

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-10-11a

This is Sunday, the 11th of October, 2015, the day after Navy went down in ignominious flames of defeat in front of the very well-coached forces of Notre Dame. We commiserate with all of those plebes who are going to have a miserable couple of weeks during the bye week until Navy once again will no doubt be victorious at homecoming playing Tulane. What that has to do with our study will become apparent later on, maybe.

If nothing else, the downcast visage of the pastor, I thought if Navy is actually fielding the best team they've had in the coach's memory, we would have a shot at beating Notre Dame, which we actually did a few glorious times. However, it didn't happen this weekend, so if I am more sober and less lively, it's because I'm grieving over our first loss of the season. Be that as it may, we're going to continue our study, manfully forward, in the sacrifices that reflect the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

We have come to Leviticus chapter 2, as you will remember, and we're looking at that second sacrifice, the grain offering, fondly remembered from the King James Version as the meat offering, in which is no meat. As with many words from 1611, the word has changed its meaning. Meat used to mean food instead of that which comes from your bovine and porcine and various other Piscine sources.

I can't remember the term for fowls, but you're, well, no, there's, yeah, avian, or what sort of an allergy is it that our puppies have to birds? You can't eat chicken and duck anymore. Anyway, whatever that is. There's no meat in this thing.

It's all grain. So, we're looking at that and the reasons that God prescribed these specific order and detail of this sacrifice, and we'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then resume that investigation. Father, it is a constant comfort and source of encouragement to us that you never abandon us.

You do not leave us. You do not forsake us. We are weak.

We are made of dust. We fail. We err and fall short again and again, but by your grace, we are made to stand and we are encouraged to stand in that wonderful potential and wonderful spiritual standing that we have before you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for Him. We thank you for the incarnation of your Son into our humanity to forever unite us and bridge the gap between that which is divine and that which is inherently human. To perfect us, to transport us, to elevate us and lift us up and take us into the eternal realms where we already anticipate and enjoy the benefits of relationship with you through Him.

We pray this morning as we learn more about the Lord Jesus through these Old Testament shadows and anticipations that God the Holy Spirit will minister the truth to each of us in a way

that is helpful, in a way that is encouraging and motivating, and in a way that draws us closer to you through the Lord Jesus, that we'll be more sensitive to the leading and guiding ministries of your Spirit, that we will be more clearly able to see the way your Word bears and impinges on our thoughts and our actions, that our lives will reflect your glory and prepare us for eternal life in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Grain Offering, Leviticus chapter 2 is the primary text and you remember there is a review of this, the law of the offering a few chapters over as it provides additional instructions and guidance to the priests as they administer these offerings. So the additional instructions are found in Leviticus chapter 6 verses 14 through 23. There is interestingly an additional instruction that we find in the book of Numbers chapter 15 and you can just briefly turn there.

It's a side note that we've not yet mentioned in regard to this offering. Numbers chapter 15 in your New King James it says, Laws of Grain and Drink Offerings. How helpful.

We are looking at the grain offering and here are laws of grain and drink offerings. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel. I've mentioned this before, I think recently, but it bears repeating since God repeats it innumerable times.

The Lord spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to the people. There is a constant delegation of communication responsibility through human intermediaries. Whether it is the gospel coming to Cornelius, whether it is the word of God coming to the apostle Paul when he is still Saul and has just been struck blind, whether it is the Ethiopian eunuch, seems like a lot of trouble to grab Philip out of the middle of a big revival and as it were, transport him like Ezekiel by the hair of the head out in the middle of a desert.

But here is a man who is reading the book of Isaiah and doesn't understand it. God doesn't send an angel. God doesn't speak as a voice from heaven.

God doesn't appear to the man in a dream or a vision. He sends another human being. This is a privilege and an opportunity for all of us.

That includes you. Speak the truth to one another in love. And we many times find ourselves faced with the question, should I speak? How much should I say? How best can I express it? Am I going to make things worse? Should I just remain silent and be thought a fool rather than opening my mouth and removing all doubt? What is the best approach? Well, there is no rule and there is no single right answer.

This question should be submitted immediately and directly to God through the Holy Spirit in prayer, watching for and expecting the guidance of God. As the Lord Jesus told his own disciples, it will be given to you in that hour. Don't worry about what you will speak or what you will say.

Be prepared. Know your stuff. And God will either encourage or discourage a communication in any given context.

Be prayerful, be watchful, be prepared, but also know when not to speak. The Lord Jesus is a great example of this in his ministry, culminating in the night that he was arrested and tried. He was in many places and asked many questions.

Sometimes he spoke more often like a lamb before its shearers is dumb. He opened not his mouth. How did he know when to speak and when not to? He was guided by the very same Holy Spirit that resides within us.

So, the Lord spoke to Moses. Clearly, he has an instruction. God says, speak to the people and tell them this.

That's great. Many times we will have a truth that we can share and that we should share. There are other times we have a truth, but the context, the openness and receptivity of those to whom we might speak isn't there.

And the same Lord Jesus, who told the disciples, you'll know when it's time to speak and what to say, also said, do not cast your pearls before swine, for they will turn and tear you to pieces. Meaning, they were heading away. You threw the pearls at them when they weren't interested.

The pearls have no meaning and no value to swine and they will simply turn and injure you, damage you, attack you. So, I was talking to somebody just in recent days about the best way to dispatch feral hogs and having some knowledge of this from the past. Sometime in the past, oh, I know, I was talking to somebody who would go on hog hunts, they had too many of them in the woods, they were coming and doing damage, and so they would go out and hunt them.

And I learned at that time that hogs are built a little differently than most game animals in that their heart and lungs are further forward in their chest. And so, most people who are used to deer hunting or shooting other animals when they try to shoot a hog will shoot behind the organs that they're trying to hit and you have to aim a little further forward. Their heart and lungs are actually right above their shoulder, what would amount to the elbow joint, and you have to aim forward of that.

Most hunters would shoot six to eight inches behind that. Well, the hog doesn't drop. And an angry tusker isn't what you want in your periphery.

Understand from my more recent conversation, you can tap them in the head and that'll also take them down. But I go for center of mass. I'm not sure I can hit them between the eyes, you know, one inch above.

And, you know, good luck with that while the thing's running at you, the center of mass. Just remember, adjust a bit forward next time you shoot a feral hog. But the idea here is that God speaks to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, he has a clear instruction, when you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving you, and you make an offering by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, that was chapter one, remember, whole burnt offering, the olah, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your

appointed feasts to make a sweet aroma to the Lord from the herd or the flock, that was chapter one, he who presents his offering to the Lord shall bring a grain offering.

So our chapter two offering is always to accompany the whole burnt offering. The whole burnt offering is never brought alone. When you bring it, you will bring, when they're in the land, now they're not required to do it in the wilderness, but when they come into the land and they've got their own fields and crops and they're in a more sedentary rather than Bedouin lifestyle, they're not transient, they are resident, this is what they are to do.

If you're going to bring this offering, you will bring the grain offering as well. And he specifies how much, a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour, you say *oven ephah* is in italics there, but this was understood, the ephah was the standard measure of dry grain. If you say two-tenths, one-tenth, you're starting with that ephah.

I look this up because I have no real idea what an ephah is. And if my sources can be trusted, an ephah in terms of our common dry measure would be about 19 cups. So, most of you have been in the kitchen with a cup measure, do that 19 times.

I would say this is sort of a mixing bowl full, wouldn't you? Will a mixing bowl hold 19 cups? I mean, a big family size, you know, you're big. The popcorn bowl you share with the family, you know, that filled and probably heaping with flour. So, it's a goodly amount, it's a pretty big bowl full of flour, 19-20 cups of flour-ish.

That's one-tenth of an ephah. That's not the ephah, that's one-tenth of an ephah. Ten of those bowls would be an ephah.

An ephah is going to be like a, you know, a barrel, a barrel of flour, a great big old bunch. So, if I did my conversion right, this, when you bring this one-tenth, it's going to be a large, about as much as you could carry, I would think. You think about a five-pound, ten-pound sack of flour, and you figure you could probably get that and more into a bowl.

So, it's about as much as you can carry without help. So, you bring one-tenth of fine flour. Fine flour, we talked about that last time, takes extra work, with one-fourth of a hen of oil.

Well, I had to look up a hen because we don't, you know, go down to the store and, can you give me a hen of Coke, or a hen of orange juice? However, it turns out that one-fourth of a hen, a hen is just slightly under a gallon. And these things are kind of estimates and approximations, they don't know exactly how they figured this stuff out in the ancient world. So, a quarter would be about a quart.

Quart is short for quarter, right? Quarter of a gallon is a quart. Two pints to a quart, four quarts to a gallon, if I remember my first grade schooling. So, you got about a quart of oil that you're pouring on this big bowl of, giant bowl of flour.

One-fourth of a hen of wine as a drink offering, again, about a quart of wine comes along with

this. You shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice for each lamb. For a ram prepares a grain offering, two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour.

Since the ram is smaller than the bullock, you bring more of the grain offering as sort of a compensation. What do you think this would imply, spiritually speaking, especially by way of application for us? There is a distinct difference between the whole burnt offering, which is an expression of dedication and commitment and humility and obedience, harnessing our efforts, whatever we are, in the Romans 12, 1 and 2 sense, we present our bodies a living ola, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. And then, remember, in the grain offering, what have we seen about it? What is one of its fundamental characteristics in terms of how the materials are used? What is it made of? Fine flour takes extra work.

Olive oil is something you've got to harvest the olives and they have to be pressed. The frankincense is, and by the way, they are all vegetable in the sense of coming from the plant kingdom, right? The grain is a cereal grain that is ground and ground fine. It takes a lot of extra work.

The oil, the fine olive oil, the olives have to be picked and gathered and put in the press and they are squeezed. Do you remember the other ingredient? What's not supposed to be in there? No honey, no leaven, right? But what is the other ingredient? Frankincense. Frankincense is also a plant-based deal.

You take Boswellia Sacra, which is the name of the tree, and gash the bark and the sap exudes out. It's allowed to harden in the sun for about ten days and they pick that stuff off and when it's further dried, it becomes sort of a granulized form. They generally would transport it and use it in the granulized form.

It could also be put in solution in water and used. They used this stuff for all kinds of things. The well-off people that could afford frankincense would use it as deodorant, toothpaste, and even today I understand in Oman, they burn it and hang their clothes in the smoke so that when they're moving around, their clothing gives off this pleasant aroma.

Oman is still one of the only places in the world where you can get this stuff and it's actually becoming rare because they're over-tapping the remaining trees. I understand from my reading that the best way to do it is to put up to nine gashes in a tree, but they're having to do three times that many to keep up with the demand for frankincense and so the trees are dying and they predict that in another 50 years, if somebody doesn't conserve them in some way, just going as they're going, the things will be extinct. But they have survived and are preserved down to the present day.

But once again, think about these materials, a lot of processing going into the fine flour, a lot of processing going into the oil, a lot of processing going into the frankincense and all of them are by what we would consider to be processes that picture suffering. The grain is beaten to separate the wheat from the chaff and then it is ground and ground and ground. It is just taken

down into its component little parts by grinding.

The oil is pressed. It is squeezed. The olives have to be smashed for the oil to emerge.

The frankincense trees have to be gashed and they bleed. They call this bleeding the trees and the quality of the frankincense is determined by the appearance of the sap. When it's sort of clear and silvery, this is the stuff that kings would get.

The brown, more common looking stuff is what they would sell. But the best and finest of the blood, the sap of the tree was the province of kings. I read there was a king once that, in fact it may have been Nero, somebody died and he took an entire year's harvest of frankincense and burned it all in grieving over this individual that died.

It was a huge, costly memorial. But for a ram, the animal is smaller. The animal representing what I can commit, what I can do, what I can accomplish in strength and in what I dedicate to God of myself.

And there is a proportionality. In proportionality, there's a larger bullock and a smaller cereal offering, grain offering. Here the ram, you prepare twice as much fine flour mixed with one-third of a hint of oil.

It doesn't double the oil, but the proportion goes up. And as a drink offering, you shall offer one-third of a hint of wine as a sweet aroma to the Lord. So there is more of this concomitant or this supplemental offering.

When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill of our peace offering to the Lord, then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour. I think I said bull for the first one. It was the lamb, which is the smaller animal.

Then if you bring a goat, he's a bit larger, and the grain offering is proportionally larger. Now we get to the bullock, and the grain offering is proportionally larger there. Three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, half a hint of oil.

Notice that the larger these get, the more help you have to have, because you cannot carry three-tenths of an ephah, that's 57 cups of flour. So this would be sort of a family endeavor, I would think, to bring the bullock, to bring the flour, to bring the oil, and so on. Bring the drink offering half a hint of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Thus shall it be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. And so they are proportional. Everything is in proportion.

According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. All who are native born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. So God's people have this privilege and opportunity,

but it is a required execution of privilege.

You have the privilege, you will fulfill it. We have the privilege of many freedoms in this country, and some of them we need to be sure that we exercise. If a stranger dwells with you, whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord, just as you do, so shall he do.

One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and of the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations, as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law, one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you. How many times does he repeat that principle? Says it once, repeats it twice, states it three times.

As for you, so the stranger. Our new memory verse, Romans 15, verse 4 says, All these things were written before. They were written for our learning, right? So that we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

They were written for our instruction, written for our learning. And this requirement that anybody else who is qualified to bring an offering, and does bring an offering, functions under exactly the same ordinance. We today bring our whole burnt offering in the Romans 12 sense.

And with it we are to bring the grain offering. So what does that mean? What is the application of that? Well, it helps to understand what the grain offering reflects in anticipation of the Lord Jesus, and as he has done, so we should do. He submitted himself to the will of the Father.

He had that great attitude that even when it did not comport with his personal preference, not my will, but thine be done. He was fully submissive. I have come to do thy will, O God.

I have come to do thy will. This is something we have as our heritage that so many people in the world today do not, which is a purpose. What is my purpose? Am I just going along to get along? Do I do my job just because I need money? Why do I need money? So I can eat and have a place to live and something to drive and something with which to communicate.

It has become one of the utilities, one of the necessities of life now. And, well, why am I living? Why am I working? Why am I communicating? Well, I just am. I'm here, so why wouldn't I? What's the purpose? What's your goal? What's the outcome? When you get to the end of your life and look back over it, what will it mean? Well, we have a ready and substantial answer to that question because everything that we accomplish in this life of a positive nature, everything that is done in submission and obedience to God goes forward.

You keep it. You redeem the time. You have used your assets here in terms of time and opportunity to purchase things of eternal value.

So when you are tempted to be discouraged, when you are tempted to be downcast, when you are challenged to maintain a good attitude and to keep on keeping on, when you are challenged to bite your tongue and guard the door of your lips, when you are challenged to

keep a good attitude and look at the extent to which a thing is good and the fullness of the glass rather than what is missing or lacking, it seems like, well, what does it matter? What goes on in my soul? As long as nobody knows, what's the harm? You accomplish divine good in those decisions, in those spiritual accomplishments. You maintain your patience. You maintain your peace.

You maintain your joy. You maintain your focus. You maintain your sense of mission, your sense of priorities, your pursuit of Christlikeness and your pursuit of being pleasing in God's sight.

Your offering of the Leviticus chapter 1 whole burnt offering. Your offering of the Leviticus 2 grain offering. Not just who you are and your attitude of submission and recognizing that everything you are and have belongs to God, but in chapter 2, my work.

This is what I do. We talked about no honey. And even though honey is such an amazing food substance, it doesn't take any work.

By the way, it is not vegetable in origin either, except indirectly. Flowers don't produce honey. Bees produce honey.

And there is an insect worker in between the pollen and the honey. And this is one of the primary reasons it's not included. The things in the grain offering are things that are brought into being and brought before God through diligent human endeavor of a legitimate nature.

It is legitimate to seed the ground, to grow and husband crops, to harvest them, to thresh them, to grind them, to roast the grain in the fire, and then to grind the grain into flour and then use the flour to make food. It is legitimate to grow olives, to harvest them, to put them in a press, to get the oil. It is legitimate to find the frankincense.

In many cases, they had to buy this from people that were coming from caravans because even in the ancient Near East, it wasn't a ubiquitous or necessarily native plant. But it is the product of a process of human work. And that's what this grain offering represents.

So we dedicate ourselves first. But with that dedication and the expression of our faith and our hope and our love, in the chapter one sacrifice, there is the works. James says, faith without works is dead.

I will show you my faith by my works. And so it's not enough to believe. It is not enough to assent.

It is not enough to agree. It should reflect and manifest itself in how we act and what we do. It should change our goals, values, our priorities.

And there should be an outworking. There should be some grinding of flour. There should be some collection of oil and of that which is over and above, that which makes it special, the

frankincense.

Not the casual inclusion of things that are corruptible or that are outside God's parameters. We do it in obedience. We do it in faithfulness.

But it is human work that is involved. And that's what this represents. So these things apply to us.

There is one law for both the stranger and the native Israelite. And that harks forward to our day and our time. So the question becomes for us, how do we do that? Well, as we proceed forward in our study of this sacrifice and look at the pictures and the metaphor that it represents, these ideas and answers to these questions will become more clear.

So we'll pause here and take our break. And when we come back, we'll move forward in Leviticus chapter 2 and its parallels so that we fully understand what it means to dedicate not only ourselves, but our work and our endeavors to God.