

Building on the Foundation

Chapter 9

What we have been discussing is offering. We've read in Hebrews 9 the 14th verse that Jesus offered himself by the spirit to God. This offering is more than prayer. It may include prayer, it can include thanksgiving, it can include petition, it can include intercession; but most primarily, it must include a disposing of ourselves unto the will of God. We read in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that the life that is Christ is birthed in us, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but it is born of the will of God; therefore, we should live unto the will of God which birthed us if we're serious about coming to the fullness of the life that is Christ. I want to take a look through familiar scriptures at this offering/sacrifice.

One of the first stories in Genesis that does not include reference to Adam or to his wife Eve talks about two boys, brothers, who somehow knew they were to bring an offering to God. We know that one of the offerings was accepted and one was not. The offering that was accepted was a lamb; the offering that was not accepted, it says, was the fruit of the ground. We can suppose that it was vegetables of some sort, but the reason the sacrifice was rejected was not because the vegetables weren't good vegetables but because it was of the earth, and it was the work of his own hands. The lamb is of the earth but it's not the works of man's hands. So, one had some resemblance to the rest that God has for his saints in that it wasn't Abel's work; it was the life of the lamb that was offered, whereas Cain's offering was the work of his own hands. In consideration of the typology of scripture, Cain's work represents the work of the flesh and self-righteousness, but Abel's sacrifice represents a substitutionary sacrifice and there is a loss of life. The requirement for forgiveness is the shedding of blood, and that is a foundational law of God's kingdom.

Then, we have another sacrifice/offering when the ark landed on the mountain and Noah got off the ark. It says he built an altar and he made an offering to God. Another early story of scripture is in the book of Job, where he made offerings for his children. We see that Elijah made an offering to God and it was accepted by fire. We know that through Moses the law was given, and the law contained many sacrifices. There were all kinds of sacrifices that were offered continually. One of the things that I want to point out about this is that offerings extended for 2500 years before there was an official priest. There was no official priest until the law, so for thousands of years, there were sacrifices and offerings that were being made without a priest.

Now, we get into the priesthood and there were sacrifices that were offered. You can look at the time when the ark was returning with David to Jerusalem, and there were literally thousands of animals that died as the ark approached the city. There had to be blood flowing in the gutters. Another expression of many sacrifices was when Solomon dedicated the temple. There were tens of thousands of animals that died that day. I have thought about just organizing that sacrifice, having enough priests with sharp knives, getting the knives sharp enough to do many sacrifices in one day. We know that in the New Testament it says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and we know and have discussed already that John identified Jesus as the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. We have the testimony of the book of Hebrews that says better blood accomplished better offerings, that what the blood of bulls and goats could not do it took better blood to accomplish, that although God forgave sins on the blood of bulls and goats, although that person who was offering the sacrifice could go home forgiven, he could not be cleansed by that blood. So, we get right back to the two aspects of the day of rest, the sabbath: the blessing represented by the forgiveness of sins and the sanctification represented by the cleansing of the sinner, the forgiveness of the sin and the cleansing of the man himself or the woman herself.

We have forgiveness of sin, and that works anytime that sin shows up when we confess and have faith. I don't want to misrepresent or mis-emphasize this point, but the primary problem in the church today is not a sin issue. It's a lack of sanctification, it's a lack of growing up. As spoken in other places and other times concerning this, it speaks of how important it is that if you are offended to forgive, but let's think about sanctification bringing us to the point where we're not offended so that the operation of the spirit of God in our lives isn't only to bring us to forgiving but bring us to ministering cleansing to those who are still being offended. It's bringing us to a place of helping to be an example and leading them in a path of growth so that grace is not used just for sin but grace can be for growth, so there can be a testimony of God's purpose being fulfilled in the earth.

Anytime that we talk about offering, we're talking about sacrifice. I want to think about Jesus and some of the things he said in this characteristic. Jesus said, If any man seeks to save his life, he will lose it. But if any man will lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, he will find it unto life eternal. He clearly taught that unless the seed of corn fall into the ground and die, it abides alone, but if it falls into the ground and dies, it brings forth much fruit. He was not only prophesying concerning himself, but he clearly taught that if any man was going to be his disciple, he was going to have to deny himself and take up his cross and follow daily.

I thought for some time what Jesus's commandments were that he commanded us as the church to do. We know that he commanded us to take up our cross, that he commanded us to love one another, that he commanded us to pray for those that cursed us and to forgive those that abuse us, and that if we're asked to walk a mile that we go the second mile. Then, I began to think about what were Jesus's commandments, what commandments did he live by, not what commandments did he give us, but what commandments did he receive. I want to look at John 10, beginning in the 17th verse. Jesus said, Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again. This is where he said this was the commandment he received; he said this commandment have I received of my father. What this means is that Jesus lived his life as a daily offering.

When we read in John 1:12 that when we received him, we received power to become sons of God, this is how Jesus used that power. He waxed strong in spirit; he grew in grace and stature with God; he learned obedience by the things he suffered because this is how he used the power that he received. He said I have power to lay it down and power to take up it again. This is the power that we receive when we receive Christ. It is a power God made available so we can lay our life down. The great benefit when we lay our life down is that we embrace the operation of God's capacity to raise the life offered into a greater expression of his purpose. This is referred to in Ephesians 4 as growing up into him who is the head. This laying down by offering/sacrifice of our self-reliance brings all that God is and can do as the power by which that life is raised. In verse 29 of the 1st chapter of Colossians, Paul refers to this as God's mighty power working effectually.

Let's go into Hebrews the 6th chapter and the 20th verse, Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The word I want to notice and emphasize is the word "made". Let's turn over to Hebrews 7, the 20th verse, And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. Then again, in verse 26, For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. In the 28th verse, For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the son, who is consecrated for evermore.

One of the things that we can clearly see here is that priests according to the law still had to offer for their own sins, but this priesthood that is made according to the order of Melchisedec, it says, is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; we can see why sanctification is an important part of the seventh day. It's because the only priesthood that is available to those who are not only holy, harmless, separate from sinners and undefiled is according to the law, and it is an inadequate testimony to the purpose of God.

There are two things I want to sum up again. A verse we have visited many times throughout this study is John 1:12. When it says that we have received the power to become, the Greek word that is translated there "to become" is the Greek word "ghinomai," and it is the same word that is translated in Hebrews when it says he was "made" a high priest. So, we could read John 1:12, and we could say that we have received the power to be made the sons of God, or we could read in Hebrews and we could use the translation from John, and we could say he became a high priest. What I want us to think about and take away from this particular discussion is that although Jesus was born Christ in first birth, he had to be made a high priest. The 2nd chapter of Luke details very clearly that there was an old priest named Simeon, and God came to him by the spirit (probably an angel) and made him a promise. The promise was that he would not die before he saw the Lord's Messiah. Now under the law in Israel, the first born were to be presented to the Lord at the temple, so once the family was able to travel, once the baby and the mother were stable and recovered from the birth process, the first born were to come to the temple and be presented to the Lord. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple and maybe he was a month old, just a small infant. Because this temple was a source for many areas and many towns in the area, every day there were babies that came to the temple, so this temple serviced a large region. Simeon, as was his habit, was at the temple and somehow by the spirit he identified Messiah as an infant among the other babies that were coming on that particular day.

I have thought on various occasions how remarkable this was because this baby wasn't teaching parables, this baby wasn't doing miracles, this baby wasn't walking on water; this baby was just a baby. Simeon by the spirit of God recognized Messiah and he glorified God and he prophesied over the child and he spoke to the mother by the spirit of God. How many people in Israel when Jesus was 30 doing miracles and teaching didn't recognize him as Messiah? I'm saying all this to say that Jesus was born Christ, but although he was born Christ, he had to be made a high priest. He was not born a high priest. He was made a high priest by offering himself to God. He had to grow up into becoming a high priest, and it was the continuing work of the spirit in his life that made him a high priest.

We are called to be kings and priests unto God, and the book of Hebrews teaches us that it is now obviously necessary that there be a priesthood that arises after the order of Melchisedec. Although we are born in a second birth as Christ, it's only by the continuing work of the Holy Spirit that we are going to be made high priests, but God is not going to force us to accept the work of the Holy Spirit. It's going to happen because we willingly offer ourselves daily, that we submit ourselves for growth, and we deny ourselves and our lives in this world, fulfilling what Jesus said, Except a man hate his life in this world, he cannot be my disciple. We have had a lot of ideas about what that meant and most of them have ended up as religion. We do not know what that is and we do not have the power to do that. The Holy Spirit knows what that is and God is the only one that is of a power to perform it.

Now are we the sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be, and we do not know the way, and we do not have the power to do it. We must learn to live as a daily offering to the working of God.