

The Living Worship Of A Chosen People

1 Peter 2:4-10

Objective: Motivate Christians to fulfill the purpose for which they were created.

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10.

Memory: 1 Peter 2:5

Introduction:

1. Wouldn't it be easy, nice, if we didn't really have to struggle with things to worship God? If religion and sacrifice were simply rote and external things?
2. Maybe if we could just put \$5.00 in the collection plate and say we were worshipping God? Maybe not even come in – just have a boy stop by on Saturday night and deliver it for us?!!
3. But worship is not simply external. It involves genuine devotion. Heartfelt commitment. Our very lives. It involves everything we do. If we are really to be God's Holy People...

We need to be worshipping God spiritually, with our very lives. (HOW?)

In 1 Peter 2:4-10 the Apostle uses several word pictures to describe who and what we are supposed to be. In the midst of this description, are two phrases that especially designate what we are to be about as we approach the Living Stone and live as a chosen people. As we worship God, here are the key things we are to be focused on as God's special people.

We need to be about the business of

I. Offering Spiritual Sacrifices.

A. Sacrifices are something offered up to God as worship.

1. 1 Peter 2:5, **"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."**
 - a. You are "living stones". Not just at 11:00 Sunday. God is worthy of our worship always. Constant worship in many ways. Constant living worship entails constant sacrifices.
2. In Psalms 50:14-15, after making it clear that God doesn't really need *animal* sacrifices, the passage explains what God really is after; **"Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."**
 - a. A thankful heart. Appreciate of all God does for us.
 - b. A heart of integrity that keeps its word, fulfills its vows. Even to God! (Cf. baptismal vow)
 - c. A humble and contrite heart that knows where help comes from and asks rather than leaning on one's own power and resources only. Apply self, but lean and rely on God.
 - b. These are the things that honor God, the spiritual sacrifices.
3. Similarly, Psalms 51:15-17, **"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."**
 - a. This is the concept Jesus is speaking of when He says, **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**
 - b. Are arrogant enough to ignore God and think you can make it on your own?
 - c. Are you humble enough to know your need for God?
 - d. Do you have a contrite heart that seeks to set aside all sin and to please God in every way so He will abide with you and help you through life?
4. Psalms 141:1-2, **"O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me. Hear my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."**
 - a. God is pleased when you talk to Him. Whether you are lifting your voice to call for help, or to offer thanks and praise.
 - b. Take time to pray. Not just for help, but to offer praise even in good times. This is living worship and spiritual sacrifice.
5. Hebrews 13:15-16, combines the prayers with deeds. **"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."** Reaching out to show God's love to others is a worship to God.

B. Sacrifices are giving up of something.

1. A relinquishing of something we naturally would like to hold onto. Something paid or lost to self. A dying to self.
2. Spiritual sacrifice might involve some *intentional* changes in behavior. Not just to make our lives better, but because we know such changes please God. Giving up something for the glory and praise of another. In this case, giving up something so that God will be honored.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:1, ***“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.”***
 - b. Intentionally getting rid of certain practices in order to glorify God. and please God.
 - c. Because, with a humble and contrite heart, you are wanting to be “acceptable to God”.
 - d. You may not *feel* like it – that’s why it’s called a “sacrifice”. It needs to *cost* you something.
3. Spiritual sacrifice may involve giving up some old ways of thinking.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:4-5, ***“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”***
 - b. Being built together into a “spiritual house” implies a corporate, congregational unity and functioning –i.e. if you are a Christian, if you are a “living stone”, you need be active as part of the congregation – the rest of the house.
 - c. A “spiritual house” is a place for a royal priesthood to function. It is here that the priests (you) function, in the context of the corporate unity of a congregation, in concert with and in connection with other Christians, other “living stones”.
 - d. As Living stones, you are cinder blocks. Love is the mortar holding together. The “spiritual house is the community in which the spirit of God dwells. You can NOT be a “spiritual house” in isolation from other “living stones”. Otherwise, they are being built into a temple for God while you are just a useless cinder block setting out in the yard.
 - e. If you are not involved with the body, that building made of Christians, you are NOT functioning as the living stone you are supposed to be! Maybe your *FIRST* “spiritual sacrifice” is to die to self, to relinquish your timidity or fears and come to be an active part of a congregation!

The second action phrase comes in 1 Peter 2:9, ***“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*** As God’s chosen people, we need to be about

II. Declaring God’s Praises.

A. We have a lot to praise God for!

1. He has called us out of darkness. We were lost and now are found!
2. Darkness was the ignorance of 1 Peter 1:14. ***“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.”*** Way of world. Not knowing any better.
3. Darkness was the empty way of life of 1 Peter 1:18. ***“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,”*** No real purpose. No significance.
4. Do you realize where you have come? Remember what you once were and what you have been enabled to become! Ephesians 2:12-13, ***“remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”***
 - a. You now have citizenship in heave. No longer separated from God in Christ. You now have a covenant with God You have His promise. His guidance, His protection. Reason to hope.
 - b. Such realization ought to prompt us to thankfulness, and to declaring God’s praises.

B. With the fruit of our lips – our words.

1. Tell people of the mercy you have received. Be so glad that we have to tell people! Like the man who searched and found his lost sheep.
2. God tells His people in Isaiah 43:12, ***“I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “that I am God.”*** You are now that people. God’s witnesses to tell others where the raise and thanks go.
3. You can simply tell others, “ I Thank God”. It is good to say “thank you” to God, Himself in a

private prayer, but its great to tell others too. In fact, I like it more when Denise tells others what I did, than when she simply says thank you to me. I like her to brag on me some. God likes us to brag on Him. To tell others, "Look what God has done."

4. Now, words can be empty if they are just words. Declaring the praises of God comes importantly with your life and behavior! Declare God's praises ...

C. With your very life and behavior.

1. Spiritual sacrifices are really, in effect, a living proclamation of praise to God. The manifestation of a thankful heart. People ought to be able to see your thankfulness.
2. Let them see it in the things you do. Let them see it in the changes in your behavior.
 - a. "Why did Big Bad Bill stop being so abusive to folks?" It ought to be obvious that he is appreciative to God for leading him.
 - b. "Why doesn't George party so wild and hardy as he used to?" He is not living for God.
 - c. "Why is Sally being so nice when we are so mean to her?" She is giving praise to God.
3. 1 Peter 2:12, ***"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."***
4. 1 Peter 4:11, ***"If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."***
5. Behavior that reaches out to help others as God reached out to help you. In Philippians 4, Paul, says of the gifts they sent to help him, ***"They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God."*** Declare His praises by your helpfulness, forgiveness, hospitality, generosity.
6. God's praises are declared through the behavior of those in whom He lives. This ought to be our very lives. This is the spiritual worship declared in Romans 12:1, ***"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."***

So What?

Do you know why God rescued you? Do you know why God has shed His light on you? Do you know why you have been so blessed and chosen? It is so you will fulfill a purpose.

Are you fulfilling the role for which you were chosen? For which Christ sacrificed Himself for you? Are you really showing the appreciation for your salvation?

We need to demonstrate that we are indeed, God's special people, by doing that for which we were created; offering spiritual sacrifices and proclaiming His praises.

Closing Prayer:

The Living Worship Of A Chosen People

1 Peter 2:4-10

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10.

Memory: 1 Peter 2:4-5

“y_a_, l_l_s_, a_b_b_i_a_s_h_t_b_a_h_p_, o_s_s_a_t_G_t_J_C_.”

We need to be worshipping God spiritually, with our very lives.

Key things we are to be focused on as God’s special people.

I. Offering Spiritual Sacrifices.

A. Sacrifices are something offered up to God as worship.

1 Peter 2:5 Psalm 50:14-15 Psalm 51:15-17 Psalm 141:1-2 Hebrews 13:15-16

B. Sacrifices are giving up of something.

1 Peter 2:1 1 Peter 2:4-5

1 Peter 2:9

II. Declaring God’s Praises.

A. We have a lot to praise God for!

1 Peter 1:14 1 Peter 1:18 Ephesians 2:12-13

B. With the fruit of our lips – our words.

Isaiah 43:12

C. With your very life and behavior.

1 Peter 2:12 1 Peter 4:11 Romans 12:1

So What?

We need to demonstrate that we are God’s special people, offering spiritual sacrifices and proclaiming His praises.