***Christian Sacrifices - PH94-01  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

Today we live in the era of the Melchizedek priesthood which is functioning under the King Priest, Jesus Christ. He is the High Priest of this order, and all Christians are individually priests under Jesus Christ in this royal priesthood. We have, therefore, pointed out that, as royalty, we should act accordingly. There are certain things that befit people who are members of royalty, and there are certain things which are unbecoming to those who are royalty. Never forget that you are a royal person in the family of God in His royal priesthood.

Each Christian is his own priest before God, and no one else is, so there is no clergy and laity with God. That's only a human division. Since each Christian is his own priest, it is, in the nature of the case, a very private matter. Therefore, it is something between himself and God. You should not try to intrude into someone else's priesthood. It is God and the believer priest. You should not be poking your nose over the fence, trying to see what's going on in somebody else's priesthood. If you have been in that practice, it would be something that God would honor you if you were to cease and desist from immediately.

However, privacy does not preclude the admonition of one believer by another relative to sinful practices. It does not give you the right to admonish someone relative to your preferences. You may have preferences relative to many things: preferences to vocabulary; preferences to styles of dress; preferences to haircuts; and, preferences to any number of things. You cannot admonish people beyond just that being your preference. But there are certain things that the Bible says are right, and there are certain things it says are wrong. You have a right, as a believer to admonish another believer when he is in a matter of sin. This is indeed a thing that should be graciously done.

However, if he rejects your admonition, that's the end of the line. He has the right to reject, just as you have the right to extend the hand of caution to him. The Christian priest must ultimately account only to his High Priest, Jesus Christ. It is up to the High Priest, Jesus Christ, to do the disciplining of the priest.

We found that there are certain basic functions which constitute the priesthood. First is the function of maintaining temporal fellowship. Another word for this is spirituality. We may think of it as being in the inner circle of temporal fellowship, within the outer circle of eternal fellowship. It is the business of the Christian priest to keep himself in that inner circle.

The second function of the Christian priesthood is learning and sharing Bible doctrine. In Jude 20, the first part of that verse says, "But you, beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith." This has reference to going from babyhood in the Christian life; to adolescence; and, to adulthood to where you come to the super grace level. The super grace level means that you have built a structure of spiritual maturity within your soul.

This structure includes the basic facets, the Scripture reveals, of grace orientation; to have a relaxed mental attitude (this is a mental attitude love); to have a mastery of the details of life (to know how to be related properly to material things so they do not dominate you, and your priorities get all fouled up); to have the capacity to love God, your husband or wife, and your friends; and, then to have an inner happiness that passes beyond people, situations, or things. This constitutes the spiritual maturity of the believer. All along the line, you are building this structure of spiritual maturity. It is a place for your personal defense. It is also the place from which you attack in the angelic warfare – from which you carry forth your service.

This is constantly developing as you go up this inclined plane until you come to a fully developed, mature level at the super grace life. Then you have reached the position where you may maximize the expression of your Christian priesthood in every respect. You cannot be a Christian priest in the finest and fullest sense of that word, in the Melchizedek era in which we live, until you have come up here to the plateau of super grace living. That is full spiritual, mature development.

The problem then is to continue learning doctrine in order to maintain this level, because as an inclined plane, it has two directions. You may fall into reversionism, which is backsliding in the Christian life, and you may go all the way back down in your maturity to where you have shattered this whole structure, and you're back down to babyhood operation. Super grace is a very wonderful area of life. It is the normative area of life for the believer. It is the place you're supposed to be. But it is also very hazardous area, because this is the area where somebody who has gone along with the Lord thinks that he has now certainly fully arrived; that he has no one to talk to; and, that he has just learned so much that there is just nobody capable of dealing with him in spiritual things. At this point, he can go into greater horizons – new things that are waiting for him out there.

Here is the Christian who gets dissatisfied with his local church because he's got a squabble, and he doesn't realize, like in marriage, you have your squabbles, but you stay married. Let me clarify this. Someone asked a question about this. If the Lord said, "This is your right church because you are properly related to the instruction of the Word which you're getting here," then that's how you came to it. You didn't come to this church on some false basis. An example of a false basis would be that you say, "Because I'm single, and I want to get a husband or wife, this church has a lot of potential husbands and wives running around, so this is where the Lord has led me." The Lord is probably going to lead you away from that for sure.

You may have come there because you like to have the church provide your social life, and they have parties and just wonderful things going on, so you think that that's where the Lord has led you. That is an improper way to be related to a church. When you grow spiritually, you'll probably disassociate yourself from that. If you got into a church because they had a hotshot program; because it had a famous preacher; because other people thought he was a hotshot preacher; or, because other people viewed him with some fame, that's probably the wrong way for you to relate yourself to it. Maybe it was because it was the denomination you always grew up in, so you won't go to a church that's a certain denomination. That's a wrong way for you to relate yourself. Sooner or later, if you really go on to super grace, God's going to peel you off from that church, and He's going to put you in one where you can grow as a believer in a maximum way in this function of your priesthood.

If the Lord has led you to a church that has taken you and moved you along from nobody in babyhood and started you up this scale, and you have gone by leaps and bounds, I guarantee you that's not the church that God intends you to leave. If you do, you may think you're going out to new and greater horizons, but you are indeed going down to reversionism. Never forget that crazy people (insane people) do not understand what they're doing. They are not aware of what's going on. When spiritual insanity sets in, people are actually going down in their spiritual lives, and they think they're going up.

Now, some of you sometimes have traveled, and you've made a turn that was wrong. You thought you were going in one direction, and you were so happy you were getting closer to your destination, only to realize you were going the wrong way. I did that one time after driving all night. I was driving along the road, so pleased that we were making such wonderful time, and all of a sudden, I realized that I'm supposed to be driving north, and here it's morning, and the sun is on my left. That bothered me. I said, "Ah, the road has turned." But it stayed on the left. Finally, I had to stop and say, "This cannot be right: Joshua or no Joshua; or, the sun standing still, or no sun standing still, this cannot be." I realized I was going in the wrong direction.

Several years ago, an aviator decided to fly from here to Europe, like Lindbergh did, and they wouldn't let him do it. So he decided to fly from New York to California, and he said that he accidentally got confused on his compass. Instead of flying west, he flew east, across the ocean to France. When he got there, he said, "Well, I can't believe this. I flew in the wrong direction. His name was Corrigan, and all of the newspapers were filled with stories about "Wrong Way" Corrigan. They couldn't prove that he did it on purpose. They couldn't arrest him. They couldn't take his license or anything. They just said, "Go back to school and learn how to navigate a little better." But he flew the wrong way. Maybe he did, and maybe he didn't. But usually when you're going the wrong way, you think you're going right.

So this is a very important thing: the function of your priest; learning and sharing doctrine; and, to get up to super grace. But it's also important to stay up there. That's my point. It's the greatest place in the world. It's the only place to be – in the super grace life. But it is a very dangerous place because here's where you are now under maximum attack from Satan. You're not under too much attack at the lower levels. As you go higher on this scale toward the super grace life, that's where you get maximum attack.

The super grace concept is based upon James 4:6 that says God gives us more grace. He not only brings us to greatness, but then he pours it in; overflowing; and, above and beyond. He just pours it on. So this is the terrific life that we're seeking. But if you're up there, take care. You are on Satan's list. Maintain that function of your priesthood.

The next function we studied was that of prayer. Prayer is based upon the rock of Jesus Christ. We pray in His name. It is done in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit, and it is done to the Father. You do not pray to Jesus. You pray to God the Father. You do not pray to the Holy Spirit. You pray to God the Father. You pray in the power of the Spirit, and in the name of Christ; that is, on His authority.

**Christian Sacrifices**

We also have the function of offering spiritual sacrifices. There are four spiritual sacrifices for Christians:

**The Sacrifice of Your Physical Body**

We have studied the first one, which is the sacrifice of yourself, which is, as Romans 12:1 declares, the giving of your physical body into the Lord's work. All along the line, Christian service is done by means of the physical body. All Christian service is a matter of using up your physical capacities and the allotted time (the days of your life). Christian service means doing something with your body and not doing something else. Christian service means not doing something else with your life.

A lot of people never get into this function of their priesthood simply because they're always using themselves in something else. Very frequently they will have no hesitancy about excusing themselves from some area of Christian service because they actually think they've got all this business that they had to take care of; all these important things to do in life; and, all these demands on their time. Well, don't ever forget that if you come up with that excuse, you have fallen into the trap of not realizing that Christian service means not doing something else – whatever. It means that this requires the investment of your life – not your rag-tag dog ends where you throw up whatever is left and you it shovel out to God. It means that you give Him the finest that you have first, and then the rag-tag ends you save for yourself.

God may indeed take your life, but He certainly will take the time of your life in service. That's what Christian service is. It is using up your life. It is using up the capacities of your physical being in the Lord's service. So give God an unblemished body (that is, a body that's in maximum efficient operating condition); maintain it; and, give your prime capacities to His service.

**The Sacrifice of Praise**

The second sacrifice that we'll be studying now is the sacrifice of praise. This one is declared in Hebrews 13:15: "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is the fruit of our lives, giving thanks to His name." This has to do with the Christian priest's speech and his mental attitude of gratitude. There is the key word: "gratitude." The sacrifice of praise is a very deliberate provision requirement by God because it achieves a very critical need in the life of the individual believer. While you bring the sacrifice to God, He receives something and He is pleased with what He receives. Never forget that the maximum beneficiary is you yourself, when you bring these sacrifices. God has designed these for specific reasons for our own blessing and benefit.

This sacrifice is to be offered up through our High Priest, Jesus Christ, through whom we have access to the Holy God. The word "praise" in Greek is "ainesis." The word "ainesis" means "a tale" or "a narration." The idea is something verbalized. We often use the word "testimony" to describe it. This verbalized expression is to be repeated continually. It is the expression of gratitude. That's the idea. Gratitude expressed preserves the blessings that we have.

In Romans 1:21, we recognize that the whole world of unbelievers went down the tube when they became ungrateful for the original information that mankind possessed about God: "Because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The step downward into worshiping animals began with people who were ungrateful. They were ingrates toward the information that they had concerning the true and living God.

An ingrate loses perspective on himself. When you and I are not grateful to God's grace plan that makes everything possible for us, we forget what zeros we are. We begin thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. For this reason, Galatians 6:3 says, "For if a man thinks of himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." There isn't any time when any of us is something. We are nothing to begin with; we continue as nothing; and, we end up as nothing.

So the apostle Paul, who understood that so thoroughly, could say, "I am what I am by the grace of God." You and I cannot say anything else relative to what we are. And when you get to super grace level, that's the time you better believe that you are what are by the grace of God, or you're not going to stay up there. If you are not careful to keep bringing the sacrifice of praise when you're at super grace, you are threatening yourself and your personal welfare for all eternity. This is a very important sacrifice. I cannot stress that enough. It is a mental attitude of gratitude to God for the plan that He has given us.

If you are an ingrate, it will lead you to violate the principles stated in Romans 12:3, which says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." Don't get disoriented to what the grace of God has done for you, and start attributing that to yourself, or to start complimenting yourself for where you have come in the Lord's work, and for how far you've gone up the inclined plane toward spiritual maturity. You should constantly be recognizing that every bit of progress you made was because the Lord did it for you.

After all, where did you start with the brains even to know where to go to get the information of doctrine that would lead you on to any level of spiritual maturity? Perhaps most of you can sit here and just think back to the time where the grace of God picked you up and brought you into the sound of real biblical instruction in depth. Think back to the years you spent wallowing around in a lot of foolishness and corncobs and husks. You were nothing. You were zero. It was the grace of God that led you to the place of opportunity.

Why you? There are thousands of believers who are sitting in churches all over this country right now, and all they're getting is corn husks and shucks and nothing. They're going through religious exercises. But those people are not going to walk out the door and know how to relate themselves to God one bit better than they did when they walked in. They got a little bit of tingling of their ears; they got a little bit of religious surrounding; and, they got a little bit of religious ceremony, but their souls are just as starved and as much a spiritual desert as when they walked in.

So who are you, and who am I that God should have picked us up and led us into the knowledge of the Word of God in the grace concept? That's what most Christians don't know. They don't know that God's plan for them is grace, and that God's grace plan means that He has provided the whole thing. Not only has He provided the whole plan, but God has included His determination to bring you to a successful accomplishment so that you have created something with your life.

If you don't understand that and don't know how to proceed to create something with your life, then you will fight Him; you will resist Him; and, you will regret it for all eternity. It is important to understand these sacrifices of the priesthood, and to bring them. The sacrifice of praise enables you to keep from getting the swelled head (the big head) as a Christian because you have made progress.

Please remember that anybody with half a brain can collect some resource materials and get real hot on some subject so that you know more than anybody else does. You become an expert, but never forget that an expert is any spurt away from home. The people who can't impress the folks at home are the people who shove off. I'll tell you that too. That's because the people at home know them too well, so they can't play their expert role to them. Why? Because you became an ingrate, and because you forgot that you were a zero. Only the grace of God has enabled you to do anything at all.

Now, specifically, this sacrifice of praise is described here as being the fruit of the lips. The word "fruit" is the Greek word "karpos," and that is a good translation. That's what it means. It's the word for "fruit." The word "lips" is "cheilos." The two together are referring to the Christian's mouth as producing verbal fruit of praise, which is then offered as a sacrifice to God as a Melchizedek priest. Fruit here is identified specifically by the expression "giving of thanks."

In the Greek Bible, the word "giving of thanks" is our old friend "homologeo," which you may remember from the fact that it is the word which is used in 1 John 1:9 that says, "If we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us." That verse is the basis upon which we get into the inner circle of temporal fellowship after we have been guilty of sinning. "Giving of thanks" is the translation of the Greek word "homologeo." It is in the present active participle. It is translated "confess" in 1 John 1:9. The idea here is indeed "confess" or "admit;" that is, giving God the credit for what He does. That's the idea here of giving thanks. To confess His name means to give God credit for what He does; that is, to express gratitude, and to express thanks to Him.

We can compare this to Psalm 22:22 which expresses this idea with the words, "I will declare Your Name unto my brethren. In the midst of the congregation will I praise You." ... So the idea here of confessing or declaring the Lord's name is to be praising Him, and to be recognizing what He has done, and to be specifically saying it. Since it is present tense, that indicates that we are to be offering this sacrifice continually. We are continually to be expressing our praise to God by recognizing what He has done. It is active. That is, you as a Christian priest must do it for yourself. I can't offer the sacrifice of praise for you. I can't offer it for my family. I can't offer it for anybody. Neither can you. You can offer it only for yourself. It is a participle, indicating that a principle has been stated.

So the point here is that verbalizing God's blessings helps tremendously in keeping us grateful. It helps us to remember from whence we came. Then indeed, when we look at the progress we have made, we are pleased. We should be. We should be able to come to a point where we say, "Well, I am happy with the progress I've made. I had been a fool in times past. I have violated God's principles: in part, because I was ignorant; and, in part, because I was negative. I take taken my life and put some stars on it that I need not have done, had I been responsive to the Word of God that I even knew. And now I have made progress beyond that point."

You should be able to look at that and see that you've made progress. But at that point, say, "Thank you Lord, for having taken a zero and moved him up a little bit. I really pray that you keep me there, because without You I'll go backwards again."

So there are some very practical times when you can give credit to God for what he does. That's what a testimony meeting is all about. When we gather at the Lord's Supper service, and we have opportunity for sharing what God has done in our lives, we are offering the sacrifice of praise. Every time you stand up in a testimony meeting and recognize what God has done; confess what He has done; and praise Him for what He has done, you are offering the sacrifice of praise, and it is received as such.

This is a public offering of the sacrifice of praise. We do it privately to God, but we can do it publicly. There is great merit in that. You start in a simple way. You start in a simple, short way of standing to your feet and expressing credit to God for something He has done. That's all there is to it. You don't have to be a big public speaker, and you don't get bashful and shy. People's eyes aren't on you. They're on the Lord, and your eyes shouldn't be on yourself. You should have your eyes on the Lord. When you do, you'll be able to stand up and say, "I want to give God credit for having done this and this and this. I thank Him for it." That's all there is to it. Now, that is the sacrifice of praise.

The singing of hymns and gospel songs expresses praise. It expresses our gratitude to God. When you do that in temporal fellowship, singing a hymn is an offering of a sacrifice of praise. Remember that God rewards for every sacrifice you offer. I know that some of you who haven't been singing very much are going to take up singing now. You don't have to be good singers.

By the way, be sure that you are doing it as an expression of praise. Don't grab the songbook and say, "I have to get another sacrifice – points up on the board." So you're going to sing like crazy even if you can't read the words or find the page. No, we're not talking about monkeyshines like that. We're talking about a genuine song service which expresses praise to God. You have to be in temporal fellowship to do that. It's not the quality of your voice. It's the attitude of your mind that counts. But singing of hymns is an expression of praise.

You celebrate your spiritual victories and your joys by making this sacrifice of praise. If you want to read a beautiful example of this, you can go back to Exodus 15, and read that chapter where Moses and the people of Israel have just come across the Red Sea. God had opened the water and then closed it on Pharaoh's army, and they offered the sacrifice of praise in the form of a song. That's exactly the thing we're talking about here.

Psalm 146:2 expresses this idea when the psalmist says, "While I live, will I praise the Lord? I will sing praises onto my God while I have any being." That's exactly what we're talking about. ... This is the expression of praise through song, and all such expressions of praise are glorifying to God.

In Psalm 50:23, we read, "Whoever offers praise glorifies Me, and to him that orders his conduct to right I will show the salvation of God." If you want to glorify the Lord, then offer to Him the sacrifice of praise.

This sacrifice is comparable to the Old Testament fragrant aroma sacrifices which were brought in the form of the burnt, the meal, and the peace offering. The sacrifice of praise will preserve you as a believer priest from worry and from self-centered gloom. Remember that praise is heaven anticipated. In heaven, it's all going to be praise, and it's all going to be joy. If you want to preserve yourself from a lot of foolish worry; from a lot of self-centered gloom; and, from a lot of negative attitudes, then when you find yourself moving in that direction, just say, "Well, it's time to offer the sacrifice of praise." Sit down and review from whence God has led you, and start confessing to His name what He has done for you.

The Christians who are most negligent of this spiritual sacrifice are not the ones who are suffering, and not the ones who are having a hard time in life. The Christians who are most negligent of offering the sacrifice of praise are usually those who are most blessed. It is when God has really prospered us, and things are going well, that we fail to offer this sacrifice. When we're down there where it hurts; where the troubles are around us; and, the crises are upon us, everything that the Lord does to help us we see in such stark contrast that we're very ready to say, "Thank you, Lord, for solving this. Thank you for getting this straightened out. Thank you for giving me the answer for this." But when you get up there to that plateau where things are going well, that's when you quit offering the sacrifice of praise; that's when you become an ingrate; that's when you start forgetting who you are and from whence you have come; and, that's when you start going down.

Do you see how important this sacrifice is? If you offer this sacrifice of praise deliberately; carefully; and, by previous planning, it'll do tremendous things for you. It's insurance for your spiritual well-being as few things are – the sacrifice of praise.

Offer it publicly, and certainly, offer it privately. "Praise the Lord" is not a bad expression. Sometimes we kind of badmouth it; we giggle about it; and, we smart-off about it. But when somebody says it, it's not a bad expression. It's one of the spiritual sacrifices of our Melchizedek priesthood.

**The Sacrifice of Divine Good Works**

We move on to the sacrifice of divine good works. Hebrews 13:16 says, "But to do good forget not." The word "to do good" is the Greek word "eupoiia." "Eupoiia" is "a doing good" or "a benefit." It is a specific act of something good that you have done. God says that He is well-pleased with this particular kind of doing good. That is, it is a fragrant aroma sacrifice. Obviously, if God is pleased with some good we have done, it must, of the nature of the case, be divine good, and it is not human good. Otherwise, God would not be pleased with it.

**Spiritual Gifts**

What this Scripture is teaching is that there is a sacrifice that you and I may make, as God's priests, which is a sacrifice of good that God is well-pleased with. It must be, therefore, the divine good which God the Holy Spirit performs through us. The basic way that a Christian produces divine good under the control of the Holy Spirit is through the exercise of his spiritual gifts. So every time a Christian uses his spiritual gifts in any way, he is making a sacrifice unto the Lord.

So in order to make this sacrifice, you must first determine what gift you have. Your guideline for determining this is, first of all, your own opinion on the matter relative to what your heart would like to do; the things that you would like to serve in; and, the direction in which you would like to work for the Lord. That is the first point. The second point is that other people look at you and say, "You have this gift."

Now, I'm going to teach you a tactic of the devil here. As you look over these spiritual gifts that we have listed in the Bible, you try to identify whether you are an evangelist; a pastor-teacher; you have the gift of exhortation; administration; giving; teaching; faith; or, showing of mercy. You may get your heart set on one that you'd like. You might decide, "I'd like to be a little Billy Graham. I'd like to be a great evangelist."

I used to think I'd like to be an evangelist. At our home in Chicago where I grew up, we had a big full-length mirror, and they didn't have it on the floor. They had it hung on the wall, so it was kind of at an angle, and you could really see yourself. When I was in high school, I used to stand in front that mirror preaching. I'd listen to Billy Sunday and the other big evangelists of the day. I'd work out a little sermon. When nobody was around, I would be preaching to that mirror. Well, in the grace of God, that isn't my gift. That wasn't my ballgame.

So you may decide, "I want to be an evangelist." And, you know, if you're an evangelist, you've got to have a diminutive first name. You've got to be a "Jimmy;" a "Johnny;" a "Jackie;" a "Joey;" a "Billy;" or, a "Sammy." ... So you got to have a small name, so you fix yourself up with an appropriate name, but you discover that the people in the congregation say, "I don't know about that. I don't you if you have that gift."

Do you know what the devil does? He takes you, and he says, "These dummies don't know anything. Go over here to this other church. They'll be impressed. They'll recognize your gift." Well, you come in there, and you do know something about the Word of God. And they will be impressed, especially in a church that doesn't teach doctrine. But do they know you? Do they know you in your functioning to be able to say, "I have seen this gift demonstrated in you," or "I have not seen this gift demonstrated in you?"

This is one of the devil's slickest tactics of all, in getting you confused on what your spiritual gift is, so that you cannot offer the sacrifice of divine good. He gets you to run off to someplace else when you are hellbent and determined that you're going to have a certain gift. You're going to have it, and you're not going to be around people who will say, "I don't think you have it." So either you have one of these gifts (or more), or you don't.

If you're going to offer the sacrifice, you must begin with these spiritual gifts. You must see that you want to do it; and, that other people say, "Yes, I see that you do have this gift." The third guideline is that there is fruit produced. Indeed, as you invest the functioning of this gift, God brings spiritual blessing. God prospers and uses the gifts. That is very critical. You're not the only one that can see that. Other people see that too.

So are you an evangelist? Do you have that special capacity for explaining the gospel that it has such impact; that people understand it; that they are brought under conviction; and, that they cannot resist it? This is more than just personal witnessing. This is a unique gift to be able to speak to people so that the gospel is very clear and understandable. God uses your words to bring them under tremendous conviction, whether they go positive or negative.

What about the gift of pastor-teacher? Do you have that combination gift of being able to shepherd a flock with all the hardships and happinesses involved? Do you have the capacity not to be running around wanting people to like you? Do you have the capacity to be a shepherd (not somebody who wants to be loved) so that you can do the job: hard or easy; gentle or harsh; or, whatever it takes? With it, do you have the capacity to teach and explain the Word of God? These two (evangelist and pastor-teacher) are communication gifts given to the body of Christ.

There is the gift of exhortation. Can you get up and move individuals and groups of people to do what they should be doing relative to the Lord's work and their relationship to the Lord? Can you get up and speak in such a way that God takes your words, and again, people are convicted and moved to do what they should do?

Do you have the gift of ministering (of helping)? This gift covers all of your natural abilities – all of those capacities you were born with on a natural level. These include all the things you use to earn a living; for recreation; and, everything else you do in your social life. God brings and sanctifies all of those capacities you have in every way under the gift of ministering, and He uses them to help the Lord's work – to help individuals.

Do you have the gift of administration to be able to be the leader of a group; to organize; and, to direct people so that they pull together effectively? You can't be the head of an organization without this spiritual gift. If you are, you don't have it, then get out of it.

The gift of giving is not just ordinary giving that all Christians have. This is the gift of major giving. Just because you have a lot of money doesn't mean you have the gift of giving. A lot of people who have a lot of money, indeed, do have the gift of giving, but they never function on it, or they function on it in a paltry measly way. But there are some people that God has called and said, "This is a capacity I've given you." Not only do you have the capacity to be able to earn the money in large sums, but you have the capacity to part with it. You have the capacity to give it up. You have the capacity to recognize that you are a zero; the grace of God has brought you here; the grace of God is going to keep you here; the grace of God took care of you to this point; and, He will continue to take care of you. He did the biggest thing for you in bringing you to salvation, and He will keep you all the way down the line. So you needn't stand here holding onto your money like some greedy miser, as if this was the thing that was going to carry you through. The gift of giving is a very critical gift in God's work, and a very important gift to identify.

The gift of teaching is the ability to explain the Word of God in usable form. This isn't just to get up so people can't go home and think, "What in the world was said, and what in the world am I going to do with what I heard said." This is teaching so that you understand it, and teaching so that the complicated things are clarified.

The gift of faith includes a tremendous capacity to believe God. How many great stories we could tell here at Berean Memorial church of believers who had faith and said, "Let's go." That doesn't mean to be just gung ho: "Let's run out. Let's do things." But there is a time when it takes people who say, "This is what God wants us to do, and God will enable us to do it. Let's go." I have seen people who have fought believers in this congregation who had the gift of faith, and were expressing that confidence in God, maybe to do something that we didn't have the money to do at the time. However, because everything indicated that this should be done; this is the right thing to do; and, this is what God wants us to do, the fact we don't have the money to do it is beside the point. The people of faith stood up and expressed that view. Those who resist the gift of faith find themselves broken in pieces upon it and shattered. This is an important gift in the body.

There is the gift of the sharing of mercy. This includes the capacity to do the tender thing, the merciful thing, and the kind thing for the person who needs it. The person in need is often the person who is unlovely; the person that people are not particularly drawn to; or the person who is left out, but that person has great needs. Then nobody reaches out and says, "Let me help you." There are some people who have a great capacity, when they sense a need, to have the mercy to reach out and do the thing that needs to be done.

This is the sacrifice of good. This is the production of divine good which God the Holy Spirit enables you to make. The Bible lays very great stress on the bringing of this spiritual sacrifice. Here's a partial list of verses that constantly say, "Bring the sacrifice of divine good through your spiritual gifts:"

Galatians 6:9-10 say, "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we don't faint. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially onto them who are of the household of faith."

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus onto good works, which God has therefore ordained, that we should walk in them." All of these verses are stressing the great sacrifice of divine good works. It's one of the greatest of the sacrifices that the Christian priests are to bring.

Colossians 1:10: "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Then 1 Timothy 6:18: "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to share."

2 Timothy 2:21 says, "If a man therefore purges himself of these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

2 Timothy 3:17: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Titus 2:14: "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works."

Then finally, Hebrews 10:24: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

All of these verses are stressing that single basic concept to bring the sacrifice of divine good. I want you to notice Hebrews 13:16: "But to do good, forget not." That "forget not" is significant in the Greek. The word "not" is the Greek "me." It is with the word "forget," and the word "forget" is present middle imperative. Here's what this means grammatically. You recognize that imperative is a command from God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is telling you not to forget to bring this sacrifice. You shouldn't forget any of them, but there is a special scriptural admonition not to forget this one. Furthermore, its present tense. When you have this combination in Greek of this "me" with the present tense, it shows that some Christians were in the process of neglecting the gifts. So the people that he wrote this letter to (the Hebrews, and the congregations that received this letter) were people who were already in the process of neglecting the bringing of the sacrifice of divine good – the exercise of their spiritual gifts.

The sacrifice of divine good by a Christian priest is not just do-goodism. That's humanism. We get a lot of that. It's not just bleeding heart stuff. The sacrifice of divine good is the functioning of these spiritual gifts. God says, "Bring it. Some of you are not bringing it. Some of you are in the process of neglecting it. Some of you haven't even gotten so far as to be able to say, 'Here's my gift,' let alone to say, 'Here's where I'm using it.' And it takes both of those factors.

Now, there is a fourth sacrifice and we shall go on with that next time. This will be the one that we started all this with back in Philippians – the sacrifice of substance. There is a great deal to say about that one. Thus far you should understand the sacrifice of your body and all that that means. You should understand the sacrifice of praise and all that that means, and all that that will do for you. And you should understand the sacrifice of divine good and all that that will do for you.

Please remember that these are well-pleasing. These are sweet, savor, fragrant, aroma sacrifices for which God at the Judgment Seat of Christ will give you rewards that you shall enjoy forever. Without these sacrifices, you will deny yourself that reward. Start thinking ahead. You have presents that are a lot bigger than Christmas, farther down the line.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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