

A Living Sacrifice

By Steve Pruitt

I appeal to you therefore, brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12:1 ESV

Thomas Hawkes was born in Essex, England and later entered into the service of the Lord of Oxford. Upon the death of Edward VI, rather than change his religious beliefs to that of Queen Mary's, Hawkes left his service and returned home. After returning home Hawkes' wife gave birth to a son. Hawkes refused to have the boy baptized according to Catholic tradition and was reported to the Earl of Oxford. He was sent by the earl to Bishop Bonner of London where he answered to the charge of contempt of the sacraments. On February 9, 1555 he was condemned as a heretic.

Days before Hawkes was to be burned at the stake he agreed with his friends that he would lift his hands over his head if the pain was tolerable and his mind was at peace. When he was engulfed in flames and most people thought him to be dead, Hawkes suddenly raised his burning hands above his head and clapped three times. Those who understood this gesture broke into shouts of praise and applause as Thomas Hawkes sank into the fire and died.

The Old Testament sacrifices were killed at the will of their masters. They had no will of their own. When it came time for the fire to consume them they didn't object. The same applies to a true worshiper; however, this sacrifice is alive. A true worshiper offers himself to the Master as a holy sacrifice. He is dead to his own will but alive and submitted to the will of his master.

The ultimate expression of love is the giving of one's life for another. Laying down of one's life for another is the relinquishing of the right to have one's needs met in order to meet the needs of another. A true worshiper has no life of his own. He has been bought with a price. He has died to the right to have his needs met in order to meet the needs of his Creator. In other words, to do the Creator's will. The true worshiper does not exist for himself. He exists for his Maker. A living sacrifice has at its core the greatest of commandments: To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Have you surrendered your will to the will of the Father? Do you love the Father with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength? Ask the Father to reveal to you any part of your life that you have not surrendered to him. Ask him to give you grace to love him even unto death.

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Scriptures for meditation:

- John 15:13
- Ephesians 5:2
- 1 Samuel 15:22