

## In Love and On Mission

Hebrews 13:15-16

Reality Carp o5.17.o9

Theme Statement: Proper Christian living involves both sacrifice and service.

Purpose Statement: To get us to live in a way that exalts Christ and cares for people.

We value thankfulness in our culture

We all seem to know intuitively that it is right to be thankful

- We express it all the time (Starbucks)
- We teach our kids (and other's kids) to say "thank you"
- We think adults who do not say thank you are strange

So did Jesus!

- Luke 17:15-18  
 15 Now **one of them**, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,  
 16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.  
 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? **But the nine--where are they?**  
 18 "Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

Psalm 69:30-31

I will praise the name of God **with song**, And shall magnify Him **with thanksgiving**.  
 And it will **please the Lord better than** an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

in everything **give thanks**; for this is God's will for you **in Christ Jesus**

- **Think of what we have in Christ!!!**

There is a right response to what God has done:

1. The sacrifice of praise (v. 15)
2. The sacrifice of service (v. 16)

1 Peter 2:5

you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Consistent with the author of Hebrews' heavy reliance on and allusion to the OT and the Levitical law, priesthood and sacrifices

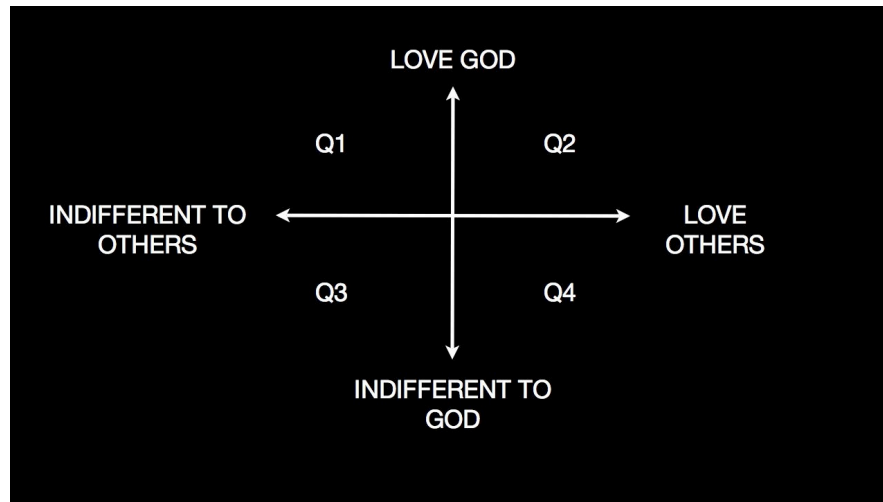
- There is a connection here between this Christological exhortation and Levitical practices
- Leviticus 7:12 and **the sacrifice of thanksgiving**
- The work of Christ replaces the animal—but the concept of **a sacrifice of thanksgiving** transcends covenants

...with such sacrifices God is pleased

We all want to live lives that please God. (Both kinds of sacrifices are required)

Theoretically loving others flows out of loving God

- Cf. Jesus and the first and second greatest commandments
- The Chart



- Q3 = Aborting and Euthanizing, Q1 = Separatists, Q4 = Humanism, Q2 = Biblical
- We need to be **in love** and **on mission**
- Though the later should flow from the former
- We are too selfish to assume it—we need to pursue it!

What pleases God is when we live **both** exaltationally and incarnationally:

- We **exalt Christ** through praise and thanksgiving
- We live **like Christ** through sacrificial service
  - We worship and adore the Jesus of **Revelation 19**
  - We imitate and adore the Jesus of **John 13**

Thankfulness and praise is the right response, but it is not the only response:

- Because we are selfish we have a tendency to let the blessings stop with us
  - We are culturally conditioned this way (if I am saying thank you it must be something for me)
- Salvation is not just about you or me
  - The common Christian saying is “**God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!**”
    - That is true and good
    - But I recently came across a perspective that is more true and better
  - “**God loves His Son, Jesus Christ, and has a wonderful plan for Him, to bring all the nations to His feet as Lord of all, and He loves you and me enough to give us a place in it.**”<sup>1</sup>
    - This is a Christocentric perspective (it is about Jesus and not us)
    - It is about all the nations worshiping, not just you and me
      - This perspective awakens us to more than us!
      - And to God’s purposes among the nations and all people
      - We pursue loving others for the glory of Jesus

As a congregation I think we need to grow in **doing good and sharing**

<sup>1</sup> David Bryant, “Beyond Loving the World: Serving the Son for His Surpassing Glory.” In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 718-721. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009.

- We have the sacrifice of praise thing going pretty well
  - Some leave early when worship starts (you will grow out of that)

Here is how I know we need to grow in **doing good and sharing**:

- It should be unthinkable to the city (any segment of the population thereof) that Reality would be expelled
  - **We should be so impacting the city and its population that it would terrify them to see us go**
    - There will always be adversaries (Jesus raised people from the dead and fed thousands and they crucified Him)
  - **But there should be a tangible positive impact** (evident to non-believers)
    - 1. For the wellbeing of the city
    - 2. To the glory of Christ
  - **We should so serve the people and meet the needs that if we left, the city would have to raise taxes to meet those needs** (Cf. Tim Keller)

★ It is not enough for Christians to simply live good lives as individuals **in** a society<sup>2</sup> ★

- We must work toward the transformation **of** society
- Through **doing good and sharing** (deeds of compassion and service)

Israel was told to “**seek the peace and prosperity--welfare**” of Babylon while in captivity there (Jer. 29:4-7)

- How much more should Christians be well known as people who seek to serve and bless and care for our cities and their populations
- Whether they believe in Jesus or not (God causes the rain to fall...)

“Early Christian bishops in the Roman Empire were so well known for identifying with the poor and the weak that eventually, though part of a minority religion, they were seen as having the right to speak for the local community as a whole. The early church was known to be more committed to and effective in help for the poor than was the Roman government or other cultural institutions. **Unless that is true for us today as well, we should not expect cultural impact.** If the church does not identify with the marginalized, it will itself be marginalized. That is God's justice.”<sup>3</sup>

God always cares about and calls His people to care about the marginalized and poor and oppressed

- Do we even know who they are in our community?
- What about the non-english speaking population
  - There are some doing this (trailer park, bible study)
  - But who can you seek the peace and prosperity of?

Generally speaking about the local church:

- When we **gather** we are equipped, inspired, challenged
- When we **scatter** we are to do good, share, and care
  - It is important to be the church both as we **gather and scatter**

<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller, “Cities and Salt: Counter-Cultures for the Common Good.” Ibid., 615-619

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- The heart we cultivate in here as we **worship** God together (v. 15) will be what we live out there as we **represent** Jesus to others (v. 16)
- **In love and on mission**

I think this is really where we are at as a local church

- What can we be doing to serve our community?
  - We have done well in international missions and in church planting (financial and time investment wise)
- But what about right here?
- I really think this is something we need to become purposeful about in this next season
  - Not Christian separatists, but not humanists
  - But like Jesus who would spend the whole night in prayer to the Father and then feed the 5,000

Jesus said that He was sending us into the world in the same way the Father sent Him (Jn 17:18; 20:21)

Two facets of that:

- 1. **I came to seek and to save the lost** (Luke 19:10)
- 2. **For even the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served** (Mark 10:45)

The two handed approach:

1. Evangelism (Preaching right)
2. Service (Doing right)
  - Not either/or but both/and
  - Evangelism leads and takes precedent
  - Doing good can open the door (but we also are to do good to those who reject—God does)

Cf. What Peter and James and John said to Paul when they realized he had been entrusted with preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles

- **Only don't forget the poor** (Galatians 2:9-10)

Some of us have a tendency to want to call down fire on people that don't accept Jesus

- Luke 9:53-56
 

53 **But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.**

54 **When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"**

55 **But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;**

56 **for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."]** And they went on to another village.

Some of us are more concerned with the plight of people than the Glory of God

There is a balance.

It is not either/or but both/and (for proper Christianity)

**In love and on mission** (What quadrant are you living in?)

Hebrews 13:15-16 (What can you do?—what can we do?)