

The Spiritual House
Titles of The Church (6)
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Today we look at another title of the Church.

^{NAU} **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.

A living stone is a stone that has life in it. We Christians are living stones, and we are being built up as a house, not a physical house, but a spiritual house.

We Cannot Isolate from Other Christians and Live by Ourselves

First of all we can't isolate from other Christians and live by ourselves. Only one stone can't be built into a house, no matter how big and how wonderful that stone is. It needs stones and stones to build a house.

There is no room for individualism. Many Christians don't want to relate to other Christians, they say that they don't need to go to Church, they can worship God and meditate the Word of God at home. That is not Christianity. Maybe this way is alright with Buddhism, indeed many Buddhists meditate the word of Buddha in isolation; but that's not Christianity. We Christians concern not only for our own salvation, even though salvation is important, but that's not our only concern. We are baptized into one body; we, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house of God.

For What Purpose That We Are Being Built into A Spiritual House?

What are we supposed to do? In 1 Peter 2:5 apostle Peter says that the purpose is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament time the high priest entered the Holy of holies once a year to offer up sin offering for himself first, because he also committed sins, then for the people of God.

^{NAU} **Hebrews 9:7** but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, he offered himself up as the perfect sacrifice for sins once for all.

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^{NAU} **Hebrews 9:12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, he entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

But it doesn't mean that we can just neglect our sins. When we commit sin (or sins), we have to come immediately before God to confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. Even though we don't need to offer up a sin offering like in the Old Testament, but we have to repent of our sin.

In the Old Testament there are many different kinds of sacrifices besides the sin offering. Now we don't need to offer sacrifices for sins, but how about the other sacrifices, do we need to offer up other sacrifices? The answer is yes and no. Yes, we still need to offer sacrifices to God, but it is not burnt sacrifices, it is spiritual sacrifices, according to the above verse 1 Peter 2:5.

What does it mean to offer up spiritual sacrifices?

1. To offer our lives as a living and holy sacrifice to God

^{NAU} **Romans 12:1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual (the word "service" is not in the original Greek) worship.

Apostle Paul teaches us to offer up our bodies (that means our lives) as a living and holy sacrifice to God. Our first spiritual sacrifice is to offer our lives to God, we let Him use our lives in whatever way He sees fit.

2. We offer a sacrifice of praise to God

^{NAU} **Hebrews 13:15 – 16** Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. ¹⁶ And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

"Through him" means through the Lord Jesus, we offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. This verse says that when we give thanks to God, we actually offer up a sacrifice of praise to Him.

^{NAU} **Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

In this verse Philippians 4:6, apostle Paul teaches us to give thanks in everything; that means even when we are in trouble we still give thanks to God.

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Unfortunately most people are doing exactly the opposite, they like to complain and criticize in almost everything. If we give thanks to God in everything, that will really stand out as a contrast to the world. When we do things contradicted to what the world is doing, they will wonder what kind of people we are. Do we have the boldness to do this?

Also when you give thanks to God even when you face troubles, you will immediately experience the peace and the power coming into your being. That is something for you to experience, not to analyze it intellectually.

3. We do good and sharing

Also according to the above passage Hebrews 13:15 – 16, we need to do good and sharing with other people, that is a spiritual sacrifice to Yahweh God.

Conclusion

We Christians together are being built up as a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. Our spiritual sacrifices are:

- We offer up our lives to God and let Him use us in the way He sees fit.
- We offer up sacrifices of praise to God, that means we give thanks to Him.
- We do good and sharing.