

WORSHIP WITHOUT SACRIFICE!

Sermonette by Robert Schmid

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Good morning brethren. Another beautiful Sabbath day.

A day that God specifically blessed and set apart for holy worship. The 4th chapter of Revelation, a very short chapter, speaks of "Heavenly Worship". I love the words that the living creatures and the Elders, that are before the throne of God, are singing:

*“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!
Worthy are thou, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for thou didst create all things,
and by thy will they existed and were created.”*

Yes, God created all things, and each Sabbath is a memorial to that fact. On the Sabbath God desires our worship and that we honor Him. Fortunately, God in His wisdom and mercy has made provision in and through His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, when we fall short in our worship of Him.

It is said that Mohandas Gandhi had a list of seven deadly sins and one of them was WORSHIP WITHOUT SACRIFICE. Now, I know, that some of you are wondering what the other six deadly sins are, so, let me give them to you. Here is his list of seven deadly sins:

- 1) Wealth without work
- 2) Pleasure without conscience
- 3) Knowledge without character
- 4) Business without morality
- 5) Science without humanity
- 6) Politics without principle
- 7) Worship without sacrifice

Obviously, much could be said about each of these sins, but it is WORSHIP WITHOUT SACRIFICE that caught my attention.

So, let's see why WORSHIP WITHOUT SACRIFICE is not pleasing, in fact is not acceptable to God. Please turn with me to Ex. the 19th chapter.

In Ex. 19 we find the nation of Israel arriving at the foot of Mt. Sinai. It's been three months since they left Egypt, and that God brought them to Mt. Sinai through some of the greatest miracles recorded in scripture. And so, God called Moses up to the mountain to make a covenant with the people of Israel. The covenant was a simple one, a simple proposition. God was to rule over them and in the process fulfill all of the promises made to Abraham, if Israel would be faithful and

obedient. In verse 8 we read the answer of the people to God's proposal, where they unanimously state: *"All that the Lord has spoken we will do."*

When we were baptized we said the same thing to God, didn't we!

God was obviously pleased with that acceptance, but just to make sure, He wanted to tell them personally, and so God send Moses down to make an announcement to the people that in three days there would be a meeting, in other words a commanded assembly, and God himself would be the Speaker, God himself would give the sermon.

By the way, many Bible commentaries put this assembly on a Sabbath. Jewish tradition says that it was Pentecost. Whatever day it was, we can be pretty sure that it was a Sabbath day meeting, a holy convocation. And so, God gave Moses instructions of how to prepare for Sabbath services.

He said in vs. 9, *"Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you (that is Moses) for ever."* He said in vs. 10, *"Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow and let them wash their garments and be ready by the third day; for on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mt. Sinai in the sight of all the people"*.

In other words, God told the people to prepare for Sabbath services.

"Be ready," He said, and friends I believe that God is saying the same to us today.

"Be ready" when you come into the presence of God.

"Be ready" God pleads with us today, just as He thundered it to His people 3 1/2 thousand years ago.

Now, someone might say: Hey, I don't have 3 days to prepare for a meeting, not even with God. Well, God knows that. But, how about enough time of preparation to assure that you are not being late for Sabbath services?

You see, God was making a point, God was establishing a principle. He told the Israelites to take three days to get ready. How many do you think were late for that meeting, or how many do you believe decided not to come? Look at vs. 16, *"On the morning of the third day (notice here is your scripture for morning services) there were thunders and lightning's, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who where in the camp trembled"*.

Now today we need to ask ourselves how loud, how pressing God's Holy Spirit speaks to us. Do we tremble spiritually, when preparing and when coming into the presence of God?

Well, this is where SACRIFICE comes into the picture.

Now I know that we all desire to worship God, but are we prepared to worship God sacrificially, or do we want to do it our way? What is our way? What is the natural, human way of doing anything? Well, with one word – it is sinful! You see, Gandhi's list of seven deadly sins covered every aspect of human endeavor, and worship is no exception.

Let's look at a few examples of how God's way requires some sort of sacrifice no matter what we do.

First of all there is the Sabbath itself. Every one of us had to make the decision to swim against the stream when we decided to acknowledge God's 4th commandment and keep the Sabbath holy. For some, little sacrifice was required. For others, the sacrifice was big. Maybe you lost a job over the Sabbath, or maybe you alienated yourself from family members who could not comprehend and could not accept what you are doing. You decided to worship God in spirit and in truth, and it cost you a SACRIFICE.

Alright, you have been in the Church for a number of years and the Sabbath is not a problem anymore. But, what about worshipping God at the appointed time? God gave the Israelites three days to prepare in order to be ready in time. Do we today take sufficient time to prepare to meet with God at the appointed time? This may take some SACRIFICE. Maybe you have to get up 2 hours earlier, or forego your breakfast or reading the newspaper. Whatever it takes - do it. God takes no pleasure in our worship of Him, when we come into his presence unprepared.

Please, see the spiritual principle of this. You may be here two hours early, but your mind may be far from God right up to, or well into services. Brethren I know, it takes sacrifice to prepare the mind for God. We can get so busy with ourselves, that yes, our body is here, but our mind and heart is far from God, and God is not pleased with, will not accept, that kind of worship.

I don't know about you, but song service is particularly difficult for me. My mind wants to do everything but concentrate on the words of the song, wants to do everything but concentrate on worshipping God.

Can you imagine the Israelites standing before God in all His thundering glory worshipping Him with their hands in their pockets and their mind on lunch? Unthinkable you say, impossible, and yet it's so easy for us to do precisely that. I have to force myself to keep my mind on God, it just doesn't come naturally.

Or, consider this: God is giving His sermon. He is at the ninth commandment and everybody knows He is just about finished--right. After all there are only 10 commandments. And so, while He is giving the last, His most important commandment, maybe a summary statement, everybody is busily engaged breaking down the tents to go home. Unthinkable you say, ridiculous, and I say you're right, and yet we do precisely that when we snap our briefcases and put bibles, glasses and pencils away, while God through His minister is still speaking to us.

That's what the natural man wants to do. It takes self control; it takes a mind that is on God, to worship God in an acceptable way. And that requires SACRIFICE.

Well, I don't have to give you any more examples. I am sure you can see what I am getting at. *Acceptable worship* is not just a Sabbath issue, it is a 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week issue.

We either glorify God in what we do, or we offend Him. The difference is SACRIFICE.

We either do it our way, the natural way, the sinful way, or *God's way*.

We either, sacrificially pay our taxes, offerings and other obligations, or we do not.

We either sacrificially control our tongue, or it becomes a restless evil full of deadly poison.

We either sacrificially worship and honor God, by taking care of the sick, the poor, the elderly and the oppressed, or we offend God if we don't.

SACRIFICE is required whenever you want to do it God's way!

I believe that Gandhi was right when he labeled *worship without sacrifice as sinful*.

In conclusion please turn to Rom. the 12th chapter.

Rom. 12 and we'll read vs. 1 and 2

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, I appeal to you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, that is your whole life, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service". Or, as the RSV puts it, "which is your **spiritual worship**."*

"And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" for YOUR life.