

The Cross in the Light of the Sanctuary

Sermon #1031

Study by W. D. Frazee—February 18, 1967

In invite you to turn to Galatians the sixth chapter, where we will find our text in the fourteenth verse. Galatians 6:14. One of these wonderful inspired statements that God had Paul write down so that we all might share the blessing.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” Galatians 6:14.

Today the cross is looking upon with veneration, with feelings of gratitude, devotion, but in the generation to which Paul wrote the cross was an object of reproach. It represented the place where the worst criminals were put to death. And so for Paul to say that he would glory in the cross is something that was very hard for the Greek world with their intellectual superiority to see any light in. The Roman world, with their appeal to the power of force, laughed at the idea. The Jewish world stumbled at the cross.

There was nothing in human nature that responded to the idea that there was glory in the cross. There is nothing in human nature today that responds to the true glory of the real cross. For this reason it is very important that we should ever keep in mind that which God has told us about it, for to us it is spoken as to Peter, if we discern something of this glory, “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 16:17.

So let us gather around the cross this morning. To help us in this we shall look once again at the sanctuary, for in the sanctuary we have the plan of salvation in outline. That is why God gave it to us. You remember the Psalmist says, “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.” Psalm 77:13. Thank God that way reaches where we are and leads from where we are to where God is.

You remember that in this ancient sanctuary that God had Moses make, when He called him up there in the mount and gave him this pattern, He said, “Moses, make it like what you saw. Make it like the one in heaven.” Surrounding this sanctuary was the court. In the court we note two articles of furniture. The laver, where the priests washed before they ministered in the sanctuary, and the altar of burnt offering where the sacrifices were slain and offered.

In our service last Sabbath we noted the invitation of God to His people to meet Him there at this altar. This altar represents the cross. So as we study the cross this morning in the light of the sanctuary service, we shall turn again to Exodus 29:38. This altar, as you will observe, is not the golden altar inside the sanctuary where the incense was offered, rather it is the brazen altar in the court where the sacrifices were slain.

The cross where Jesus died was not in heaven. It was here in this earth. And it was outside the gate, you remember. So Jesus came to this world from heaven to give His life a sacrifice for us. He came where we were.

“Now this *is that* which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: *This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee” Exodus 29:38-39,42.

Where does He meet us? At this altar of sacrifice. We come there to this altar and we see there what our sins deserve. We see the sacrifice slain. We see the smoke ascend as that sacrifice is consumed. We say, “That is what I deserve. My sins made this necessary. Lord, take my sins, consume them. Take my life and use it in Thy service.” Here we meet with God.

Now, I want you to notice that expression “continually” in the 38th verse, and in the 42nd verse, “continual.” What is it that is continually? This offering. This sacrifice.

“*This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations” Exodus 29:42.

“This *is that* which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually” Exodus 29:38.

In other words, friends, if you went up there in the morning you saw the smoke ascending from that altar. There is a lamb on the altar. You come back in the evening and the smoke is ascending. Another lamb has been sacrificed. Come back tomorrow morning, what will there be? The sacrifice is still there. Another lamb has been sacrificed.

But never forget, in the reality, there is only one lamb. Who is that? Jesus. Jesus.

Can it be that He is sacrificed continually? Not in the sense, of course, that He was on Calvary. The nails were driven once. He died once. He was buried once. He

rose again once. And He ever liveth to make intercession. But there is something about the mystery of this that we need to meditate on, dear friends, that is this—that the burden of sin which broke the heart of the Son of God on Calvary has rested on Him since sin began and can never be lifted until sin is over.

This is the lesson that we learn as we look at that altar this morning and we see that smoke ascending.

“This shall be a continual burnt offering” Exodus
29:42.

A continual burnt offering. As Israel gathered from their tents around that sanctuary morning and evening and saw that smoke ascending, God sought to impress them with this fact that the plan of salvation is an expensive plan, that to forgive sins costs something. It cost heaven everything.

Now unfortunately I must tell you that they came to look upon this thing as the years and ages went by in an entirely different way. They came to look upon these sacrifices as the way in which they paid off for their sins. Wasn't that a tragedy?

In other words, a man would think, “Well, I have sinned. I will go pay off. I will take my lamb up there to the sanctuary. I will bring that and sacrifice it, and the priest will put it on the altar, and he will eat part of it, and that will pay off for my sin.”

That was the plan of the Devil, to get them to twist and pervert the whole thing. And in that way, that which God gave as a message of His love, became instead the instrument of the Devil's teaching to give people the idea that there was something that they could do to placate the deity. That there was something they could do to pay off for their sins.

This is pure paganism. Satan studied the sanctuary service. From the perversion of it grew much that we see in the pagan religions over the world today. In many parts of the world we see in the different heathen customs, remnants of this sanctuary service, perverted, twisted, so that human beings think that by some offering of blood, perhaps, or food, or in some way that they can atone for their sins, that they can get right with the gods, the spirits that they worship. All of this is paganism.

God desired them to see in that altar, not what they could do to placate God, but what God had done, and was doing, and would do to get close to them and take the burden of sin from them at an infinite cost to heaven. That was what God desired them to see.

That is what He wants us to see this morning, dear friends. He wants us to see in this offering upon the altar the gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord as He offers

Himself upon the cross, and in the sanctuary above to take away our sins and bring us into close harmony, close fellowship with Him. Oh friends, I am glad for this altar. Aren't you? I am glad for this wonderful altar.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” Galatians 6:14.

Now, last Sabbath we noticed another lesson that I would like to mention just briefly and go further with. That is that this altar is not only the place where Jesus gives Himself for us, but where we give ourselves for Him. This identifies the altar with the cross also. Let us turn this morning to Matthew the sixteenth chapter and notice the twenty-fourth verse.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” Matthew 16:24.

To follow Jesus means then to take up what? The cross. We sing “Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.” Why does He speak of the cross here as our cross? The answer is, friends, the cross is ours. It is what we deserve. When we come to Christ and take up the cross, we are simply submitting, mark this point, to have sin killed now instead of having to die with sin at judgment day.

May I repeat that? The wages of sin is what? “Death.” Romans 6:23. The soul that sinneth it shall? “Die.” Ezekiel 18:4. Then if I continue on with my life of sin, what will be the end of it? What will be the end? Death. Yes. That is the end result.

We see it in the physical world. The man that smokes may get lung cancer, or he may get a coronary attack. Somebody else transgresses God’s law in some other way, the result is death. Not some arbitrary decree of God that is the consequence, the inevitable result of transgression. But my dear friends, in an infinitely more important and more serious way, the wages of sin is eternal death, everlasting death, permanent death, spiritual, physical, literal death. Death forever. To be cut off from God. To never live. To lose life. That is the result of it. That is the consequence.

Now when Jesus went to the cross, He took that kind of death for us. The Bible calls it in Revelation chapter 20 the second death. That is the death of the sinner, the death of the transgressor. My point is when you and I come to Christ and accept the cross, that means, please don’t lose this point, that means that we are accepting the fact that sin must die and we are willing for it to die now in us instead of waiting until judgment day. And if we will do that God promises to give us a new life which, instead of dying, can live on forever. That is eternal life. It is the life of Jesus Christ.

In other words, when we look at that altar, dear friends, we have to recognize that one way or another every sin in us must die. One way or another. If we keep the sin, then we will die with it at judgment day for the wages of sin is? Death. If we will give up the sin now, then that sin can be severed from us and it can die, friends. That old nature can die and God has promised to give us a new heart, a new life, that is

worth everything. Oh, I am thankful for that this morning? What do you say?

But human nature doesn't like to die. Just imagine. Remember those thieves that were there with Jesus at Calvary as the executioners took them and put them down upon the cross to drive the nails through their hands and feet, do you know what they did? They wrestled with their executioners. Believe me, they weren't weaklings either. They put up quite a fight. And it took those strong, hardened Romans soldiers to grab them and hold them and tie them down and drive the nails through.

But Jesus meekly submitted. Dear friends, which will you do? Believe me. Sooner or later we will meet the penalty. The question is whether we will wait until circumstances, time, grab us and bring us to the realization of the results of sin, or whether, looking at Jesus and His love, looking at that altar and the smoke of the lamb ascending, we say, "Lord, I will come and submit. I will be willing to have my sinful nature put on that altar. I will be willing to give up my way. My way."

Did you ever hear that expression "my way?" We hear it in the home sometimes. I think I ought to have my way part of the time. Deep inside we would like to have our way how often? All the time. And how the human mind schemes and plans and thinks how to get its way.

Turn now to Isaiah the 53rd chapter and I want you to see the result of that.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to..." Isaiah 53:6.

To what?

"...his own way..." Isaiah 53:6.

And what is the result?

"...and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" Isaiah 53:6.

Then as we see that lamb being consumed there on that altar, as we see Jesus dying on the cross, what do we say? There is what it costs to have my own way. When we see that we say, "Well that is too expensive. I cannot afford to break the heart of the Son of God in order to get my way. That is too expensive. I will give up my way. I will be willing for my way to be sacrificed, my life to be sacrificed." That is what Jesus meant when He said, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself." Matthew 16:24.

What do you say when you deny somebody something? No. Someone has said that that is the hardest word to pronounce in the English language. No. Such a little word. But here what God asks us to do is not to say, "No" to somebody else, it is to say "No" to who? Ourselves.

Turn to Luke the ninth chapter. There is a little word that Luke wrote down from what Jesus said here that is missing in what Matthew wrote down. I want you to get this added word. It is so important.

“And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”
Luke 9:23.

Which word is in Luke’s record that wasn’t in Matthew’s? Daily. What does that mean? Every day. How often was a lamb put on that altar? Every day. And if you went back the next day, what was there? Another lamb.

I am going to take a little card and use it to represent my life. Jesus invites me to come to the cross with Him, to come to the altar with Him, and put my life there with His. Is that right? But I say, “Lord, what is going to happen to me if I do that?” He says, “The same thing that happened to Me. I gave myself for you, now I want you to give yourself for me. It took all I had, now I invite you to give all you have.”

Look again at this wonderful fellowship that comes as we share His cross.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:20.

He gave all for me, now I am giving all for Him. My point is, it is to be done how often? Every day. “You mean I do that today and I must do that again tomorrow?” That is right.

“Oh, but I gave myself to Christ five years ago, ten years, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years ago, won’t that take care of it?” No.

“This *is that* which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually” Exodus 29:38.

Every morning the life must be placed upon the altar. Every evening the consecration must be renewed.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice” Romans 12:1.

Oh friends, Let’s do it! What do you say?

Now I wish you would go to Leviticus the first chapter and I want to show you something very interesting about this altar and the sacrifices placed upon it. Leviticus

one. This tells about coming to this altar there in the court, a man with his offering of the flock or of the herd. The fourth verse says that he was to put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering so that it might be accepted for him. The third verse says that he must offer it of his own voluntary will. God doesn't force anybody. Then he was to kill that sacrifice. And then began a most interesting work.

Notice the sixth verse.

“And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces” Leviticus 1:6.

That offering was cut into pieces. What was done with it?

“And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar” Leviticus 1:12.

Now I would like to suggest a very practical application to this here, friends. You know there is some people that are willing to give everything to the Lord, but there is some thing that they hold back. I can illustrate it. If I were to ask, how many of you would like to make an entire surrender to Jesus Christ of everything?, I trust every hand would go up.

But now suppose the Holy Spirit begins to get down to precise details. What about this thing? What about that thing? Will you give Me this? Will you give Me that? Can God’s highest and best will be done in this particular thing? Right at that point some people hesitate and hold back. God sought to teach them in this offering that as they came and put their hand upon the head of the sacrifice and slew it, then they were to separate it into its peices and put it upon the altar piece by peice.

May I suggest that some of us might get help, friends, in placing ourselves, our lives upon the altar peice by peice? Let me illustrate. Here are my ears. Can you visualize placing your ears upon that altar? What might that involve? Oh that might involve that tonight or tomorrow when somebody has some juicy morsel of gossip that they want to share with us, that we stop and think, “Oh no. I don’t have those ears any more. I put those ears on the altar. Those ears belong to Jesus. They are not mine to satisfy my carnal nature.”

Might that effect what we tune into on the radio? If my ears are on the altar, would there be some things that I wouldn’t have time for? Yes. Here are my lips. Shall I put them on the altar? Oh yes. And that would affect what goes out of the lips in speech and what comes in through the lips in food and drink. Is that right? My, my, what a lot of life that would affect. Wouldn’t it?

Here are my eyes. Suppose that I would place them there on that altar. Whose are they? They are God’s. What will I look at that then? Only that which pleases Him. Only that which He wants me to behold. I will pray the prayer of the psalmist, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.”

Oh friends, do you see how we can just take the body as they did the sacrifice peice by peice, part by part, organ by organ, and present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. I am so glad, friends, that as we do that, the dear Lord is willing to consume everything in our nature that is unlike Him, and give us a nature that is like His own.

Turn to Ezekiel 36 please.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be

clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” Ezekiel 36:25-26

Notice, He takes out the old and He gives us the new. That old nature as we place it upon the altar and it is consumed, He says, I am going to give you a new heart. A new heart. That is why we need to come to the altar, friends, and meet with God so that the life we lay down may be consumed by His sacrifice, so that the life He came from heaven to share with us may be imparted to us.

Not only do we meet with God here at the altar, the cross, here is where we meet with one another. This is the basis of fellowship. Let me illustrate that. Suppose I have seen my brother do something that I don't think is right. He might even have done something against me. If I don't come to that altar, friends, I may feel a grudge, I may feel a separation. But when I come to that altar and I see Jesus dying there for me, I remember that He died not only for me, but what? For him. Is that right?

I may think that he deserves something. When I come to that altar I see that Jesus took, not only all I think he deserves, but a lot more. I remember that Jesus has taught me to pray when I come to the altar, "Father forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." And so there at the altar I find, not only reconciliation between me and God, but reconciliation between me and my brother because Christ pays the debt. He dies for my sin. He dies for my brother's sin. And as I give up myself for Jesus I thank God for the covering righteousness, not only for me, but for my brother.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" 1 John 1:7.

Friends, these are some of the precious lessons as we meditate at the altar which typifies and symbolizes the cross of Calvary. Let's gather around the cross. What do you say?

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