

Altars

THE PLACE OF BLESSING & SACRIFICE

Altars Part 1—The Place of Blessing and Sacrifice

Pastor Dave Patterson

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USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is not to get through the questions, but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

Altars are the entry point to the presence and purpose of God for your life.

- **The Altar is the place where the Divine meets with humanity.**
- **The Altar is the place of covenant and promise.**
- **The Altar is the place where the activity of heaven touches earth.**
- **The Altar is the place where the fire of God can be found.**

“The chief danger that confronts the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell.”

– **William Booth**

[Psalm 43: 3-4]

*Send out your light and your truth;
let them guide me.*

*Let them lead me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you live.*

*There I will go to the altar of God,
to God—the source of all my joy.*

[Hebrews 9:22-23, NLT]

²² In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

²³ That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

[Malachi 1:6-8,13, NLT]

⁶ The LORD of Heaven’s Armies says to the priests: “A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt for my name!

“But you ask, ‘How have we ever shown contempt for your name?’

7 “You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar.

“Then you ask, ‘How have we defiled the sacrifices?’

“You defile them by saying the altar of the LORD deserves no respect. ⁸ When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn’t that wrong? And isn’t it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?” asks the LORD.

[1 Peter 2:4-5, NLT]

You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor.

And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. (acceptable sacrifices)

1. The sacrifice of praise

Praise is a choice and not an option. Worship and praise is a decision, not an emotion.

When you worship on your worst day, incense is lifted to heaven.

[Hebrews 13:15-16]

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

It's not a sacrifice until it costs you something.

[Habakkuk 3:17-18, AMP]

*Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
Yet I will praise him, and [choose to] rejoice in the LORD;
I will [choose to] shout in exultation in the [victorious] God of my
salvation!*

2. The sacrifice of helping those in need

Helping others is not a one-time thing; it is a lifestyle.

[Hebrews 13:15-16]

*And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need.
These are the sacrifices that please God.*

3. The sacrifice of a broken heart

[Psalm 51:16-17]

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.

You do not want a burnt offering.

The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.

You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

[2 Corinthians 7:10, NLT]

For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

***Don't run away from the altar with your sacrifice of brokenness.
Present it as an offering for God to consume.***

4. The sacrifice of our lives

[Romans 12:1-2]

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Take everything that you thought was your best version of you to the altar, so that the fire of God can consume it; He will show you a brand new picture of who you are!

FOR MONDAY—

1. Find a small group at TFH.org/groups, and live life in community.
2. Figure out what it looks like to give God your first and best in your time, talent, and treasure.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. When was a time that you felt you really gave your all? When have you done something with less than your best?
2. What first brought you to church? What were some things that took time for you to receive or connect with God about?
3. Why do you think sacrifice is such a key to what makes an altar? What distinguishes a “living sacrifice?” What are the sacrifices that God is looking for?
4. Where does your sorrow lead you? How can we “sing our best song on our worst day?” When have you had to choose the sacrifice of praise?
5. What blessing is waiting for you on the other side of the altar?
6. What does your next step of sacrifice look like? Of the four presented in the message, which one are you feeling the need to grow in?