

“The Everyday Offering”

05/19/2019

Scripture: Hebrews 13:7-17

Please find with me Romans chapter twelve and verse one.

I want you thank you again for another opportunity to present God’s Word. As you know, there’s only one volume in the universe that has the life of God in it; the Bible, one living Book. There’s no greater book in existence.

This past week I received a call from a man who, for the first sixty-five years of his life, had the idea that the Bible was just another religious book and that it didn’t matter if he even knew what was in it. So, he never read it. He’s an avid reader and reads four or five books a week.

Now, over the past few months, he and a friend of his have been reading the Bible. They’ve completed the Book of Acts and the Book of Romans together. Each time they open it, they read two chapters. And this week they began the Book of Genesis. He was expressing to me how grateful he was for the Bible I gave him and, by the mercies of God, encouraging him to read it.

So, the Bible is a living, breathing Voice. It’s the Voice of Heaven. It’s the Voice of God. And when we read it and hear it and learn it, we are reading, hearing, and learning the LORD’s heart.

So, thank you for allowing me the privilege of sharing these words with you today.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “The Everyday Offering.” Shall we pray?

Notice my title “The Everyday Offering.” God is working on your life every day. He’s working on your character. He’s working on your mind. And, He’s getting you to know Him better as He does His work on your heart. And, if you’re anything like me, you think you have a working knowledge of God. But, then He surprises you by bringing something into your life you don’t expect and you don’t often like. But through that very thing, He teaches you something more about Himself. All this; every day.

And offering; an everyday offering. Did you know that God is looking for an offering from you today? That’s what I’d like you to see with me in this twelfth chapter of Romans at verse one.

Now, of all the passages in Romans, this might be the one you hear His heart most clearly. It’s the first verse of chapter twelve. Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

I want to begin with the word “mercies.” It’s plural, obviously. And it’s a reference to the first eleven chapters of this epistle.

What is Romans anyway? It’s an explanation. It explains God’s saving work, beginning, of course, with your life before salvation and moving you on to a life of usefulness to Him.

So, here’s Romans. First, an explanation of what it is to be unsaved, then saved, then an explanation of what it means to be united with Christ and then, here in chapter twelve, what it means to be surrendered to Him. Unsaved, saved, united and surrendered. Or we could say “in salvation He deals with your sins. And in the rest of your life, He deals with your sin and your self.”

Now notice the power of little words; verse one. The word is “mercies.” What is the simplest way to look at mercy? It’s this. Mercy is God reaching out to you, reaching

down from heaven. The main distinction between religions or the world and the Gospel of Christ is this. God reaches out to man. God does for you what you cannot do for yourself. We are, by nature, so lost that we can do nothing to help ourselves. So, God, in mercy does for us the huge work of salvation.

Mercy is the LORD doing something for you. Mercy is giving. Mercy is God extending to you something you don't deserve. So, the entire Book of Romans chapters one through eleven are encapsulated one little word; "mercies."

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Let me go back with you to the Old Testament for a minute. In the inner chamber of the Tabernacle and later, the Temple, there was a mercy seat. Have you ever wondered what that was? And why did God have Moses design a *mercy* seat for the Holy of Holies, a place where just one man would see once every 360 days? You see, whoever the High Priest of Israel was in any particular year, he and he alone, would enter the Holy of Holies.

Can you see how important this was? Only the High Priest; only once each year; and only with the blood of the sacrifice; and only on Yom Kippur. The holiest day of the Jewish year is Yom Kippur, which means "Day of Atonement." Only on that day would blood be sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant. On that day, the sins of the people would be covered.

Turn back in your Bible with me to the Book of Exodus, to Exodus chapter twenty-five, to the mercy seat. Exodus 25:17.

Exodus 25:17 "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. (18) And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.

(19) And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. (20) And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

(21) And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. (22) And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

Did you see what the mercy seat was? It was a solid gold lid; pure gold; forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide. It was the covering for the Ark of the Covenant. It was a lid. And on either side were two solid gold cherubs facing the mercy seat.

So, it was literally a lid. But, it was more than a mere lid. Look with me at this word from one of the writers of the Psalms. Psalm 99:1 "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."

And did you notice what the LORD says He would do at the mercy seat? He said, verse twenty-two of Exodus twenty-five. "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat ..."

The lid is the Hebrew word "Kippur." It means "covering." So, what is the mercy seat? It's the covering for the Ark of the Covenant *and* it's the place where God met with His people in their representative, the High Priest of the nation. It was at the mercy seat where the High Priest would annually come to atone for the sins of the people. It was so important that only one person could handle it. Only one man could enter the Holy of Holies and meet with the LORD and only with sacrificial blood and sin offering blood

that would cover their sins. On Yom Kippur the High Priest would sprinkle the blood all over the lid.

Now, let me read for you Romans 3:25 *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy-seat] through faith in his blood ...”*

This is the exact same word here in the New Testament as the Old Testament word “mercy seat.”

Folks, all of the mercy of God was extended to the entire human race one day. When? It was the day when Jesus went to the Cross. He shed His blood that day and His blood was the one sufficient sacrifice that could remove your sins.

Can you now see why Paul says in Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God...”*?

And why did the LORD have Moses construct the mercy seat? It was so that He could meet with His people.

Have you ever considered this; that the one thing God wants from you and me is our fellowship? The Cross, the shed blood, the death of Jesus, the burial, the resurrection, the ascension into Heaven; the whole reason was so that He might bring us near to Himself.

What is it that God wants? What is it that Paul appeals to you that you would do in this first verse of Romans 12? What do you think God wants from you? Here it is in just one word: fellowship. And folks, God’s ways and God’s plans are found in only one place. Do you know where that is? It’s in a Person. It’s in the LORD Jesus Himself. His mercy brings you into fellowship with Him.

So, can you see God’s desire is for fellowship with you in this verse? Paul says Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice ...”*

God’s mercies demonstrate that He wants your fellowship.

Everything in Romans is found in this one word: mercy. God is a God of mercy. The Gospel is the Gospel of mercy. The biggest need in every heart is mercy. And, apart from

mercy, you have one attitude and one question that your heart is asking “What does God want from me?”

The one thing He wants is *you*. He wants your fellowship. He wants you. And the means by which He achieves that goal is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Father sent the Son into the world in order to bring you near to Himself.

Ephesians 2:11 *“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; (12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes [formerly] were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace ...”*

So, in order to gain fellowship with you, God sacrificed His own Son. He allowed Jesus to shed His blood to pay the penalty for your sins. And, at the moment you trust in Christ alone, He extends complete forgiveness of your sins. God brings you near to Himself and you find fellowship with Him.

And how can you respond to such love and such a desire on God’s part to fellowship with you? One way; by your everyday offering; by offering your body to Him.

First, God’s mercies demonstrate to us that God wants our fellowship.

Second, God calls you to present an offering of yourself to Him.

Have you done that? Are you aware that all you have is rooted in His mercies; so that you are willing to present an offering to Him? Have you done it again today? Do you see that it’s a daily offering?

Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

Here are the terms you use when you bring your offering to the LORD: living, holy, acceptable, and reasonable.

This is how the LORD describes the one thing He looks for from you every day. Present to Him a living sacrifice. It's a holy sacrifice. It's an acceptable sacrifice. And it's a reasonable sacrifice.

Have you ever noticed how reluctant we so often are to do what the LORD commands us to do? And why is that? Isn't it because we're looking at ourselves instead of looking at Him? Who are you presenting this offering to? What has He already done for you? If, every time you hear or read one of the LORD's commands, you balk, you are missing out on the one thing that will make your life victorious and vibrant. And that is fellowship.

Romans 12:1 is all about fellowship. The LORD wants you know Him well. Husbands, do you not want to enjoy and experience sweet fellowship with the wife God gave you? Children, do you not want to experience sweet fellowship with your mom and dad? And, practically speaking, don't you want to have sweet fellowship with the people of God?

It all begins with Him. It begins with responding to *Him*. It begins with wanting to have sweet fellowship with Him. The great God of mercy has called you to fellowship with Himself.

You can't make it on your own. What did Adam do when he chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil over the experience of close fellowship with the LORD? What is it that inspires and encourages you the most? Isn't it that sweet fellowship with your Savior?

Jesus said "*Come unto Me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest...*"

And in Revelation three we read that the LORD knocks on the door of His Churches? Why? Because He wants to have fellowship with them.

A surrendered life is a life of fellowship with the LORD.

And Paul says it's characterized by life (a living sacrifice), holiness (a holy sacrifice), one that pleases the LORD (acceptable), and reasonable.

Where else can you find anything in this world that compares to life, holiness, being pleasing to God, and reasonableness? Nowhere. It's found only in fellowship with the Son of God.

Let me share with you just these three things by way of application.

One, this offering is based upon trust.

Never is an offering accepted by the LORD that is missing this element. He's invisible. Yet, we see Him with the eyes of our heart, the eyes of faith. The most definite things in life can't be seen with your physical eyes. And God is the Most Definite Person there is.

Do you want to live in His mercies? Come to Him every day with an offering of your body. And bring that offering by faith. He's The Trustworthiest of Persons. No one can be trusted like God.

Do you remember what it was like when you were a little boy or a little girl and you got hurt? Who did you run to? Wasn't it to a trustworthy person; your Mom or your Dad? Where did you find your greatest comfort? In the trustworthiness of Mom and Dad.

That's faith. And that type of faith honors the LORD most.

Then, two, besides faith is love. Who loves you? Who's so trustworthy that He totally loves you even when you aren't thinking about Him or are rejoicing in Him? He's The Loving God. And what does your Heavenly Father rejoice in more? He loves to have you love Him back.

Anyone who loves wants the one loved to love him back. Here's a word from the Apostle of Love, the Apostle John. I

John 4:18 *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”*

The only one with Perfect Love is our Heavenly Father. And when you have His love poured out into your heart by the Holy Spirit, then that Perfect Love removes all tormenting fears.

And the highest and best way to live your life is to do everything you do because you love the LORD. Do you have to suffer? Do it because you love Him. Do you have to work hard, to discipline yourself, to do things that are beyond yourself and out of your comfort zone? Do it because you love Him.

Everything that God is and all that God does is in the realm of love.

One, your daily offering of your body to the LORD is based upon trust.

Two, it's rooted in love.

Three, it's a matter of devotion. Any offering you present to the LORD must come from a devoted heart.

So, here's the question “To what or to whom are you devoted?”

Let me make it clearer by this question. “How much time do you devote to your cell phone?” Can you get through one full day without it? Can you get through an hour and not think about your cell phone, a text, a call, an emoji? You see, you're devoted to that cell phone. And what did you do before you had a cell? Do you ever think that some text might be there for you to read?

Devotion. If you are devoted to something, you think about that thing than most other things. You make time to think about it and you invest your life in it. Whatever you are devoted to will capture your heart.

One, the offering of your body to the LORD is based upon trust.

Two, it's rooted in love.

Three, it's a matter of devotion.

And last, it's a question of obedience.

Paul beseeches. Paul pleads. He begs. He urges you to make this daily offering to the LORD. But he doesn't command it.

Now, did you notice that God's commands often come clothed in His beseeching; that He always exhorts you to do best thing for you?

How many of you liked it when your children obeyed? How did you handle it when they disobeyed? Didn't you wish they had just obeyed? And wouldn't their obedience always be a benefit to them?

Well, it's no different with the LORD. How do you think He responds when you ignore Him, ignore His commands; ignore the pleadings of the Holy Spirit through verses like Romans 12:1?

“Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him” [The Message].

Folks, the LORD appeals to you every day to do only those things that will most please Him. And, at the top of the list must be this matter of the offering of your body to Him. It's His way. It's the best way.

It's based upon trust.

It's rooted in love.

It's a matter of devotion.

It's a question of obedience.

So, what will it be? After all God has done as described in Romans one through eleven, what will you do? What will you do today? What will you do right now?

Will you leave today the same way you came in? Or, will these 27 words encourage you to offer your body to Him? If not, why not? Because when you do, then your life with God will certainly be the adventure He intends it to be.

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 644 “The Greatest Thing”

I’d like to end with a letter from a missionary. It was a response to a letter that he had received his sister. And it describes for us a problem many of us face as Christians. The one who wrote this letter was a missionary to the Chinese. Here’s what he wrote.

“...I felt assured that there was in Christ all I needed, but the practical question was – how to get it *out*. He was rich truly, but I was poor; He was strong, but I weak. I knew full well that there was in the root, the stem, abundant fatness, but how to get it into my puny little branch was the question. As gradually light dawned, I saw that faith was the only requisite – faith was the hand to lay hold on His fulness and make it mine. But I had not this faith.

I strove for faith, but it would not come; I tried to exercise it, but in vain. Seeing more and more the wondrous supply of grace laid up in Jesus, the fulness of our precious Saviour, my guilt and helplessness seemed to increase. Sins committed appeared but as trifles compared with the sin of unbelief which was their cause, which could not or would not take God at His word, but rather made Him a liar! Unbelief was I felt *the* damning sin of the world; yet I indulged in it. I prayed for faith, but it came not. What was I to do? When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter...was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed to me the truth of our *oneness* with Jesus as I had never known it before.

“But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One.” As I read I saw it all! “If we believe not, he abideth faithful.” I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, “I will never leave thee.”

“Ah, *there* is rest!” I thought. “I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I’ll strive no more. For has not *He* promised to abide with *me* – never to leave me, never to fail me?” And...*He never will.*

Nor was this all He showed me, nor one half. As I thought of the Vine and the branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured direct into my soul! How great seemed my mistake in wishing to get the sap, the fulness *out* of Him! I saw not only that Jesus will never leave me, but that I am a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. The vine is not the root merely, but *all-root*, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit. And Jesus is not that alone – He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed. Oh the joy of seeing this truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding too may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ.

...it is a wonderful thing to be really one with a risen and exalted Saviour, to be a member of Christ! Think what it involves. Can Christ be rich and I poor? Can your right hand be rich and your left poor? Or your head be well fed while your body starves? Again, think of its bearing on prayer. Could a bank clerk say to a customer, “It was only your hand, not you that wrote that check”; or “I cannot pay this sum to your hand, but only to yourself”? No more can your prayers or mine be discredited if offered in the name of Jesus (i.e., not for the sake of Jesus merely, but on the ground that we are His, His members) so long as we keep within the limits of Christ’s credit – a tolerably wide limit!

The sweetest part...is the rest which full identification with Christ brings. I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize this; for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me, for in the easiest position He must give me His grace, and in the

most difficult His grace is sufficient. It little matters to my servant whether I send him to buy a few cash worth of things, or the most expensive articles. In either case he looks to me for the money and brings me his purchases. So if God should place me in serious perplexity, must He not give me much guidance; in places of great difficulty, much grace; in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? No fear that His resources will prove unequal to the emergency! And His resources are mine, for He is mine, and is with me and dwells in me.”

What is the nature of your service to God? What type of service do you bring Him?