

The Power of Sacrifice – Leviticus 1:1-9

Opening

Scripture → Leviticus 1:1-9

Today, we continue an exciting new series: **Draw Near**. And this morning we will focus our attention on the many sacrifices found within the third book of the Old Testament. If we are honest, the thought of physical sacrifice, that a worshipper would slaughter an animal as an act of worship seems primitive, reprehensible, barbaric, and no longer applicable to our modern sophisticated society. ***If we are honest,*** you have difficulty with applying these sacrifices to our lives and effectively remove these teachings from our sanctification. And if this is the result, Satan has **effectively removed** part of the Lord's glorious truth in our lives. Let us take a moment to break all the sacrifices into digestible bite sized morsels and then apply them to our lives. Here are the sacrifices in the OT:

I am sorry – Death of an animal

Whole burnt offerings. This is the most sacred offering. It finds its name because of its method: the whole sacrifice is burned up! It was so sacred that only the priest could partake and offered it in the inner sanctum. This powerful sacrifice was offered daily, on the most important days of Israel, and was a signal to the Lord that his worshippers desired to bring their needs to His attention. This most sacred –I am sorry- was for general sin or general sacrifice.

Sin offerings (Lev. 4-5). A sin offering, and don't let the name fool you, was made by anyone who sinned unintentionally or was **unclean**. Being unclean in the OT was not necessarily sinful: birth, death, certain diseases etc... Sin offerings were required of those wanting to **repair relationships with God that was broken.**

Guilt offerings (Lev. 4-5). Are sacrifices needed when one unintentionally sins. So, the "guilt" is not necessarily the intent of the act but the consequence of the sin. All sin leads to guilt.

I Am Thankful Sacrifices

Grain offerings- these were most sacred sacrifices of celebration. Consisted of flour, oil, aromatic spices (Jim N Nick's cornbread). **General thankfulness for God's provision for first fruits (Lev. 2). Grain = life.** *They were giving of their provision to the one who provided.*

Peace offerings (thanks, vow, freewill). These were moments of worship when you started or ended a period of vow to the Lord, Feast of Weeks, or times of blessing in your life.

Today as we open the life-giving Word of our Lord, ask yourself: What sacrifice do you need to bring before the throne today?

Today's message is entitled: The Power of Sacrifice. We all love stories of sacrifice. There is something powerful when we hear of a man or woman who has freely given of themselves for others:

In his recent book (2017) *(Re)union*, Bruxy Cavey writes:

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The **first Victoria Cross of World War II** was awarded to Company **Sergeant-Major John Robert Osborn.** The sergeant-major and his men were cut off from their battalion and under heavy attack. When the enemy came close enough, the Canadian soldiers were subjected to a concentrated barrage of grenades. Several times **Osborn protected his men by picking up live grenades** and throwing them back, but eventually one fell in just the wrong position to pick up in time. With only a split second to decide, Osborn shouted a warning and threw himself on top of the grenade. It exploded, killing him instantly. The rest of his company survived that battle because of Osborn's selfless other-centeredness.

There is Power in Sacrifice

Prayer

Big Idea: If you want the power of Christ you must sacrifice

True Worship always flow from/not to covenant relationship (1:2)

We live in a worship crazed society. The world's most obvious secret is that everyone worships something. As the *old saying goes* **“show me how you live and I will show you what you worship.”** Listen to **our vocabulary**: what a powerful time of “worship”, I didn't get anything from “worship,” or I can “worship” at my house. Here is a powerful truth in Leviticus: **these sacrifices don't earn a relationship with God, these sacrifices emanate from covenant relationship.**

Here the Word of the Lord: “Speak to the Israelites.” Another translation is this: Speak to the children. Whose children? Gods! **People in covenant relationship understand the grace of the Savior and will worship because of covenant.**

Israel thought often that the sacrifices were an end in themselves (God condemned this thinking in Amos 5:1-24 and Jer 7) True worship always flows from covenant relationship. Why are you here today? **Are you here For-relationship or from relationship?**

Grace always precedes law

Worship is not Passive (1:2)

When anyone brings.. (Used 4x in this passage and 76x in the book of Leviticus). **The giant reminder in Leviticus is that worship is not about what you take but what you bring!**

The power of sacrifice to the Lord is that it invites you to become an active participant in worship. Look at the words and the world of the Israelites: brings (offering), lay, slaughter the bull (2,200 lbs), wash its entrails. *So what excuse did you have this morning? You didn't have to tie up the bull and put him in the mini van.*

We have bought the lie of our entertainment/consumer culture. We go to sporting events and watch passively and convince ourselves that we won, we watch tv and convince ourselves we are friends with the celebrities, our faces glow with each minute we spend on the phone. Over and over again we are passive.

The more horrifying truth is that we have let this societal malaise infect our worship. We show up when we want to, listen half-heartedly, and hope to passively

by osmosis hear something in worship that will help us have a good day. **And some are here today to be entertained and “receive.”** We need to hear from the Lord!

The Adversaries great desire is to create passive observers who never experience the power of Christ. Jesus births powerful active worshipers.

When was the last time that we woke up and said Lord let me bring to you today! Let me not sit in a pew passively but invest in the kingdom. To serve our small kids, to invite my unchurched neighbors, to give sacrificially so that orphans in Zambia or foster kids in Pell City will know they are loved. Students will you give your summer to go on missions? **Worship is not passive! Are you actively preparing your heart and serving Christ?**

I want to Know Christ and the Power of the gospel. We must not leave here thinking what a great sermon, beautiful music, and moving of others. **I want to leave here saying Lord, I brought my life as sacrifice and I will serve you!**

Oh that you would never exchange the comfort of a pew for the power of sacrifice. ***My our worship be powerful, active, and sacrificial for the one who sacrificed it all for us!***

The power of sacrificial remembrance (1:2)

And this is how the sacrifice in Leviticus serves as a glorious reminder of the grace of Christ. We will focus the remainder of our time on the “I’m sorry” offering of the whole-burnt-sacrifice.

Unblemished Male- You do not come before the altar of the Almighty on your terms or according to your agenda. No, this sacrifice is special- it must be without blemish. **How is this possible?** What will you bring God that has no defect or blemish? We are reminded of the glorious sacrifice that is offered on our behalf- **our redemption is found in the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished spotless lamb** (1 Pet. 1:19). **As the hymn declares: behold him there, the risen Lamb! My perfect, spotless, Righteousness, the great unchangeable I am, the King of Glory and of grace. One with Himself I cannot die, my soul is purchased by His blood! All glory to Christ our spotless sacrifice. This is the power of sacrifice**

Lay Hands- upon bringing his offering to the tent of meeting and entering the tent, the worshipper stretched out his hand upon the head of the burnt offering. The laying on of hands = ownership and substitution. It was as if the worshipper was saying this offering is mine and it is taking my place.

This is the different between knowing about a sacrifice and making your own. It is one thing to watch this take place at the altar and say, “how nice.” **It is quite another to say to the Lord, “this one is mine!”**

The difference between Jesus saves, and Jesus saved ME is the difference between knowledge and saving faith. The difference between difference and profession. **I wonder: John 19:30** When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. **Did he bow his head as if to say: place your hand upon my head—and I will be your sacrifice! This is the power of sacrifice!**

Atonement- The clear purpose of this sacrifice is to make atonement. The basic meaning is *to smear, rub, wipe, clean, or purity*. The powerful picture of this sacrifice is that the death of this animal wipes clean the sins of the one who offers: **purify me and I will be clean, wash me and I will be whiter than snow (Psalm 51:7)**. If Jesus is our once and for all sacrifice: what in your life needs atonement/wiping today?

Slaughter – sin always leads to death- ²³ **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** If we were to see the immediate spiritual results of our sin- how would we change? If every time I sinned, it caused the death of an animal would I think twice?

Sacrifice is personal (He is to skin)- The offeror is involved intricately in every step of the sacrificial process. Personal involvement is an immediate reminder of the life taken in sacrifice. *The blood would have been on your hands!* Are you guilty of standing back and watching? This would have been unheard of.

The power is not in the worshipper—but the sacrifice. God is calling ordinary men and women to sacrifice for the one who gave his life!

Call

Are you guilty of trying “not to get blood on your hands?”

Will you bodily take a stand and reject passive worship in your life? Will you long for powerful sacrifice?

What is the Lord calling you to sacrifice today? Will you give your life-time-money- kids-work so that the nations might know Christ? The reason that churches are not growing like they should? The people of God are content to sit and watch.

"People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa....It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege." ---David Livingstone

There is power in Sacrifice. The greatest sacrifice the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. This was the one who John saw in Revelation and declared: [I saw One like a slaughtered lamb as though standing](#)

Jesus died on the cross as our substitute. So that everyone who lays their hands (professes) will have eternal life.

Notes

Leviticus 1

- The Biblical priests taught the people what was requires of them

3 Principal Types Offerings Overview(JPS, xiii)

1.

1. Burnt Offering [‘olah]→ Atonement

- a. Most Sacred
 - i. Only the priest could partake of them
 - ii. Only in the sacred areas of the Sanctuary
- b. Consisted of animals and fowl that were slaughtered and sectioned and then placed on the altar of burnt offerings
 - i. Blood drawn was dashed and sprinkled on the altar
- c. Smoke of the sacrifice went heavenward as a pleasing aroma

2. Grain Offering [minhah] --> Celebration

- a. Most Sacred
- b. Consisted of flour, oil, aromatic spices.
 - i. Originally not meant to be burned but presented to God
 1. In time adapted to be burned on the altar.
 - ii. Priest placed a fistful of dough on the altar
 1. Rest was baked or fried
 2. Most made from unleavened bread

3. Sacred Gift of Greeting [zevah] – sacred meal--> Rejoicing

- a. Certain parts burned on altar
- b. Most boiled in pots then apportioned among priest and donors (Lev 3)
- c. Less Sacred
 - i. Parts could be eaten outside sanctuary

PURPOSE OF SACRIFICES

Not to save the people

Religious acts of a people already in covenant with YHWH: an act of worship

For unwitting sins (sins of ignorance); for sins of a high hand (deliberate) see Ps. 51:16,17

A final type or function of sacrifice is atonement or expiation. The fact that the animals permitted in the Bible for sacrifice are pastoral and hence frequently used metaphorically for the Israelites themselves, is significant in this regard (Fox).

EMPHASIS ON THE BLOOD

A life has been taken

Sin is serious because a victim has died

The victim was a substitute for the sinner

Lev. 1:1 ¶ Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying,

- Odd sequence/Syntax. The Lord Called reminds of Exodus 40:34-35

- In Exodus Moses could not enter the tent. In Lev he is called from it. In this way Leviticus is linked sequentially from Exodus.
- Lord-->
 - in Lev God is primarily referred to his personal name Yahweh
 - Covenantal name
 - His Name is Sacred see 10 commands (Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11)
 - would not have been pronounced but read as Adonai
 - Yahweh called Moses twice before using this name
 - burning bush (Exod 3) and Mt Sinai (Exod 19)
- Tent of meeting
 - Conceived as God's earthly residence. Served two functions
 1. Was an oraculum → where God communicated his word
 2. A cult site → where God was worshipped
 - In Lev god's revelation comes from the Tabernacle
 - Moses was never allowed into the dwelling place (Exod 40:35)
 - Show us that the Lord is a revealing God
 - He does not desire His will to be a Secret!!

Lev. 1:2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.

- Children of Israel
 - Israelite people
 - This is an ethnographic distinction and expresses kinship and reflects the notion that nations, like families, are descendants of common ancestors and share common genealogy.
- Offering (korban) is a generic term for anything presented to God when one approaches his sanctuary.
 - Could consist of artifacts and vessels, votive (vow) objects, or sacrificial victims.
- Livestock-offering
 - “General followed by the specific”
 - wild animals are unsuitable for sacrifice.
- **Excurses: Offering (Cornerstone)**
 - First 7 chps of Lev show both the priest and people how to offer sacrifice
 - It is too limiting to only focus on the "HOW"
 - Israel came to view the rituals as the initiating means by which they could enter into a relationship with God
 - when in fact the actions described were already the result of an existing relationship with the Lord
 - Israel thought often that the sacrifices were an end in themselves (God condemned this thinking in Amos 5:1-24 and Jer 7)
 - Also the sacrifices offered here are not new/novel since offerings were mentioned from the beginning (Gen 4:3; 8:20; 22:2; Exod 18:12)

Lev. 1:3 ¶ “If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.

- If
 - expresses the options available to those who offer sacrifices (JPS)
 - ANE monuments discovered in Marseilles from Carthage dating to 4 BCE show tariffs/taxes to be paid to those who offered in the temple of Carthage
- Burnt offering
 - derives from the verb [ylh] to ascend
 - smoke and flames ascend to heaven
 - Ascent
 - sacrifice on the altar
 - priest on the platform
 -
 - this sacrifice was consumed by fire in its entirety
 - The whole Burnt Offering was the most important in Israel (Cornerstone)
 - Offered daily (Num 28:3; 1 Chr 16:40)
 - 1st offerings on the Sabbath, annual festivals, or bringing up the Ark (Corner, 21)
- The Olah was a signal to God that his worshipers desired to bring their needs to His attention (JPS)
 - its purpose was to secure a response from God
- His
 - All could come to sacrifice both men and women had equal access to the courtyard, altar, and rituals done here (Lev 12:6; 15:29)
 - This stands in contrast to the later Herodian temple
- Male
 - Adult male animals were the rule for the whole offering
 - Why?
 - fewer males were needed to maintain flocks?
- w/out blemish
 - Necessary for both sacrifice and worshiper (Lev 22:19)
 - not mentioned as necessary for sin and guilt offerings
- Door
 - In the tabernacle you would first encounter the altar just inside the gate
 - a perpetual fire burned here welcoming worshippers
 - sacrifice here happened in plain view of everyone

Lev. 1:4 Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

- Laying hand
 - perhaps with some force against the lesser "touching" of a blessing
 - **Significance?**
 - laying on of hands= substitute
 - clue--> only one hand used

- Two hands used to transfer sin to the scapegoat.
 - laying on of hands= ownership
 - laying on of hands appoints leaders in Num 27:18-23
 - the animal belongs to the worshipper
 - laying on of hands= transference
 - in Lev 24:10-16 the community lays hands on guilty party
 - Physical contact shows there is no worship through proxy or at a safe distance
 -
- Atonement
 - The clear purpose is to make atonement.
 - basic meaning of the verb= to smear, rub, wipe, clean, or purify.
 - Usually impurity wiped off with blood (Lev 4:20)
 - signifies a substitute (See Exod 30:12-16)
- Offerer
 - Intimately involved in the sacrificial process
 - See Genesis 22:13-- the ram "in the place of" Isaac
 - Personal involvement is also an immediate reminder of the life taken in sacrifice
 - Blood would have been on your hands!

Lev. 1:5 He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

- Blood [life giving element] was dedicated to God alone
- Could not be used for human consumption (Lev 17:10-14)
- *only sanctified priest could use it*
- the bible never informs on the actually instrument used in the sacrificial killing
 - only for Isaac doe we have a description of the knife (Gen 22:10)
- Altar
 - according to Exod 27:1-8 it is made of acacia wood overlaid with copper.
 - partially filled with earth
 - had 4 horns.

Lev. 1:6 And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces.

- sectioned--> specialized hebrew word meaning the sectioning of living bodies, animal or other sacrifice.
- the only exception was the paschal lamb roasted whole (Exod 12:9).

Lev. 1:7 The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire.

Lev. 1:8 Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar;

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Lev. 1:9 but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

- Entrails
 - dirt or physically unclean matter could not contaminate the altar
 - internal organs, stomach, and intestines [not liver/kidneys] needed to be cleaned for partially digested matter
- Legs-- probably the shins or lower section
- Did the odor appease the anger of God?
 - See Gen 8:21 and Noah
- Aroma
 - common description for whole, peace, and grain offerings

Illustrations

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I love stories of this kind of bravery and self-sacrifice. They give me hope for humanity and offer us all a glimpse of God's goodness reflected in his image-bearers. But no matter how beautiful that heroic act may be, through Jesus we see an even greater love at the heart of God. You see, soldiers who fall on grenades do so out of love for their friends while they are on the battlefield trying to kill their enemies. Jesus died for his friends, *and his enemies*, and for everyone in between.

Application
