

A Living Sacrifice, week 2

11/2/2017 Andy Figueroa

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

What does St. Paul mean by “a living sacrifice?” How do we do that? What does that have to do with giving?

In his use of the word *therefore* St. Paul reflects back on all that he has written up to this point about *the mercies of God*. God has **given us mercy**, salvation through Jesus Christ, instead of the punishment we deserve. Then, St. Paul uses the language of Old Testament worship, *sacrifice*, indicating how we are to respond, by giving ourselves over entirely to God, not as dead sacrifices, but as we say in the Holy Eucharist, *our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee...* accepting His gift and being transformed by His love. This is our *spiritual worship*, offering our whole lives to God with *praise and thanksgiving*.

The Elder Zacharias of Essex has said that the essence of worship is exchange. We offer to God what God has given to us, and receive in exchange what we could never have by nature. *All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee.*¹

In the Holy Eucharist liturgy, we re-enact the ancient drama, presenting to God a portion of what we have received from Him, as described in Deuteronomy 26:2-4, where it reads, “you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving

you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ...Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.”

The gifts that we provide as part of our worship are tokens of the *living sacrifice* that St. Paul calls us to present. Our offerings also provide the money for Holy Trinity’s vital day-do-day operating and maintenance expenses: pay, electricity, insurance, repairs. Let us not undervalue the importance of what we give.

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:15-16

You will find a copy of this article and past articles at: <http://2chronicles36.org/>

¹ <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2010/05/07/our-selves-our-souls-our-bodies-more-on-faith/>

