

Daily Devotional, April 29, 2021 The Cost of Sacrifice

“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again, and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest Jesus) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:11-12

The most difficult part of reading the Old Testament are all of the rules and regulations about animal or crop sacrifice that took place at the Jerusalem Temple. Jews ceased that practice when Rome destroyed the Temple in the year 70 A.D. As Christians, we celebrate the good news that such ritual behavior is no longer required of us—Temple or no Temple--because Jesus died and atoned for our sins on a cross.

The latter part of the Old Testament calls for a sacrifice of “doing justice and serving the poor and needy” while the New Testament calls for a sacrifice of mercy and service from the disciples of Jesus. In the church today, we typically think of making a sacrifice twice each year...once in November when we prayerfully commit our financial pledge of a tithe and again during the forty days of Lent as we journey with a fasting, praying, repentance as we journey with Jesus in the wilderness of temptation.

Sacrifice, though an old concept and practice, is very timely! What is being asked of every person in the world right now is sacrifice. We give up a little (in some cases, a lot) to gain a benefit for ourselves and others. Namely, to keep the number of infections and deaths down and move past this pandemic as quickly and safely as possible, we have been asked to give up many things. We make fewer trips out, do less socializing, Still work, learn, meet and worship from home. Although we are slowly crawling out of hiding, many of these are these things are still required, necessary, and carefully prescribed sacrifices. Will there be benefit? Will the future reward be worth the present pain? We continue to pray and trust that the answer will be “yes!” That’s how it works with sacrifice, especially the one Christ made for us and for our salvation. Although we have been asked to sacrifice much, we owe everything to the One who made the greatest sacrifice of all!

Prayer: Holy God, you seek justice, mercy, and service from us. May our careful, costly, disciplined practices quicken the coming of healing and wholeness in this world you so greatly love. Amen.