. Man must **be baptized** into Christ (Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16)