

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
January 19, 2022
What is Sacrifice?

1 John 3:10-17 KJVS

[10] In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. [11] For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. [12] Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. [13] Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. [14] We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. [15] Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. [16] Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. [17] But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

What is Sacrifice? The loss of something great to gain something better. According to the dictionary: the offering of animal, plant, or human life or of some material possession to a deity, as in propitiation or homage; The surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim. A loss incurred in selling something below its value. To surrender or give up, or permit injury or disadvantage to, for the sake of something else. Our English word comes from the Latin sacrificium, equivalent to sacri- sacer = holy + -fic- facere = to make. The combining form means to 'make sacred or holy'. Ultimately a sacrifice creates a unity or wholeness between two parties, one being esteemed, the other of low estate. Christ, in His perfect Sacrifice created a unity, a long lost wholeness between our God and ourselves. What we see through these definitions is a study in comparative values. In its purest sense, a highly valued possession is given in exchange to generate a relationship of an even higher value. The valuable life of Christ was sacrificed to form for us an eternal life with Almighty God. This principle applies to many things in life. We sacrifice a portion of our wealth to tithe to the Lord's work. We surrender precious time or effort to help someone gain a personal advantage. We give a place in our home so someone has a place to live. We might give away a vehicle or some other possession to help a friend get ahead. Sacrifices in life can be great or small. A gallon of gas to a stranded motorist. A meal or clothing to a homeless person. Furniture to a new neighbor. Time or talent to a brother or sister who has suffered a great loss. Even in the game of baseball a batter will bunt himself out to bring a player home to score a run.

In our passage tonight we find sacrifice woven throughout. V10. Righteousness: the equity of character in the eyes of God. If you are trying to live a righteous life for God you are sacrificing the life of self. We know a righteous life is a selfless life. Love itself is sacrifice. Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:1. Agape Love is other centered. It gives without seeking a return. Most sacrifice never sees the satisfaction of its efforts but it gives none the less. V11. Loving one another is the highest form of Christian character. John 13:34,35, 15:12,17. Truly giving this love is not always rewarded. If a brother or sister in Christ does not return our love, we must love anyway. Part of our discipleship is lovingly training the family of God. V12. Why was only Able's sacrifice acceptable to God? First, God looks at the heart. We can only guess that Able gave the best of his flock at great personal cost, while Cain gave a stingy portion to the Lord. We are taught that God required only a blood sacrifice. If that be so then Cain was in full disobedience. Consider Hebrews 9:22 and 11:4. Able's sacrifice cost him his life, the ultimate sacrifice but he's now in heaven for it. V13. Being hated by the world is a sacrifice as well. How easy it would be to fit their mold and be acceptable to them. We give up many friendships to befriend God. Romans 12:2. The gods they serve demand a high sacrifice indeed! That of their eternal life. John 3:17-21. V14. If the greatest sacrifice is laying down one's life for his friends, John 15:13, then the greatest failure is abiding in death. Matthew 16:25-26. V15. Hate and murder are the antithesis to sacrifice. Such people, rather than sacrificing their anger and desire for revenge, selfishly hold it and die in their sin. John 8:23-24. Such disbelief is suicide; literally self murder. V16. The greatest thing we can sacrifice is self. Not in selfish suicide but in altruistic offering. Why does a soldier jump on a hand grenade? Matthew 10:38-39, John 12:24-25. V17. Here is the most basic, down to earth living sacrifice. Most of us have so much. Why is it so hard to part with some to raise up another? Hebrews 13:16. Luke 6:30-38.

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat,
Winston Churchill