

## From the Ashes - Sacrifice (Palm Sunday)

Big Idea: *The Hebrew people experienced the temporary forgiveness of sins by the blood of an animal sacrifice.*

*The sacrifice of Jesus, to leave heaven and offer himself on the cross, was an atoning sacrifice that is effective throughout eternity.*

*Through Christ, we are completely redeemed from the ashes of our former life.*

Prayer: *“Jesus, thank you for your sacrificial life. Without your life, death, and resurrection, we would all be lost in our sin. Remind us today that we’re no longer slaves to sin, but **alive in You**. Help us to **live our lives sacrificially**, and be willing to lay our lives down for others.*

**1 John 2:2 - Christ is the sacrifice that takes away our sins and the sins of all the world's people.**

---

**Intro:** Today, we’re going to be talking about **the sacrifice of Jesus** and the impact his humble actions have had on all humankind.

**To illustrate the idea of sacrifice** I want to share a story with you from the trenches of World War II.

**“John Robert Fox** was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in May 1915. By all accounts, he was a smart, diligent young man and he earned a place at Wilberforce University. Here, he signed up for the Reserve Officer Training Corp, meaning he not only finished college with a graduate degree, but with a rank of Second Lieutenant. When war broke-out he took his commission and joined the 92nd Infantry Division, a segregated division for African-American soldiers that fought with distinction throughout the conflict.

With his unit, Fox was sent to the European theater of war. In 1944, he found himself fighting the Nazis in Italy. It was here where, in December of that year, he was tasked to stay behind in the small village of Sommocolonia, in Tuscany. The village had been overrun by Nazis, and Americans were in retreat.

***Fox found a house to hide in*** and, from the second floor, he used his radio to contact his colleagues.

***He called for artillery fire*** to be directed at the village in order to give the US forces time to retreat, regroup and then launch a counter-attack. Fox specifically ordered a barrage of fire *on his exact position*. The gunner who received the message pointed this out to him, assuming it must be some mistake. Fox, however, simply said: ***'Fire it. There's more of them than there are us.'***

***Fox's act of sacrifice was not in vain.*** As he planned, the artillery barrage did indeed give his comrades the chance to regroup and launch a successful counterattack. When the US army entered Sommocolonia, they found Fox's body surrounded by the bodies of nearly 100 Germans."

***The sacrifice*** of John Robert Fox ***gave life, opportunity, and victory*** to his fellow soldiers in a decisive battle with the Germans.

***The sacrifice of Christ also gives life, opportunity, and victory to all who would believe.***

***The sacrifice of Christ is so completely sufficient that there's no need for any other work to be done.***

There is much to learn from Christ in this area, let's get started; Main Teaching

---

## **I. Humility & Sacrifice**

***Philippians 2:6-8 - <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!***

***We already covered humility in week 2,*** so I'm not going to belabor the point again.

***I do have to take a moment to recognize where there is sacrifice... there is humility.***

- ***Christ willingly gave up Heaven to come to earth as a sacrifice for our sin.***
  - He **did not** hold onto His position and power, but
  - Instead **laid it all down** to be a humble servant and give up His life on a cross. He knew - - -
  - ***In order to rescue the world from the curse of sin, it would cost Him His life.***
- 

**II. There Is A Cost - *If you are going to follow in the footsteps of Christ, which is what it means to be a disciple, then you are going to experience sacrifice.***

Thankfully, ***Jesus is very straightforward*** about this and He tells us this in the gospels. Listen to his words from **Luke 14**

#### **Luke 14:25-33 - Leaving All to Follow Christ**

<sup>25</sup> Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

<sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

<sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it— <sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’?

<sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup> So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

This is admittedly **one of the more difficult passages** in the New Testament.

**Jesus' challenge is to give up family, plans, and position in the process of discipleship.**

Another way to say it, to **paraphrase the lesson** of this passage, is to say,

***"You have to be willing to let go of everything as you follow Christ."***

**If Christ sacrificed Himself to bring redemption, then you are going to need to do the same as you share redemption with others.**

---

### **III. Crucified with Christ**

I can almost guarantee you've heard this verse from Galatians before, simply because it **describes our position with Christ** and **our engagement with the world** around us -

**Galatians 2:20** - <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me

- Yes, **discipleship and sacrifice** can be difficult.
- Yes, you must be **willing to let go of everything** you once believed to be so incredibly important.
- Yes, **there will be opposition**.

**Yes, God will be with you always...**

- In fact, **He lives in you**, empowering you to live the life of faith.
- So as hard as it is to let go of things and make sacrifices -
- ***Don't forget*** that He's with you and He's the perfect High Priest;

**Hebrews 4:15-16** - <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Sacrifice takes courage, conviction, and confidence, but it's worth it.

---

#### IV. It's Worth It - So here's the encouragement today.

**Hebrews 12:1-2 - 12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus sacrificed His life for the joy set before Him.

- ***And let me tell you today*** – there is a -
- ***very real, deep abiding joy in serving others*** and sacrificing your life for someone else.

Think about the last time you went out on a service project...

- You sacrificed time, energy, and possibly money ***to serve and be a blessing*** to someone else.
- And you know what? ***I bet it felt amazing...***
- I bet you walked away having experienced a fullness that was different than you'd felt before.

Share a story here about serving others or a sacrifice for others?

***When we trade our selfish desires and wants for a life of discipleship and servicing others the sacrifices we make have meaning and purpose.***

- They have names and faces attached to them.
- When we serve others, we can see our selfless impact.

***Without the sacrifice of Christ, there's no redemption.***

Without the sacrifice of all the saints who've gone before us, ***there's no church***.

**Sacrifice is powerful, it can change the outcome of a battle...**

Like the story, I shared at the beginning of service. ***It can change someone's life who needs help.*** And it can redeem someone's eternity... **Think about that for a moment.**

- No matter how hard life has been.
- No matter how far from God you may feel here today.
- No matter how irredeemable you believe your life to be...

**The sacrifice of Christ was completely sufficient.**

Today is as good a day as any to rise above the sin and shame and **accept the gift that God has given you through His son.**

---

**CLOSE: Application - As we wrap up, I want to take a moment to recognize that today, the Sunday before Easter, is called Palm Sunday.**

- And on Palm Sunday many churches read the passage ***where Jesus rides a colt into Jerusalem.***
- In that story, ***Jesus was treated like royalty*** and all the people lay their cloaks down before him as he rides along.

**Luke 19:35-38** - *The whole crowd of disciples begins joyfully praising God in loud voices for all the miracles they have seen, and they say, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!", "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

**And then, as Jerusalem comes into view Jesus weeps over the city and says;**

**Luke 19:41-44** - *"If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."*

## **Next week is Easter Sunday**

It's a day when we **celebrate the resurrection of Christ** and the fulfillment of the prophecies about Him.

There were many contemporaries of Christ, many well-educated and faithful people, **who didn't recognize He was in fact the Messiah.**

For them, **the sacrifice** was nothing more than the loss of a human's life.

**But for those who believe, it's the promise of eternal life.**

- How will **the sacrifice** of Christ **change your life** this coming week?
- What are some **things that you need to let go** of in order to give your life, time, money, etc... **so that others may experience the life of the gospel?**

What areas of life are you being called to **greater sacrifice?**

This life of faith can and will be **a costly one**, but remember that **Christ is always with you**, He will **never** leave you nor forsake you.

---

**Next Sunday Invite folks to church with you!**

**Next Saturday 10 a.m. we are going to our neighborhoods and inviting folks to church.**

**Next Sunday we have a special day planned for the kids and lunch following service.**

**The following Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> we will have Communion and Baptism service.**