

## LESSON THREE

# SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

### A. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES.

Scriptural References:

*"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (I Peter 2:5).*

The Apostle Peter writes of the church as being a holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices. In this lesson we shall study a few of the spiritual sacrifices the church offers up the Lord.

### B. PRAYER.

#### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

The importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized. In Revelation we see the prayers of saints as incense upon the golden altar before the throne (Revelation 5:8, 8:3). The greatest sin of the church is that of prayerlessness. Prayerlessness leads to coldness, indifference and unbelief. Prayer is the church's greatest weapon. It moves God towards man, and man towards God. God does not bless machinery and methods, but God does bless a church that prays.

#### 2. THE CHURCH IS COMMANDED TO PRAY.

Scriptural References:

*"Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).*

*"...That men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).*

*"Watch ye therefore, and pray always..." (Luke 21:36).*

*"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (I Timothy 2:1).*

The church is commanded to pray. It is not left to the mood or whim of the Christian. There is no choice but to obey.

#### 3. WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is communion with God. It is speaking to the Lord and hearing the Lord speak. It consists of communion, intercession, supplication, travail of soul, allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through the saint with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

#### 4. MANNER OF PRAYER.

There is no definite manner or time for prayer. The Bible gives examples of all bodily postures while praying: standing, kneeling and lying prostrate. There is no special time or place for prayer. We should be in a prayerful attitude at all times and ready to pray at any time. It makes little difference whether we pray audibly or silently as long as we pray from the heart with faith.

#### 5. POWER IN UNITED PRAYER.

If we pray in unison and agree as touching anything on earth, Jesus has promised that our prayers would be answered (Matthew 18:19). It is on these grounds that there is power in united prayer.

### C. FASTING.

#### 1. WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is abstaining from food and the marriage relation (I Corinthians 7:5) for a definite period of time in order to pray and seek God.

#### 2. IS THE CHURCH COMMANDED TO FAST?

No. The church is commanded to pray but nowhere is the church commanded to fast. However, Jesus said that we would fast (Matthew 9:15) and the early church fasted (Acts 13:2; Acts 14:23). Throughout the New Testament there is the inference that the church would fast.

#### 3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FASTING?

The benefits of fasting are that we might pray more effectually. Fasting prayer is more effectual and powerful than prayer without fasting. Christ said that certain demons could only be cast out through prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).

### D. WORSHIP.

#### 1. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship is a definite act of the soul as it bows before God in deep adoration and absorbed contemplation of the majesty and glory of God. In prayer we are occupied with our needs, in worship we are lost to self and are absorbed in Jesus Christ. Just as thanksgiving is one step higher in our spiritual sacrifice than prayer, even so worship is the highest step. It is with this that the Lord is most pleased.

#### 2. HOW ARE WE TO WORSHIP?

Scriptural Reference:

*"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"*  
(John 4:24).

Here are two elements in true worship: Spirit and Truth. To worship Him in TRUTH we must have a revelation of the true identity of God; to worship Him in SPIRIT we must be filled with the Holy Ghost. Only Spirit filled saints can truly worship Him in Spirit, and only Oneness believers worship Him in Truth.

#### **E. GIVING OF THANKS.**

Scriptural References:

*"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).*

*"In everything give thanks" (I Thessalonians 5:18).*

Ingratitude is a condition of the last days. (II Timothy 3:2, Romans 1:21). Only one of the lepers returned to thank the Lord for cleansing; nine went their way without the giving of thanks.

Thanksgiving is closely connected with prayer and worship. It is the link in the chain that binds prayer and worship together. Everything that we are or have, everything that we have enjoyed in life comes from His munificent hand. There should flow from the heart of the church a constant stream of thanksgiving.

#### **F. CHURCH ATTENDANCE.**

Scriptural Reference:

*"Nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25).*

It is the Lord's plan for the church to assemble together and to worship as a unit. Each member needs help; encouragement and blessing that can be had from the entire body. Just as each member of our physical body has to be united to the body in order to enjoy health and life, just so each member of the church needs to be spiritually united with the body.

Regular church attendance becomes a vital part of the saint's experience. He attends faithfully as many services as possible each week.

Before being transferred to another city, the Christian should always enquire about a church to attend. If there is no church in that locality, he should either refuse to move, or arrange to begin a new assembly as soon as he arrives. By no means should he be away from public worship services and the fellowship of the brethren.

#### **G. WITNESSING.**

Scriptural Reference:

*"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).*

The word "witness" comes from the Greek word "martyr" from which we get the English word, "martyr." The meaning of being a witness is to bear testimony of our faith to the point of

suffering and dying if need be for our faith. The act of witnessing was not restricted to the apostles but all the believers were witnesses. Every member of the church regardless of age or position in life is to be a witness. We are to witness to the ministry of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:39-41) and to His saving power (Acts 10:43). We are to be prepared to witness to the truth of the Scriptures and to a personal experience with God (I Peter 3:15).

## **I. LIVING HOLY.**

Scriptural Reference:

*"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2).*

The true church is a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27). The church is a beautiful church but this beauty is not an outward show of physical beauty. It is an inward beauty of true holiness.

The apostate church is robed in an expensive show of outward trimmings, which is cheap and gaudy in the sight of God (Revelation 17). The world has a false conception of beauty and through paint and outward adornment endeavors to camouflage the true appearance.

Salvation beautifies the meek (Psalm 149:4) and the bride who awaits the coming of her Lord is a church of holiness which is beautiful in the sight of Jesus Christ (Song of Solomon 6:4).

### LESSON THREE

## SELF HELP TEST

- A. What is the responsibility of the Christian as far as church attendance is concerned?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- B. What is the spiritual benefit of fasting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- C. What are the two elements of worship?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- D. Who may be able to exercise these two elements in worship?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- E. Seven Spiritual Sacrifices are mentioned in this lesson. To what extent is the child of God obligated to offer up these Sacrifices?