**1 Peter: We Offer Up Spiritual Sacrifices to God**

1 Peter 2:5

**Context**

When considering the blessings that are ours because of what God has done for us in Christ, we are overwhelmed with its magnitude. The depth and the riches they afford us are far reaching. Frankly, that has far more to do with the character and nature of God than it does with us as the beneficiaries.

He blesses His people. We live in light of those blessings and truths. As a result, He is faithful to us as we honor and glorify Him.

**Ephesians 1:3**—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

**Galatians 3:9**—So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

**Blessings of our union with Christ**

1. **We came to Him**

**1 Peter 2:4**—And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

* Coming to Him—our initiation into this union comes because we came to Him through regeneration
* Additionally, we come to Him in an ongoing way as a way of life

**John 15:4-9**—Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. **5**I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6**If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. **7**If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

* And coming to Him as to a living stone

1. **He made us living stones**

**1 Peter 2:5a**—you also, as living stones…

* He is a living stone, we are living stones
* He is the foundation and cornerstone; we are built upon that to become a spiritual house

1. **We are holy priests**

**1 Peter 2:5b**—…are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood

* God has made us to be priests in His house
* As priests, we have access to God

**Ephesians 2:18**—for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

**Hebrews 4:16**—Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

* In the OT, there were very specific blessings (and requirements) related to the priesthood
* In the NT (New Covenant), there are parallels to those OT characteristics
  + They were chosen of God; we are chosen of God
  + They had access to God in a unique way; we have access to God
  + They represented God to the people; we represent God to the people
  + **Application:** Remember who God has made you to be and the privileged status that we have. Function in light of the blessing.

1. **We offer up spiritual sacrifices**

**1 Peter 2:5c**—…to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. In the OT covenant, animal sacrifices were offered

**Exodus 29:10-19**—“Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull. **11**You shall slaughter the bull before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting. **12**You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; and you shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. **13**You shall take all the fat that covers the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and offer them up in smoke on the altar. **14**But the flesh of the bull and its hide and its refuse, you shall burn with fire outside the camp; it is a sin offering. **15**“You shall also take the one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram; **16**and you shall slaughter the ram and shall take its blood and sprinkle it around on the altar. **17**Then you shall cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and its head. **18**You shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the Lord: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord. **19**“Then you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram.

**2 Chronicles 35:11**—They slaughtered the Passover animals, and while the priests sprinkled the blood received from their hand, the Levites skinned them.

1. In the NT covenant, Christ offered once for all the perfect acceptable sacrifice never to be repeated

**Hebrews 10:11-12**—Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; **12**but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God

“The main task of the Old Testament priests was to offering of material, animal sacrifices, all of which pointed to Christ’s great sacrifice to come. These are no longer needed since Christ offered His all-sufficient sacrifice once for all. Now there remain for God’s holy priesthood only the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, seeing that all the treasures of God’s grace are now poured out upon us through Christ. Thus Peter writes regarding all his readers: “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”…to carry or bring up on the altar of their hearts.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Spiritual sacrifices matches spiritual house (v**5**)
2. The repetition emphasizes the fact that everything in the relation of the readers to God through Christ is now altogether spiritual.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Hebrews 13:15**—Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

**Romans 12:1-2**—Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. Paul uses “living” as much as Peter

**Philippians 4:18**—But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

**Revelation 8:3**—Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

1. In both covenants, sacrifices offered were to meet God’s requirements
   1. It was their best
   2. It was perfect, spotless, and without defect
   3. Equally true for our sacrifices today
2. Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ
   1. Christ alone is our mediator

**John 14:6**—Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

**Acts 4:12**—And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

* 1. He alone gives us access to the Father

**Hebrews 4:14-16**—Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15**For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **16**Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**9:11-15**—But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12**and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. **13**For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14**how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? **15**For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

1. Spiritual sacrifices God requires includes everything we have to offer—mind and body

**Romans 6:13**—…and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

* 1. Living sacrifices—not dead
  2. It is not unlike Abraham offering up the son of promise: Isaac (Cf. **Genesis 22:1-19**)
  3. **Application**: do we look to offer up ourselves as living sacrifices? Or do we have a tendency to crawl off the alter? Or we refuse to plunge the knife into those areas in our life that need mortification?

1. The acceptable sacrifice of praise and worship: what is it?
   1. To be clear, “praise and worship” isn’t simply isolated to our music and is somehow distinguishable from “the message” or “the preaching”
   2. It is more than just saying “praise the Lord”
   3. It more accurately includes an affirmation of who He is—including His attributes (**Ps 83:18; 86:5, 10; 90:2; 92:15; 99:9; 102:26-27; 117:1-2; 119:68; 139:1-7; 145:1-9; Rom 11:33; 1 Tim 1:17**)

**Isaiah 44:6**—Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

* 1. It is declaring what He has done (**Ex 15:1-18; 20-21; 2 Sam 22:1-51**, et al.)

1. Doing good and sharing

**Hebrews 13:16**—And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

**2 Corinthians 9:8**—And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed

**Titus 3:8**—This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

**James 3:17**—But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

1. True sacrificial generosity

**Philippians 4:10-19**—But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. **11**Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. **12**I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **13**I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. **14**Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. **15**You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; **16**for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. **17**Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. **18**But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. **19**And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

1. The ministry of spiritual reconciliation (evangelism and/or restoration)

**Romans 15:15-16**—But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, **16**to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

1. Our love and compassion for people

**4:8**—Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

**Ephesians 4:32-5:1-2**—Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. **1**Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; **2**and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

1. Prayers on behalf of the saints

**Revelations 8:3-4**—Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. **4**And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.

**Luke 1:8-10**—Now it happened that while he [Zacharias] was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, **9**according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10**And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

* 1. We often undervalue prayer
  2. We often make it a last resort

**Conclusion**

We live under the new covenant.

**Jeremiah 31:33**—But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

We do not offer sacrifices as they did under the old covenant. What does remain for us as priests are sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving based on His care and provision for us. Pray that it is well pleasing in His sight.

**Homework:** Memorize **1 Peter 2:4-5**

**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter

# John MacArthur, The Believer’s Privileges, Part 2: Union, January 22, 1989, [www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. Lenski, 90 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)