

**TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE CONSECRATED****Philippians 3:7-14**

**INTRO:** The other day my friend told me a modern day parable of sorts that is amazingly apropos in our CoronaVirus crazed world – especially with Easter approaching. The story goes like this:

A plague is raging through the population of the world and millions are dying. And then an antibody that has been found in the blood of one little boy is discovered to be exactly what is needed to make the vaccine that will save humanity. Doctors call in his parents and tell them of their findings and the great need for their little boy's blood. The parents are pleased their son can be of such service and agree to allow a blood draw on their son. Then they ask the doctors how much blood will be needed? And the doctors sadly reply, "All of it."

That reminded me of the allegedly true story about a little boy named Johnny whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The story goes that his sister's doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

"Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister."

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. "Doctor, when do I die?"

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated earlier, why his lip had trembled when he'd agreed to donate his blood. He's thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he'd made his great decision. He'd give up his life for his sister.

Both stories tug at our hearts because they involve children. Both stories are also poignant in this troubled age. Both stories remind of us of the true story of Jesus's sacrifice on the Cross. Like Jesus, they are a picture of one giving all others, in one case, for all of humanity. One is a made up story, the other possible true, but certainly an urban legend. The other is literally the Gospel truth. How willing would you be if your life was required for a sibling or a child? I think most, if not all, of us would be willing to do that? But how about being put in the place of the little boy in my first story? Would you give your life for humanity? Just asking.

How about what God asks of us as his followers? What are you willing give up? Would you give up everything by being living sacrifices? Listen to this: **(Read Romans 12:1-8).**

Francis Havergal wrote a song that most of you are pretty familiar with entitled *Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated* where she offers all she is to God. She begins with

*Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in endless praise.*

Then she begins her next verses with offerings to back up that commitment:

*Take my hands, Take my feet, Take my voice, Take my lips  
Take my silver and my gold, Take my intellect, Take my will, Take my heart, Take my love,*

And she ends with,

*Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee.*

That is the picture of a living sacrifice. Alive in Christ and living for him. Let's look at it.

**Therefore . . . in view of God's mercy . . .**

- Paul has spent eleven chapters laying out some powerful theological teaching and then he turns the page and tells his readers, with that kind of mercy fully available to all who will call on his name, now it's your turn. Be holy. Let me explain:
- It would be wonderful if you would read the letter to the Romans leading up to this passage and you'd see what I mean, but until you do, here's a very quick run-down: Paul lays out the state of humanity when they reject God. He explains how all humanity falls short of the glory of God, even those who really want to be

good. He explains that God's grace is available to those who believe and receive it. He also shows the frustration of trying to be good rather than believing in a God who is good and promises to make us good. And he shows us, when that happens, there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- Now, the reality is, I have tremendously reduced the most powerful and intense theological treatise ever written down to just a few words, but I have a method to my madness, I simply want to point out God's incredible mercy in sending Jesus to be our substitute on the Cross. He did all the work, but now is the time for our own sacrifice. And so he says, essentially, it's your turn, crawl up onto the altar. Specifically, he says

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### **Be living sacrifices**

- Not slaughtered lambs, but living, breathing servants of God, living and breathing for him. All of us. He says *offer your bodies as a living sacrifice*. Kenneth Foreman says, "*The Christian life is not simply a spiritual one. If we are not Christian in and with our bodies, we are not Christians.* In other words, if your heart is in the right place, your body is too. Paul was fighting against the Greek concept that would soon make huge inroads in the church that taught if your heart is okay, then your body can do what it wants. Paul points out otherwise. Every aspect of our being is on the altar for God's use.
- So, be holy and pleasing to God – that means walk with him. Luke Keefer says that holiness means that we are not "... *mere bumper sticker Christians. Rather one senses that the Christ-like character reflected in them is due to their persistent cultivation of God's presence in their lives.*" If it's our true and proper worship, it means that it's what we are 24/7 and not just when people are watching – because God is ALWAYS watching – and it's him we are pleasing.
- And we don't conform to the world. I think it was J. B. Phillips paraphrased this as "*Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold.*" You see, too many people are falling into the trap that to be relevant we need to be more like the world. The truth is being relevant means showing the world what Jesus looks like and transforming it, one person at a time.
- Instead be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Be transformed. Paul says in another letter, *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* Ephesians 4:22-24. Being living sacrifices means new clothes. The old moth eaten and worn life is to be changed for a new and holy wardrobe. We are different and new. To be consecrated means . . .

### **We live like the renewed people we are**

- The remaining verses of our text tells us to take all we have and offer it wholesale into God's service.
- God has given us gifts and talents and we are to use it for the Kingdom. In verse 6 Paul tells us *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.* Every one of us has at least one gift and they are to be humbly, willingly, generously, and cheerfully.
- Renewed people minister out of their attitudes, interests and actions and that means that everything we do, whether it's our home life or our job, literally drips with whose we are. This is why I remind us on a regular basis that we are Christ Followers between Sundays and not just when we're here. I know you know that. But it needs to, more and more, be reality.

**Conclusion:** As I finish this up, let me quote Luke Keefer from *EVERYTHING NECESSARY* as he describes what it is to be living sacrifices in what he calls "full consecration. It gives us "takeaways" that put meet on the bones of what Paul means when he says to be living sacrifices. He says "... *life as a whole must be consecrated to God. One of the great temptations for the Christian is to divide life into sacred and secular compartments. God's rule is acknowledged in the former area, but exempted from the latter. There is something of the feeling that, having paid their dues in certain religious categories, we are entitled to run other aspects of life according to personal desires.*" Being a Christ Follower is full time so it's not part-time with full benefits of eternal life.

He goes on to say, "... *consecration means that kingdom values take priority over other concerns.*" The pull of this world with its temptations and worries must not distract us from walking in holiness. The "good life" as the world sees it if not a priority for a Christ Follower – the holy life is. The bad news that dominates the headlines must not distract the Christ Follower – the Good News is what should be our focus.

Finally, Luke writes “. . . consecration involves giving ourselves as “living sacrifices”. God is interested in the surrender of our selves to him more than the things which we consecrate to his use. . . . The lack of true consecration is manifested in reluctant, tardy, and intermittent obedience.”

Let's be eager, timely and fully involved in our obedience. Then we will truly be consecrated. Let's mean what we say when we sing, *Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee!* Amen.