

Ephesians 14-08-17b

We're back looking at the passage in Ephesians chapter 5. Therefore, be ones who do what they have seen God doing, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. What is the means of doing the sweet-smelling aroma thing? Where does the power come from? What is the motivation? We understand that the sweet-smelling savor takes things that are normally sort of intolerable and makes it tolerable, makes it acceptable. It's okay.

I can put up with this, right? It hasn't gone away, but it's workable. It's okay. What makes this happen? How can you and I do this for each other? I do extremely odious things.

I am a hard person to live with. All of us can be hard people to live with at one time or another. There is a sweet-smelling aroma that makes it possible to put up with us, even though we are in some ways and in some cases just not up-putable, right? What is the motivation? Why would you bother to be the sweet-smelling savor? Why would you bother to claim the sweet-smelling savor of the Lord Jesus in a situation where somebody is just an insufferable boor? Why would you do it? What is mentioned twice in the verse as the operative power? It is love.

Walk in love as Christ also has loved us. To forgive as God has forgiven us in Christ, we need to love one another as Christ has loved us. Where does this love come from? We've talked innumerable times about the fact that you can't just decide to love.

You can put a green pepper in front of me and tell me to love it, and until the crack of the end of eternity, I will never love green peppers. In the eternal future kingdom of God, I will still hate green peppers. I promise you this.

It's not food. It's just not. I don't know why people eat those things.

You might as well just grab a handful. There is no way that I can decide to love something that I find repellent, that I can make good arguments against its existence. I don't think there were green peppers until the fall.

I think you have thorns, you have briars, and you have green peppers. They all came about at the same time. So can I decide to love them? Oh, well, what if I had a command from God? Behold, thou shalt love thy green peppers, and evening and morning and at noon shalt thou imbibe them with thanksgiving.

I'm going to hell. It's just that simple. You cannot just decide to love.

So if it says walk in love the way Christ walked, how are you going to do this? I could give you all the compelling arguments in the world that you need to love, you ought to love, you'd better love, you're risking the judgment of God at the judgment seat if you don't, and you could go forth

saying, man, with this love thing, I'm Jonathan Edwards and the wrath of God and hellfire and brimstone, and Jonathan Edwards wrote that thing, I think, sinners in the hands of an angry God. If you want to hear something that will curdle whatever's inside of you, that's the sermon. I mean, he could frighten people into the kingdom of God with that stuff.

It wouldn't matter. You can't decide to love. So where does the love come from? Keep your finger here and turn over to, this is going to be to your left, John, Acts, Romans, and turn to Romans chapter 5. We're going to be right back in Ephesians 5, but turn to Romans 5. Therefore, everything in Romans 1 through 4, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Does this ring any kind of a bell? Having been justified in Christ, through Christ, we have peace with God. God is not angry with us. God is not coming after us.

God is not going to drop the other boot on us. We have peace. There's no conflict.

We're going to see in 2 Kings that there is a king up in the north, and one of the kings of Israel is going to get big for his britches and say, I'm coming against you. And he says, you better not. And he says, I'm coming anyway.

Well, then he gets thrashed. He should have just left and there was peace. He creates the situation where he goes up there, too big for his britches.

There's a little parable about the thistle. We will get there very soon. So same thing here.

We have peace with God through Christ. What a great thing. What a blessing.

If you can't think of anything else to be thankful for, be thankful for that. Through whom, the Lord Jesus Christ, also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. Not only have we been graced out, not only have we been justified, not only have we been given this peace, no conflict, no impending judgment from God in that sense, but we have access to grace and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It's an amazing thing. Not only that, verse three, but we glory in hard times. Now this doesn't mean what it looks like it means.

This doesn't mean hard times. Bring them on. Here.

Chop off one of my limbs. I just glory in hard times. Crash my car, burn down my house, run over my dog, abandon me, send me off to some far off place because I just glory in tribulations.

That's not what this means. We see the glory in tribulations. We recognize that there is the opportunity to reflect God's glory in hard times.

I'm not asking for hard times. I don't get up in the morning and say, oh God, please make this the

hardest day I've ever faced. Oh Lord, if you can find a way to throw me into tribulations today, bring it on.

You'd be nuts to pray this way. Well, isn't that what that would mean? We glory in tribulations? Only the seals glory in tribulations. I don't understand those guys, the Navy Seals.

They glory in tribulations and they're just bent. Thank God for the seals, but those guys are just twisted. Nobly so, thankfully so, honorably so, admirably so.

It doesn't change the fact they're just twisted. Be that as it may, it isn't that we glory in tribulations. It is that when tribulation comes, we look for the glory.

We say, look, there is a way in this challenge, in this hard situation that God's glory can be reflected. We're oriented toward. We are watching for.

We are trying to find the glory. We look at challenges. We look at hard times and tough situations from the standpoint of glory.

Where's the glory in this? It may be a very inglorious circumstance, but there is a way to reflect the glory of God. That's how we approach it. That's what defines the tribulation is somewhere in this.

God wouldn't put this in my life if there wasn't an opportunity to be faithful, to be found faithful and to reflect His glory. That's why it's here. The testing of your faith produces patience.

Let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. So if I'm in a tribulation, God is using this to perfect me, to make me a shinier, more polished reflector of His glory. That's what that means.

Glory in tribulations. Knowing tribulation produces perseverance. Perseverance character and character hope.

Looking to the future, recognizing that we are headed for the kingdom of the Son followed by the kingdom of the Father. That's where we're going. It's not an if.

It's not a maybe. It is an absolute fact. You and I are going to see the millennial kingdom of Christ.

You and I are going to see the kingdom of the Father. There's no question and there's no doubt whether we are going to have possession, whether we're going to have inheritance, whether we will have productive function and service and be able to reflect God's glory in those future kingdoms. That depends on us.

But it is a fact that you're going to be there and see it. In it is conditional. Seeing it because you

are saved is unconditional.

You're going to see it. It is coming just as certain as any other certain thing. Whether you can see it or not, the sun came up this morning and the sun will come up tomorrow morning.

I can guarantee it because there's at least a thousand years of sun-ups and sun-downs coming in this world. So the sun is going to come up. It's a fact.

The kingdoms are coming. Hope does not disappoint. Looking ahead and recognizing that these things are coming, you're not going to be sorry you did it.

When you're taking classes, many of you are recent students. When you're studying something, getting training for something and they say there is going to be a test, are you better off if you anticipate and prepare for the test or if you just show up and say, oh, there's a test today? Which is better? Well, if you don't think ahead, you are going to be disappointed. Hope does not disappoint.

Looking ahead and recognizing that certain things are coming and getting ready for them does not disappoint. Why? Because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. So I'm back to my question.

If we are to walk in love the way Christ loved, if we're going to implement this sweet smelling savor thing and even though something stinks, it's tolerable, we're not going to be deflected by it. We're not going to be caused to stumble. We're not going to fail the grace of God.

We're not going to lose the reflection of God's glory in it. The perfume is sufficient just as the sweet smelling savor offerings are sufficient for God to leave this world running. How are we going to do that? Well, it says in love as Christ has loved us.

Where does this love come from? Does Christ love us because we are wonderful people? No. Do we love each other because we're wonderful people? Sometimes. But that's not the love that is in view.

The love here, the sweet smelling savor type of love is love that is based on something else. This is the love of God that has been given to us. You think, well, I don't have the love, it's just not there.

Yes it is. Am I going to believe you or am I going to believe God? God says it is there. If you say it's not there, you're not looking in the right place.

Somebody ever tell you, you know, you're looking for something, well it's in the right hand cabinet. You open the right hand cabinet door, you don't see it. It's not here.

They say, yes it is. Look again. I'm telling you, it's not here.

My phone is in my purse. Can you get it for me? I open the purse, this great yawning chasm of, you know, Felix's bag of tricks, there's just an infinitude of things. You can pull ironing boards out of there and small cars and, you know, you open it up and you say, it's not here.

Yes, it is. Look again. If you say the love of God is not in your heart, look again.

Because God has put it there. Scripture says so. You have this love.

It is available. Don't kid yourself. Don't give yourself some easy excuse.

Well, I'm sorry. I just don't have that love. Yes, you do.

It's an act of God. Look at what it says in verse five. Hope does not disappoint.

Looking ahead and operating on the basis of the future, I want to be judged acceptable. When the Lord Jesus returns and I stand in front of him at the judgment seat and he says, what did you do in that situation where this person was a real pill? Just a hard case. You would be justified in pushing them away, pushing them aside, getting rid of them.

No more of you. You're a heathen and a tax collector. Get thee gone.

What did you do? And you say, well, Lord, I claimed your promise that your love is in my heart because of what? What is the intermediate agent? Is the love just dropped in there like a brick? What is the agency of this love? You can say it out loud. What is the agency of this love? It's the Holy Spirit. Aha.

Now we have a clue. If I'm having trouble finding this love and exercising this love and walking in this love, where should I look for the problem? Something is amiss in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my soul. If I have trouble loving you, if you have trouble loving me, this is in the policy sense of looking out for the interests of others, putting the interests of others ahead of your own.

That's the policy of love. This isn't warm, touchy-feely, oh, let me hug you love, although that can be present and it's a wonderful thing, but this is love as a policy. The Lord Jesus Christ doesn't come down and, you know, get gooey with all of us.

His love is a policy. God's love with us is a policy of benefit and of positive feeling, positive action. Love says, I will lay down my life for you.

Love says, I will sacrifice myself on your behalf. Love says, I will look for the savor rather than the stink. I am going to operate on the basis of the sweet-smelling savor.

I still detect that there's something in the room here beyond the perfume, but I choose to operate on the basis of the perfume. It is okay. It is acceptable.

This comes from love. You can't do it without love. Where does the love come from? Not

ourselves.

It is the gift of God, just like our salvation. Well, if I'm having trouble finding it, what's the problem? I just can't find it in my heart to do X when it comes to this other person. You know why you can't find it? Something's wrong in your interaction with God's Holy Spirit because that's where it comes from.

Do you see how practical and how down-to-earth the provision of God is? He doesn't just give us these abstract platitudes and say, Oh, be happy. Oh, be loving. Oh, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.

Just as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you, walk in love. The love has been given to us in and through the gift of the Holy Spirit. So if you're having trouble with the love aspect, quit working on the love and start working on cultivating the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

How do you do that? Any idea? Oh, Holy Spirit. Let's just pray to the Holy Spirit. Oh, Holy Spirit, come like a dove, descend upon me.

Is that how it's done? You already know how this is done, right? How do we cultivate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? He's there. Well, what does He talk with? It's a courtesy if somebody speaks to listen, right? With what does the Holy Spirit speak? How does He talk? Is He just an emanation? Is He an impulse? Is He kind of a, Hey, Sam, go to the right? Is He just giving us advice in sort of a spooky, impulsive kind of way? How does He speak? What's the voice of the Holy Spirit? Say it out loud. It's the Word of God.

That's what we're doing right now, right? We're looking at the Word of God. We're giving the Holy Spirit something with which to speak. Jesus said He will not speak from Himself.

He will take of the things of me and He will impart them to you. That's what Jesus told the disciples. This is the upcoming church age motif.

Holy Spirit doesn't talk on His own. He takes the things of Christ, the mind of Christ, the Word of God, and lifts it into our conscious thought processes if we are qualified, if we have qualified ourselves. How can I hear that voice? How can I be impressed with what the Word of God says? Well, I've got to get rid of any sin that is an impediment.

Does God enjoy coming into a filthy environment? Got to clean it up, sweep the house, acknowledge sins, make sure that God the Holy Spirit has a sanctified temple in which to dwell, in which to reflect His glory. Clean up the temple, the glory of God will shine. Leave the temple neglected, unclean.

When you're expecting people, any of us that host church, we're expecting people that we appreciate and that we enjoy, and we want them to have a pleasant experience coming. So what do we do? When we know people are coming, what do we do to our house? Clean it up, right? If

you want God the Holy Spirit to be welcome and be comfortable and be willing to speak and able to minister, what do you do? Clean up the house. He's God.

You clean up the house for each other. You can't clean up the house for God? What about the Lord Jesus Christ? Revelation 3.20, I stand at the door and knock. Oh my gosh, Jesus is at the door.

Quick, get the sweeper. Quick, wipe the cabinet off. Throw that stuff in there.

Take out the trash. The Lord Jesus is at the door. Can you imagine? Think about your physical house where you live right now, whatever it may be, apartment, house, wherever you live.

Knock, knock, knock. Ding, dong. And it's not Avon, it's the Lord Jesus.

It's the Lord Jesus. What's going to go through your mind? Among many other things, what does my house look like? Am I ready to receive the greatest guest, capital G, in the universe? Well, think about this. What I'm saying to you, what I'm offering you from the Word of God is, this is a doable thing, not because we have to be exceptionally great people, because we're not.

How is this doable? It's doable because God has given us the ability to do it. You just have to go use what God has given. We need love to do the sweet-smelling savor.

We need love to do what we have seen God do. You don't have to generate the love. You don't have to justify the love.

You don't have to rationalize the love. You have to cultivate the love in cultivating the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Cultivate it.

Make an environment. You know what the Holy Spirit enjoys? We say, well, let me put out a book this person might enjoy if they're going to stay for a short time, or let me lay in some food in the refrigerator that this person enjoys. Let me have a beverage that we know that they like.

If they like iced tea, we'll make some iced tea. If they like plenty of water, we'll be sure we've got ice, especially when the ice maker is not working. If they like a certain chair, let's clear out that chair and make sure it's available, because that's the one most comfortable for them.

Whatever it is, we think ahead and we say, let's make an environment. What does the Holy Spirit enjoy? He enjoys the Word of God. So not only do we attend Bible class, but we bring it to mind at other times.

We review. We spend some quiet time and think, now what was that we covered on Friday, on Sunday? What I heard on the radio, what I read in a book, what I saw when I review my notes. Make an environment.

Listen now, you can't do the plan and purpose of God without the power of the Holy Spirit. You can't, and you won't. And you say, I don't understand, I just fail all the time.

I'm just giving up because I just can't get it done. There's people that can do that, I'm just not one of those people. Liar, liar, liar.

You are lazy and you're giving yourself a shallow excuse. You can't do it because you won't do it. Because God has given us all of the power.

It is not of us, it is of Him. And when it is of Him, the reason it doesn't happen is choice on our part, not inability, it's choice, or lack thereof. Don't kid yourself, don't give yourself a weak, lame excuse.

You think that excuse is going to hold up at the judgment seat? Oh, you know me, Lord, I'm just too weak. He's going to say, seriously? I gave you my Holy Spirit. I gave you the living and powerful Word of God.

Now what's your excuse? I have no excuse, I just chose not to use it. Romans 5.5, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. We didn't earn it, we didn't deserve it, we didn't have to climb a mountain for it, we didn't have to dig a hole for it, He's already there.

What excuse do you have for not walking in love, not operating on the principle of the sweet-smelling savor? You have no excuse. Don't kid yourself. There's no circumstance, there's no excuse for not observing these one another commands.

No excuse. You have divine power, you've got the power of God Himself that flung the galaxies in space to do this. Not an excuse in the world.

Don't be deceived. Does that ring a bell? Put away the lie? Put away the lie. The flesh is going to try to tell you that lie.

Back to Ephesians 5. Therefore, be the ones who do what they have seen God doing. It's a command. Like dear children.

Children who do what their parents do because they have seen it, they admire it, they recognize its value. And walk in love as Christ also has loved us. Now, do we know how to do this walk in love thing? Yes, we do, because we know where the love comes from.

It is divinely given in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and we know how to make that work. It's not a mystery. It's not a pie down low.

It's near. It's easy. It's straightforward.

It is a choice. It is a priority we set, a goal we pursue. An offering and a sacrifice.

Offering and sacrifice. Why those two words? Why doesn't it just say offering? Why doesn't it just say sacrifice? Did you ever wonder about that, offering and sacrifice? We talked about the sweet-smelling savor as one aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, His redeeming, atoning work. Same thing here.

What is the emphasis on an offering? If you offer something, could I just, if the room were empty, could I stand here and offer something? Anytime somebody makes an offer, you know, a company makes it, we've got a special offer. Well, you've got, it's the person to whom it is being given, right? They can't make an offering. They can't make an offer if there's not somebody to receive and take up the offer.

Offering emphasizes God as the recipient. An offering. This is focus on God.

I am offering something to Him. Isn't that amazing that we could even have the ability to offer something to God who has everything, created everything, and yet we have the privilege of offering something to Him. Offering focuses on God as the recipient.

How about sacrifice? This is easy now, right? Sacrifice means it costs me something. Remember David up there looking at Arona and the field? I will not make an offering to God from that which costs me nothing. It is an offering and a sacrifice.

It's not really an offering. You know, if I give you a gold coin and then you turn around and do something with it, it costs you nothing. You didn't earn it.

You didn't deserve it. It's a freebie. Sacrifice means this is going to set me back in some way.

Did coming to earth as a human being and taking on the form of a servant, did that cost Jesus something? Of course. Philippians chapter 2, He was willing to do it. He did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped.

He let it go. Jesus Christ had to let go of something to come here. And that's a sacrifice.

Notice that the sweet smelling savor principle means not only you're going to do this because you're looking to God and you want Him to be pleased, but it is going to cost you something. It might cost you your pride. It might cost you a sense of justice.

I'm going to even the scales. I'd really like to kind of make this person feel how bad they made me feel. I just think, you know, the unfairness of it, they need to recognize the unfairness of it.

It's a sacrifice. There is always going to be that element. If you make an offering, you know, in Israel, do they say, well, you know, the ones that you would have to get rid of anyway because they've got a bad leg, they've got a big scar, they're blemished, they're spotted, they're sort of

unfit.

Any of those, take those and present them to God. Is that how the offerings worked in Israel? What did you bring to God as a sacrifice? The best. You've been breeding your cattle for generation after generation after generation, 10, 20, 30, 40 years.

You finally get this bull. He comes out. He's the healthiest, most terrific-looking calf you've ever seen in your life.

He's muscled, he's fit, he's just stellar. You think, oh, man, with this bull, what I can do with my flock? God says, bring it to me and kill it before the Lord. You say, well, what about his brother? I mean, he's good.

Nothing wrong with him. Seriously, the best? The nature of a true offering is also sacrifice. I bring God my best.

Why? Because I trust God that if I bring him the best, he's not going to let me come up short. In a human perspective, this bull is all of my future. This wonderful ram is going to be the scion of all of my future flocks of sheep or goats.

But I bring him to the Lord and sacrifice him. Why? You talk about an act of faith, an act of recognition, that God is greater than human principles of breeding, that God is greater than human viewpoint and the human ideas of what entails and brings about success. That really becomes an offering and a sacrifice.

When you come before God, not just with this object, but with a heart that says, I trust you, that you will not leave me orphaned and needy when I bring you the very best that I have. It's the heart that brings that that makes the difference. Same thing here.

As Christ has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice. You can't do this right if it doesn't cost you something. And it will.

We have to let go of some human ideas about what constitutes justice, what constitutes fairness. That's what Jesus did. Was Jesus' life on this earth and his arrest, trial, and crucifixion fair? Think about it.

Offering and sacrifice for the sweet-smelling aroma. It will allow toleration, putting up with. It's not gone, but it's workable.

But fornication and all uncleanness. As I said at the end of the first session, does the work of Christ produce universal salvation? You know, you've got your Unitarian Universalists that think everybody's saved, everybody's, you know, they're just all distances, many roads to God, etc. Those that are far off, those that are when God appears, everybody will be reconciled.

Even these profound, you know, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins atheists, they're all going to see the light. When they see God, you know, they've had kind of a hard path, but they'll get there. Everybody will be saved.

No. Are there believers who are still going to share in inheritance and reward in the eternal future? There are some who will not. Read Revelation chapter 20.

Outside the walls of the New Jerusalem are a category, set of categories of people. They are saved, they have eternal life, but their share in the victory spoils, in the blessings and rewards and opportunities for reflecting God's glory, for serving Him, for moving into the next phase of God's plan. And believe me, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it hasn't entered into the heart of man, the things that God is going to do when we get to the kingdom of the Father.

You might as well try to explain your laptop to an ant as trying to describe for us now in this life what God has prepared for those who love Him. It's infinitely beyond our capacity. I just know it's great.

It is from God and it's something that will be so incredibly desirable. But we take it on faith because we can't understand it now. Our brain is too small.

We're too dimensionally limited. We can't understand history that doesn't require sequence. We can't understand time that isn't time.

We can't understand things that don't have beginnings and ends. We can't understand multidimensional space and operation. It's just, I mean, take an earthworm and tell him about your physics project.

It's just not possible. But it's coming. So that is expectation.

You live in the light of that expectation. But there are those who are going to forfeit all of that. Forfeit it all.

No chance. No opportunity. They will be outside.

And their meros, their portion, is in the lake of fire. Now, this has implications for you and me. Should we tolerate everything? Should we just spray more glade? You know, well, that's a worse problem, so just give me a second can here.

Sooner or later, I'll mask it enough that I can put up with it. No. There are certain things God will not tolerate.

God will not allow into His kingdom. Outside. Removed.

Separated. In the darkness which is outside. Cut into and apportioned its inheritance with the

hypocrites.

Those who make a good show but don't really engage in this Christ-likeness, in this God-following. And here's the list. Fornication and uncleanness and covetousness better not even be named among you.

This is talking still about what do we tolerate, what do we perfume and allow, what is covered under the sweet-smelling savor and what is absolutely not possible. Well, the first one is fornication, and it's not what you think. What is suggested in the standard definition of fornication, you know, illicit physical relationships, may be a subset of this, depending.

But this is talking about something more general and more specifically defined. This is a really interesting study because this word has roots in the Greek world and it is a translation of a Hebrew word in the Septuagint. And when Paul uses this word fornication in verse 3, he is reaching into a very specific set of ideas.

And it's a lot bigger than just, did you sleep with somebody without benefit of marriage? That's not really what is in view. Well, we need to know what this is because this is a dividing line between what we will extend the umbrella of acceptability over as an offering and a sacrifice to God and what we will not. Remember, there are sacrifices that people tried to bring before God that were not accepted, right? There are criteria for that offering and sacrifice.

If we are to do what we have seen God do and if we are to walk the way Christ walked, did Christ accept everything and everybody? Do you remember a little soliloquy the Lord gave the seven woes to the Pharisees? Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! Here are the things you do. The Lord Jesus did not tolerate that and the sweet-smelling savor does not cover it and it will not stand at the judgment and people who practice those things will not share in a great majority of the potentialities in the future. It is a horrible price to pay.

And here's the final point for this morning. There are things that are beyond the pale. I was explaining this to the girls the other day.

Do you know where that phrase comes from, beyond the pale? It's not P-A-I-L and it doesn't mean something that so drains the blood out of your face that you're just too pale to stand it. What does it mean, beyond the pale? Well, if you've ever heard of a paling fence, this is like a picket fence. Paling, P-A-L-I-N-G.

A paling is a slat. It's a stake or a stick. And you would mark out the borders of the thing by pounding a stake into the ground.

You could say beyond the stake. Beyond the pale is beyond the marker post. You've pounded a stick in the ground and said, this is the limit, this is the border, this is the edge of my garden, this is the edge of what I'm staking out for a house foundation.

Well, if something is beyond the pale, what does it mean? It's outside what we're talking about. It's beyond. There are things that we do not, as believers, regardless of how vital and active the Holy Spirit is and how much love we have, there are things that by accepting them and tolerating them and embracing them, we do not bring a sweet-smelling savor before God.

We become a stench in His nostrils. It is an unacceptable offering. It is a forbidden sacrifice.

It is illegitimate and not right. There is a limit. There is a very firm demarcating line between the sweet-smelling savor that covers a multitude of sins.

Remember that? Love covers a multitude of sins. It covers a multitude, but it doesn't cover them all. And there is a limit.

That's why verse 3 begins with the word, but there are exceptions to this, and we're going to have the list. Well, we need to know what these are so that we don't wind up getting so universally loving and tolerant that we allow sin in the camp, that our offering becomes polluted and corrupt. Read Malachi, if you want to see what God thinks about corrupt sacrifices.

He's not happy. Well, this is where we will pick up next time, but we'll close this morning in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You that You not only lay out for us the landscape of Christian life, of our spiritual function before You, but You have given us the means. You have given us the enablement. You've given us the guidance so that we know when and how to do the things that You have commanded us and that You have enjoined us to do.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will enlighten us, will shine the light of Your Word in our souls so that we can see clearly where we are pleasing in Your sight and where we need to make changes, where we can improve, where we can purge out the old leaven and ensure that when we bring ourselves before You as a living sacrifice, that we are holy and acceptable. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.