

MAKING SACRIFICES FOR JESUS

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Matthew 16:24-27; Luke 14 :33; Philippians 3: 8; Romans 15:1-3.

LESSON 469 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Even Christ pleased not himself." (Romans 15:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 16:24-27

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Luke 14 :33

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Philippians 3:8

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

Romans 15:1-3

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that

notes:

A Service of Love

In the Bible we read of many who made great sacrifices in order to serve the Lord. They "denied" themselves of many pleasures and comforts because they loved God and wanted to please Him. Some religions require their followers to refrain from certain foods, and people think that they can please God in this manner, but the Lord is not pleased with such actions. Man cannot will God's favour by so doing, or cause God to give him a great reward even for punishing himself.

False Worship

A few years ago when our missionary was in Mexico he observed poor, sick Indian women walking across rough cobblestones on their knees as they approached the shrine of the Virgin of Guadeloupe. They expected to obtain favour of the Virgin and be healed of their afflictions, but it did not help them at all.

We read of heathen in foreign lands who even have cast their little babies into the River Nile for the crocodiles to eat, in order to win the favour of the gods, which did not even exist. But all these things are displeasing to the only true God. He looks down upon such people and tries to show them that He wants them to worship Him in spirit and in truth, from the heart.

Self-Denial

We sometimes hear it said that love knows no bounds in the service of its subjects. How true that is! A mother is easily awakened during the night when her baby cries, and quickly she arises to care for him; all day long the mother works to prepare meals for her husband and children; there are beds to make, floors to sweep, washing, ironing and canning to do. The father arises early and works through the long day, regardless of rain or sun. Most parents love their children, and without complaining they do their duties.

Men and women, boys and girls who are saved have given their heart and life to Jesus. It is true, they have their duties at home, at work or at school. But they should be more diligent in the things of the Lord than they are in temporal things. They should be waling to lay aside unnecessary activities in order to please the Lord and have more time for the work of the Lord.

Paul wrote to the Romans and told them that the spiritually strong people should bear the weak -- the newly saved or unsteady Christians; he said people should not try to please themselves, for "even Christ pleased not himself."

Jesus said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Let us try to learn what it means to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus. Life today offers a great variety of pleasures and activities that can occupy one's time from his first waking moment of the day until bedtime. Some of these things may not be sinful, either, but when we realise that time is short, and Jesus could come at any moment, we know that it is high time for every Christian to be busy with the Lord's work. We often see the motto: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

Godly Examples

reproached thee fell on me.

Let us study the lives of some of the men of God who made consecrations and lived lives of self-denial, who pleased God regardless of their own desires. Paul is among those who "hazarded [or risked] their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26). He did not consider his life dear unto himself, but gave up all for Jesus. Paul told of being beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, robbed; he suffered from pain, weariness, hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness. Also he carried upon his heart the burden for the saints of God, and fasted and prayed for them. He said very gladly he would spend and be spent for the children of God, and he had learned to be content, whether he had little or plenty.

David, too, denied himself of many things in order to please God. At one time after a battle, when he was extremely thirsty, two of the soldiers risked their lives to bring David a drink of cold water. But when they brought it to David, he said he could not drink it, because the men had risked their lives to secure it, and he poured it out as an offering unto the Lord.

Moses refused the wealth of Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

Abraham is another of those heroes of faith who lived a life of self-denial, living in tents, as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). When the supreme test came, Abraham did not hesitate to obey God, and offered up his only son, Isaac. Abraham believed that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead. When Abraham raised his knife to slay his son, the angel of the Lord stopped him and said for him not to do it, for now God knew that Abraham feared Him and loved Him. There was a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, and Abraham offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Service from the Heart

These and many others in the Word of God are examples of sacrifices, consecration and self-denial. Today the Lord does not demand such great sacrifices outwardly, perhaps, but He is reaching for our hearts. Are we willing to deny ourselves even of little things for Him who gave all for us? Let us examine ourselves.

Jesus said that whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, could not be His disciple. That does not mean that we should walk away from home but it does mean to hold loosely everything that God has given us, and be waling to give up anything the Lord requires. He may ask us to visit the sick, or study music so we can play in the orchestra; He may want us to give money for missionary work; He may show us someone who needs help, or He may want us to spend more time praying at the altar and studying the Bible.

We may miss having some things in life, but that is not important. We might look at other boys and girls who seem to have more money to spend for pleasure and clothes. What if we do miss a few things, the all important thing is to obey the voice of our Saviour, and be ready to meet Jesus when He comes and help others to find Him, too.

Our love for God is measured by our obedience to Him and the willing service we offer Him. Let us ask ourselves whether we love Him enough to deny ourselves and make sacrifices in order to serve Him better. If we have the genuine love and grace of God in our heart, we will do willingly and gladly whatever He asks of us.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by self-denial?
2. Name some things we can give up for Jesus.
3. Give three examples of men who made great sacrifices for the Lord.
4. What is the reward of true Christians who live lives of self-denial?
5. Can anyone win God's favour by punishing himself?
6. What can we do to have the blessing of God upon us?
7. What prompts a Christian to work for Jesus?
8. Is it a hardship for a Christian to obey Jesus?
9. What kind of service does a real Christian give to God?