

# God's Sacrifice

A sermon delivered Sunday Morning, November 6, 2016  
at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.  
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John 1:36

*And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"*

This is what I pray we do for the next few moments—behold the Lamb of God. There is no sight more beautiful than beholding Jesus Christ. May the Lord be gracious to let us see Him, that the veil would be pushed back and we could see the glory, power and eternity of this One we call the Lamb of God.

*"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."*

Oh, there is coming an hour when all will look upon Him. The Bible says they will look upon whom they have pierced. They will see Him. But in that hour it will be too late. Today is the acceptable day of salvation. Look and live. Behold Him. Let your heart turn away from all the things that have interested it and see Him. Watch Him. Study Him. Think upon Him.

Can you not see Him climbing that hill for you? Can you not see Him stumbling under the weight of your sins as He carries the cross, the very emblem of your sins? Look at Him. See Him there in that court, if you can dare call it a court, as those religious men dressed in their resplendent robes passed judgment on the Son of God? How dare they? Yet they dare.

Look at Him standing there, meek and mild, mild as, well, a lamb. The Lamb of God. There He stands in His peasant robe, now bloodied from the beating with the hands and fists of those who have mishandled Him. His nose is dripping with blood. His eyes are starting to swell shut. Yet He answers them not a word. They blaspheme and curse Him, yet He does not curse them.

Behold the Lamb standing there.

Behold Him standing in Pilate's hall. He asks, "What is truth?" when Truth is standing before him. Oh, Pilate, if only you could have seen. If only your eyes had been opened to behold the Lamb of God, you would never have asked that question. You would have bowed down before the Lamb.

Watch as they lead Him out the Via Dolorosa, the road that led to the dark and harsh hill Golgotha. Watch as they law Him down and strip Him of His clothes. Behold Him there, your Savior, your Redeemer, with nothing to cover His shame. Naked for all to see.

Watch Him as they take the hammer and nails and drive it into His flesh and into the timber. Then they lifted Him up for all the world to see. Behold the Lamb of God as He bleeds profusely to wash away your sin. I love the song that says, “The blood ran red and my sins washed white.” There it is. Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world. He’s hanging, bleeding there for you and me.

See the anguish. See His countenance marred as He bears the weight of your iniquity. Watch Him as He grinds bone on iron as He pushes Himself up to pray, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Behold, He is reviled but reviles not in return. He only utters kindness and compassion for His killers. Have you ever seen such mercy? Has there ever been a display of such lovingkindness as this?

Yes, you know about the cross, I’m not asking you to behold just a crooked, twisted piece of timber, I’m asking you to behold the One who hangs on that twisted timber. Look at Him there. Remember, He’s there for you. He’s there for me. I think we have lost sight of this crucified Savior. We don’t see Him in His shame and torture. We speak of His death so casually, with such complacency, it doesn’t move our hearts anymore. Oh that God would be gracious to this body right now, to me right now, and let us see the crucified once more so that my heart would be melted and my eyes would weep.

Behold the Lamb of God so that He would once again capture our hearts and our affections. That’s what we need. We need Jesus to capture our hearts and attention so we don’t serve Him in mediocrity with a cold heart. I need to see Him as He is so I may serve Him in full devotion, the devotion He deserves. With all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

That’s what I pray we can do here, with God’s help.

## **I. The Sacrifice Belongs to God**

### **A. The Sacrifice is Attributed to the One Offering It.**

Notice the text. I want you to notice the two-letter preposition: “of.” Behold the Lamb of God. It shows possession, it’s an attribution, attributing that this is God’s sacrifice.

In the Old Testament, sacrifices were attributed to the person offering them. It was true in the very beginning with Cain and Abel. It was true with Abraham as he led Isaac up Mount Moriah. It was true of Moses and the whole sacrificial system of worship. When a man brought his animal sacrifice it was attributed to him, it was *his* sacrifice. This was established in the law of Moses.

*Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, 2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD,*

*you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. 3 If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. 4 Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.” (Leviticus 1:1-4)*

In other words, that lamb, goat, or turtledoves, stood in the place of its owner. He had reared those animals. As a herdsman, he had bought them and kept them for this very moment. It was his sacrifice. If you were not a herdsman, and you had no lambs, goats, turtledoves, or bulls, then you would purchase these so they could be yours. Your sacrifice, your lamb.

Do you remember when King David made his way to the threshing floor on the same Mount Moriah where Abraham offered Isaac? He had come to purchase the threshing floor to erect an altar and give sacrifices to stay the hand of God as the death angel had passed through the nation because of the sin of David in numbering the people.

When David arrived, the owner of the threshing floor and the oxen, when he discovered what David wanted, wanted to give it to him. David said no. “No, but I will buy it at a price, for I will not offer a burnt offering to the Lord which cost me nothing.” See, he wanted it to be his sacrifice. It had to belong to him. It had to cost him something. It had to be sacrificial in order for it to be substitutional.

Yet the Bible says, “Behold, the Lamb of God”

## **B. God Has No Need of a Sacrifice.**

God has no sins. He’s committed no wrongdoing. He cannot do so. It’s as unimaginable as pigs flying, that God could sin. Yet this is the sacrifice of God. It’s attributed to Him. This is His lamb. Why?

Because the sacrifice that is given from us had to come from something far better than what we could offer. This is God in His compassion looking upon you and I.

## **II. The Sacrifice is Provided By God**

This is the lesson we learn from the story of Abraham offering his son, Isaac to God.

### **A. A Sacrifice Was to be the Best of the Best.**

When you gave an offering to the Lord it was not to be the leftovers, it was to be the foremost. It was not to be the latter fruits but the first fruits. In every way, the law suggested and taught, “Give your best to God. He’s worthy of nothing less. He’s worthy of your absolute best.” You do not bring the Lord some offering that is inferior. You don’t keep your best sheep from God. You don’t keep your best cattle, your best goats, the best of your flocks, you give Him your absolute best.

*“Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.”  
(Leviticus 22:20)*

He would not accept the lesser, He would only accept your best. The Bible goes on to say that it's an abomination to give God something that's second best. It might be good, but if it's good and not best, it's unacceptable to the Lord. Yet, what do we offer the Lord most of the time? I ask for honesty and sincerity now. Isn't it true that we so often offer to God that which we wouldn't even call a sacrifice?

It's amazing. People give what they do not want and think they have given much. We're to give Him the best of our energy, as much as that might be, you're to give it to Him. You give Him the best of your intelligence, as much as that might be. The best of your emotions, the best it might be.

I think of William Cowper, who was given to great fits of depression, you know him as the writer of some of the great hymns like “God Works in Mysterious Ways, His Wonders to Perform,” and “There is a Fountain.” That was William Cowper. Yet, he was given to depression, and he learned from his pastor, John Newton, a great hymn writer in himself (Amazing Grace), that even in your depression you are to give God your best. Seek the Lord even in your hours of darkness.

If that's the best you have, then that's acceptable to Him and that's what He deserves. But anything less, anything secondary is an insult to this One who loves us most. Give Him the very best.

## **B. God Required Abraham's Best.**

*Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”  
(Genesis 22:2)*

What did Abraham do? What God required. He had come to know this God. He had beheld Him. In his beholding, he knew God deserved the best and had the right to claim it. So he packs up with Isaac and a few servants and they head out on a three-day journey to the Mount Moriah, where one day the temple would be built. There, Abraham takes his son Isaac and builds a stone altar. He binds Isaac's hands and feet, lays the wood upon the top of the altar, then scoops up his son and lays him on the altar. Then, with a knife, unsheathed, is willing to give God his very best.

But, as you know, something happens.

## **C. God Provided the Substitutional Sacrifice.**

*And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” 12 And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and*

*looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided." (Genesis 22:10-14)*

Little did they know, hundred of years later, not too far from that place God would provide the substitutional sacrifice for us.

See, the lesson is this: not only does God deserve our best but we must be willing to give it in faith, trusting Him. Also this: even our very best is not good enough. Your best day is not enough to lift up to the Lord and say, "Am I acceptable in Your sight? I've lived a good life today. I've kept Your commandments today. I've done all that I know to do today." Your very best is not enough.

God has to provide us the very best.

I had the privilege last night to be at the retirement celebration of Pastor Louis Moore, the pastor of Way of Christ Bible Fellowship. I was asked to be one of the speakers and give some reflection about our dear brother. I was amazed by one of the testimonies given that night by a dear sister in his church.

She came to the podium and spoke about the friend in she has in her pastor. She said that he had gone to her aging and ill mother's home many times and two weeks before she died, led her to the Lord. Prior to this, even knowing her mother was a faithful churchgoer, she knew she wasn't right with God. She would ask, "Mother, are you sure you're right with the Lord?" And her mother would answer, "I hope so. I hope all the years of my service will be enough."

Louis faithfully shared the Gospel with her and two weeks before she died she accepted Jesus Christ. She beheld the Lamb of God, which takes away her sins. After that, her daughter visited and said, "Immediately, I saw my mother and I knew something was different. Her countenance was different. I even felt a holy presence. I said, 'Mother, are you saved?'"

"Oh yes, now I know that all my years and labors in the church was not good enough, but Jesus is!"

Our best is not enough. God has to provide the sacrifice for us. We do not live by our good works. We live on His and therefore our good works are built upon the foundation of His, so in the end it's really Him working through us.

That's why we have this two-lettered preposition here. "Behold, the Lamb of God." It's God who provides the substitute who represents you.

There's another reason for the word *of* here.

### **III. The Sacrifice is Mediated by God**

#### **A. No Human Priest Offered Up God's Lamb.**

Through the centuries, the High Priest had offered thousands upon thousands, if not millions, of animals. He who filled the office of the High Priest, carried out what his father and his father's father had done, so that by the time Jesus came along, sacrifice after sacrifice had been given to cover the sins of the people. But the Bible is very clear: the blood of bulls and goats does not take away sin. In fact, it's impossible.

Therefore, on Golgotha's dark and dreary hill, there is no High Priest in his linen garment and ephod committing this sacrifice. Not at all. The Lamb of God is sacrificed by God. He, God, becomes our mediator and offers up the substitutionary sacrifice for us.

#### **B. The Lamb is Sacrificed By the Father.**

The Bible tells us in what I consider the heartbeat of the Gospel, Romans 3:25,

*“whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,”*  
(Romans 3:25)

In other words, all of the previous actions of killing lamb and goat and bull, was merely ceremonial. It was God and His mercy that overlooked the sins of the people. But no more. No more winking at sin, no more turning a blind eye, no more overlooking. No. On this day, my sins were mediated, they were sacrificed, punished, by God. Fulfillment of the justice of God took place because God did it.

The Father would leave this to no man. He could not entrust this to any of us. He had to do it. And He did. The Father slew His own Son as a priest would slay the goat or lamb. The Father places our sin upon His Christ and, as a priest, would lay His hands upon the sacrifice.

The prophet Isaiah in the 53 chapter, verse six, says, “All we like sheep have gone astray...” There is no other priest to mediate us. Even the priest have sinned. All have gone astray.

See, when we beckon and plead with you to become a follower of Christ with us, it's not from a feeling of superiority that we are somehow better and more deserving and we're looking upon you with some kindness or mercy. No, all like sheep have gone astray. We have beheld Jesus, the Lamb of God, and we know that if He can wash our sins away He can wash your sins away. Your conscience can be cleaned for the very first time. Why? Because there's none of us good, no not one. There's none righteous. None seeks after God. Their mouth is like an open sepulcher, the poison of asps is under their lips. Their feet are swift to shed blood and the fear of God is not in any of our eyes until we behold the Lamb.

We're pleading that you would look with us and be saved, not because we feel superior but because we love you and want you by us, by our sides being filled with the glory we are filled with when we behold Him.

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)*

I'm so thankful for that last word. All. There is not a person in this room whose sins were not put on Jesus. I don't know how to explain that. I believe there is a definiteness in the death of Jesus, a particular redemption, a definite atonement, but I also believe that the Bible says the iniquity of us all were put on Him. Somehow, dear friend, your sins, my sins, were placed upon Him. You don't have to keep living the shell of a life you're living. Come on.

I'm begging you to be honest with yourself. God knows it's true. Many of us who know you, know it's true. We see it in your eyes, the windows of your soul, there's an emptiness. Is there not? There's a pain, a longing that just can't get met and satisfied. Am I not describing reality about you? It doesn't have to continue this way. The Father laid your sins upon the sacrifice as the priest would have laid his hands on the sacrifice before he raked the knife upon the throat.

The priest did it because he wanted you to know the forgiveness of the weight and guilt of your sins. The Father slays the sacrifice just as the Old Testament would slay the sacrifice.

*"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted." (Isaiah 53:4)*

Jesus was afflicted in a way we cannot even describe it. I think to even try borders on blasphemy.

The Father offers the sacrifice according to the orders of His holy justice.

*"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;"*

Father, forgive me when I feel like You don't love me. Forgive me, Lord. I read this that it pleased You to bruise Him and put Him to grief when You make His soul an offering for sin.

*"He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. I I He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities." (Isaiah 53:10-11)*

Your sins are gone. You bear them no more. Not one stain or spot is on your record today. There's no reason for the Father not to come and minister to you, right now. You say, "Oh yes, I've not sought the Lord these many days. It's been weeks now. I haven't opened my Bible or even prayed. I've sinned. I've done things I should not have done."

Yes, but He bore your iniquities. He carried your pain. He bore your sins. Come! Rejoice in the Lamb who was slain by the hand of the Father. Look, the High Priest of Heaven has slain the sacrifice He provided on your behalf and your sins are gone. Receive it. Claim it at this moment. I am forgiven by the blood of His sacrifice. Believe it. Receive it. You will be washed by the blood.

Do you need to be led in a prayer? No. You just have to say, "Jesus, what You have done for me, I receive and trust that it's true." He will do the rest because He bore our iniquities.

I want you to see one more thing. Yes, He's the Lamb of God, He's God's sacrifice provided by God, mediated by God, but I want you to hear me as I bring this message to a conclusion:

### **C. The Lamb Goes Freely.**

He went freely to the slaughter. The Father didn't have to bind His hands and feet as Abraham bound Isaac's. Jesus said, "I lay down My life freely. No man takes it from Me." He goes freely.

Many, many years ago I read to you what is called "The Father's Bargain," by one of my favorite Puritans, John Flavel. It's been a long time but I have to read it to you again.

Let me read to you the words of John Flavel in a message he preached back in the 1600s.

Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving his bargain with Christ for you:

See, the Father and the Son had an agreement before you were ever born, before the world was ever made. Of course, we don't know what that conversation was like, but maybe Flavel gives us some clue.

Father: My son, here is a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice! Justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them: What shall be done for these souls?

Son: O my Father, such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their Surety; bring in all thy bills, that I may see what they owe thee; Lord, bring them all in, that there may be no after-reckonings with them; at my hand shalt thou require it. I will rather choose to suffer thy wrath than they should suffer it: upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.

Father: But, my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite, expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare thee.

Son: Content, Father, let it be so; charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it: and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures,



(for so indeed it did, 2 Cor. 8:9. “Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor”) yet I am content to undertake it.

Isn't that amazing? What love for you, that for you He was willing to go. Flavel ends the conversation by addressing his hearers:

Blush, ungrateful believers, O let shame cover your faces; judge in yourselves now, has Christ deserved that you should stand with him for trifles, that you should shrink at a few petty difficulties, and complain, this is hard, and that is harsh? O if you knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in this his wonderful condescension for you, you could not do it.—John Flavel

When you see what Jesus was willing to do for you, how can you give Him so little of you? And then, when problems occur, when difficulties arise in your life, how can you sit and complain to this very One who didn't complain when your sins were laid upon Him and He suffered for them? How can you complain?

#### **D. The Lamb of God was Provided for Me.**

The Lamb of God was provided for me because my best, your best, was not good enough. Hallelujah.

I had no sacrifice. I'm like that guy Jesus tells the parable about, the one who shows up at the wedding but has no garment. When the master of ceremonies shows up he says, “Friend, where's your garment?” He had none. So they said, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him out.” I had no garment. My rags are filthy. My righteousness is shameful. I had no garment. I had no cause, I had no right, I had no sacrifice.

But one was provided for me. It was His sacrifice and His garment of righteousness. It was His obedience, His perfections. Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.

Are you in this world? Then that means your sins too. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

This week, when you're tempted to complain, dear Christian, remember the sacrifice of God. Remember. If you behold Him, you will then see that there is no sacrifice too great for Him.

When you're tempted to turn your attention and heart away from the Lamb of God and pursue things of this world that will not survive the judgment of God, remember, there was the best. Remember there was the best.

When you're in this room, thinking at this very moment, “I should do better than I am. I should be more religious, I should pray more, I should stop doing this and stop doing that. I need to cease doing this and start new habits.” Please remember, dear friend, your best is not good enough. The sacrifice has been provided and the Father sacrificed Him that you might know the power that will not just pardon your sins but give you power over your sins.

Behold, the Lamb of God! Amen.