

A Living Sacrifice

Sacrifice is not just an Old Testament subject. Christians are to be a "living sacrifice" too (Romans 12:1-2). What is the Christian's living sacrifice?

First, a sacrifice, by definition, must cost something (Luke 21:1-4). Christians must offer up a sacrifice that costs; something given up.

Second, a sacrifice must be acceptable to God; according to his will. Christians must offer up a sacrifice "acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Third, a sacrifice must offer the best (Matthew 6:33). Christians must offer up a sacrifice that is holy and spiritual; the best that we can give God of our time and our effort.

Fourth, a sacrifice must be given freely (2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:6-7). Christians must offer up a sacrifice that is from a free-will; given freely, willingly, cheerfully, and lovingly.

Fifth, a sacrifice must be given without desire for personal recognition or reward (Matthew 6:1ff). Christians must offer up a sacrifice that is directed toward God and others.

Christian, is your sacrifice for Christ costly, acceptable to God, the best, given freely, and directed toward God and not self? - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Some Christians are like trailers; they always have to be pulled along.
- Sometimes those who shout "unity" the loudest, will do much to foster division.
- The person who wants to go to heaven should take the time to learn the Bible route that will get him there.
- Nobody else can do the work that God has assigned you to do.
- Say what you mean; mean what you say.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Culture Wars: Choosing Christ or Culture

When it comes to your speech, your dress, your actions, your thoughts, etc., do you choose to follow Christ and his word in the New Testament, or do you choose to follow the culture around you?

We Are At War

Do you know that there is a war going on? There is a spiritual war going on! It is a war for your soul (1 Peter 2:11), for your morality, for your eternal destiny. In fact, this war is very close to home. It's right inside you, in your heart and mind (Romans 7:23; James 4:1)!

Christ or Culture

When a Christian chooses Christ and the New Testament over culture there will be some negative consequences. First, the Christian will be rejected. Jesus said his followers would be rejected and persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12). Second, the Christian will be hated. Jesus said his followers would be hated by the world (John 15:18-20). Third, the Christian will be thought of as "strange". The Apostle Peter wrote that worldly people will think it "strange" that you do not run with them in the same excess of riot (1 Peter 4:3).

When Christ and culture are at odds (and they often are), you are going to have to make a choice. You will have to make a choice between who you love more,

Christ or the world (2 Timothy 4:9; 1 John 2:15). You will have to make a choice between where you get your wisdom, from below or from above (James 3:15-17). You will have to make a choice between who your friends will be, God or the world (James 2:23; 4:4).

Acts 16 Culture Wars

In the New Testament book of Acts (chapter 16), we have an example of a "culture war". Here, the Apostle Paul had come to preach the gospel in the city of Philippi and to miraculously heal. Let's look at four things that happened and compare them to what goes on in our culture wars today.

First, we find an "up with the evil-doers" mentality (16:16-18). The culture at Philippi did not care about the demon-possessed girl. All that mattered was using her for personal gain. They did not like that had Paul helped her. In a similar way today, modern culture promotes the evil-doer for personal gain (money, power, politics, etc.). Hollywood, the media, the music industry, award programs, etc., all give time to liberal agendas like homosexuality and trans-gendering.

Second, we find a "down with the do-gooders" mentality (16:19-24). The culture at Philippi did not care that Paul saved the girl's life. No one thanked Paul. Rather, they took Paul and Silas and illegally imprisoned them. They were "shamefully treated" (1 Thessalonians 2:2). In a similar way today, modern culture wants to get rid of the do-gooders. They

attack the hard-working, church-going, Bible-believing people of this nation and accuse them of "hate speech".

Third, we find a "down with the personal rights" mentality (16:35-37). The culture at Philippi did not care about Paul's rights as a Roman citizen (a right to a legal trial). His rights were ignored (Acts 22:24-29). They saw two religious "zealots" only. In a similar way today, modern culture wants to take away the rights of believers. You can have a "gay" pride parade, but if you try anything religious, you'll hear "separation of church and state". You can have "free speech" as long as it is not religious, Bible-based speech.

Fourth, we find an "up with the deceit tactics" mentality (16:38-39). The culture at Philippi did not care about Paul's rights, but it did care about losing its Roman status. They dismissed Paul without apology or admitting guilt. They said, "go away". In a similar way today, modern culture wants to beat down the believer and then casually say to him, "go away".

What can you do to win today's culture wars (take from Acts 16)? You can stay focused on serving God (16:25), stay focused on saving who you can (16:10, 26-34), stay focused on defending the truth (16:37), and stay focused on assembling with Christians who want to live right in a wicked world (16:40). Christ or culture, which one will you choose? - *Chris Reeves*