



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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Acceptable Sacrifices in Holy Worship

*By Rev Jack Sin, pastor of Maranatha BP Church, S'pore
(Message preached at Calvary Jurong BPC on 22 February 2009)*

Obedience in Sacrifice and True Worship

There was an important incident in Gen 4 that gave us a correct perspective of who our God is and what He rightly required of us. It is the account of 2 brothers and their sacrifices before Jehovah and His response to them. Adam and Eve's first two children were sons: Cain and Abel. Scripture tells us about these sons' occupation: one was a herdsman while the other was a gardener. By searching Scripture carefully we notice that Adam was involved in both occupations (Gen 2:15 & 3:17-19; 2:19,20 & 3:21). His sons merely divided this work among themselves, each taking a branch of their father's work. And there is nothing wrong with that 'in the course of time', that is, Cain and Abel both brought an offering to the Lord (Gen 4:3-4). Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord and Abel brought sacrifices from some of the firstborn of his flock and there is a great spiritual difference between the two of them before God.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith under Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day, it says:

The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and does good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

Gen 4:5 says, '*But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell.*' It is properly assumed by theologians that the Lord made His divine instructions for acceptable sacrifices known to Cain and Abel through their parents in Adam and Eve or that the Lord spoke directly to Cain and Abel thereby and clearly indicated why He accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. for he violated the regulative principle of worship.

The Sovereignty of God and Faithlessness of Cain

Why did God not accept Cain's offering? The reason is that Cain did not have true...

Continued on Page 2...

biblical faith (Heb 11:4) neither did he bring the specific offering in worship which God commanded him to bring. In other words, Cain manifested his unbelief by adding to the instituted worship of God. Cain, was defiant and wrong *'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'* (Prov. 14:12). The text says the Lord respected (i.e. looked with favour upon) Abel and his offering, but He did not respect (or look with favour upon) Cain and his offering (Gen. 4:4-5). An angry attitude on Cain's part is mentioned after Cain's offering was not accepted by God, but not before. Furthermore, in verse 7 when God warns Cain concerning his anger, God admonishes him, *'If you do well, will you not be accepted'*. The implication is that he acted contrary to God's command in bringing his offering in worship and that he did not bring his offering by faith (the same thing is inferred in Heb 11:4 and 1 Jn 3:11,12 where the act or sacrifice of Cain is noted). The fact that Abel acted in faith (as taught in Heb 11:4) necessarily implies that God must have given specific instruction as to the acceptable sacrifice that God required in worship. Abel obeyed the command of God, Cain added to the command of God in holy worship. Cain added something of his own invention to the worship of God, and neither he nor his offering was acceptable before God. True worship is never a matter of preference or human creativity. Worship is always a matter of God's requirement and compliance to it. Like Cain, many churches today believe they have discretionary power to introduce acts, dancing, tongue speaking, healing, so-called prophetic utterances, man centred entertainment and jarring instruments, magic shows and ceremonies of mere human preference into the sacred worship of God which is an abomination to God (Jn 4:22-24, 1 Cor 14:40, 1 Chr 16:29). Beware of committing this grievous sin of Cain that is often repeated today.

Genuine devotion for God

There was a difference in Cain's heart as compared to Abel's. This is seen already in the gifts that were offered. Scripture says Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn (firstlings) of his flock (verse 4). Abel offered the fattest first-born of his flocks. He offered to the Lord the first and the best of his flocks. Cain, on the other hand, brought *'the fruits of the ground as an offering to the Lord'* (verse 3). Scripture indicates to us here that Cain was not serious at all about obeying God with what he brought to the Lord. He brought to the Lord the fruit of the garden that was his own idea but not a blood sacrifice. Abel brought a choice blood offering of a animal sacrifice to the Lord according to his commandments whereas Cain did not. With an offering without blood, there is no remission of sins (Heb 9:22).

The story of Cain and Abel reminds me that God always wants us to give Him our best according to his will. Abel gave his best to God. Abel's gift shows the sincerity of his devotion to the Lord that it comes from the depths of his heart; that it is complete, well-meant and real. Abel truly desired to please the Lord. Heb 11:6 says, *'But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him'*.

God Himself indicates the true condition of Cain's heart (verse 7). Things were not right between Cain and his God. The words of Proverbs 21:27 apply to Cain: that the sacrifice of the wicked was detestable to God. Cain was disobedient to God and God dislikes it and did not accept his offering. It becomes clear that Cain, unlike Abel, did...

Continued on Page 3...

not really give his heart to the Lord. He offered something to the Lord half heartedly and according to his own whims and fancies and this was a great offense to the thrice Holy and Almighty Lord.

Consider what 1 John 3:12 which says, *'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'* and Hebrews 11:4 which says, *'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh'*. The bloodless offering of a wicked Cain is not acceptable to the thrice holy Lord whereas the God honouring blessed offering of a righteous Abel is.

Application

What does this mean for us today? Our offerings are unacceptable to the Lord if they are not offered to Him out of true faith and a repentant heart and according to what is stipulated in His word. If we lead a wicked life the Lord does not accept our offerings and service. Heb 12:28-29 says, *'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire'*.

With what shall we come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? We are to come before him with a broken and contrite heart and we need to offer ourselves, our whole body as a living sacrifice to Him in total surrender.

Let us also be reminded of the words of King David in Psalm 51 which says, *'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow'*. What God wants is lasting and genuine repentance of sins and obedience in giving God our very best in service, worship and everything.

Remember what 1 Sam 15:22-23 says, *'And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king'*.

What the Lord wants from us is total obedience. He wants us to walk in His ways. He wants us to serve Him in all of life. He wants us to give Him our soul in worship and service and the offering of ourselves and our lives to Him in full self-denial and sacrifice.

Conclusion

Let us give God our very best in whatever (i.e. do or say). Let us first offer our hearts of submission to God. Give of ourselves to God, repent and confess our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Let us return to our Creator God and offer our hearts to seek Christ as our personal God and Saviour today and He will accept us as His redeemed children as well.

*(NB. for deeper studies, read Kevin Reed, **Biblical Worship**, 1995.)*

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 29/03/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 05/04/2009</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Angeline, Rudy & Linda and Brian to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Eld George Chew	Rev Lim Chee Boon	
<i>Message:</i>	Pressure and Struggle	Tbd	
<i>Text:</i>	John 12:20-33	Tbd	
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Anthony	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	John Poh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for Rev Timothy Ki to serve as our resident minister. Pray for his visa application. • No YAF Meeting: There will not be a YAF meeting this Friday, 3 Apr. • Church Easter Camp – 10 to 13 April: Registration forms can be obtained from John. Also, please inform John if you would like to help out with the camp. • DHW Bible Study: The classes will be commencing soon. Please pick up your study notes from at the book table in the Fellowship Hall. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), Margaret (cough) • Pray for those who are seeking permanent employment: John • Pray for those applying for visa: Josh & Hannah • Pray for on travel: Rev Lim (travelling to London), Joey & family (Switzerland & Greece), Joshua (Europe), Sophia (Europe), Joshua & Hannah (New Zealand), Grace & Chun Long (S'pore), Joy (Brunei)
<i>Preacher:</i>	Eld George Chew	Rev Lim Chee Boon	
<i>Message:</i>	The Grand Parade	Tbd	
<i>Text:</i>	Luke 19:28-44	Tbd	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Hubert	Anthony	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 29/03/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 05/04/2009</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Daniel / Sharon	John / Evelyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	No Sunday School	No Sunday School	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Lee Wei	Nicholas	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 3 Apr	Young Adults Fellowship: No Meeting		
Sat 4 Apr	4:00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Lim	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £454.53		Lunch: £26.00	
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Need a Revealer of Love</h2>			
<i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i>			
<p>Whatever makes us forget ourselves and think of others lifts us upward. This is one reason that God permits suffering. We would never know the best and richest of human love if there were no pain, no distress, no appeal of grief or of need. The best and holiest of mother-love would never be brought out if the child never suffered. The same is true of God's love. God would have loved his children unfallen just as much as he loves them fallen, but the world would never have known so much of God's love had not man fallen. Our sore need called out all that was richest, holiest, and divinest in our Father's heart. If no night came we should never know there are stars. Darkness is a revealer.</p>			