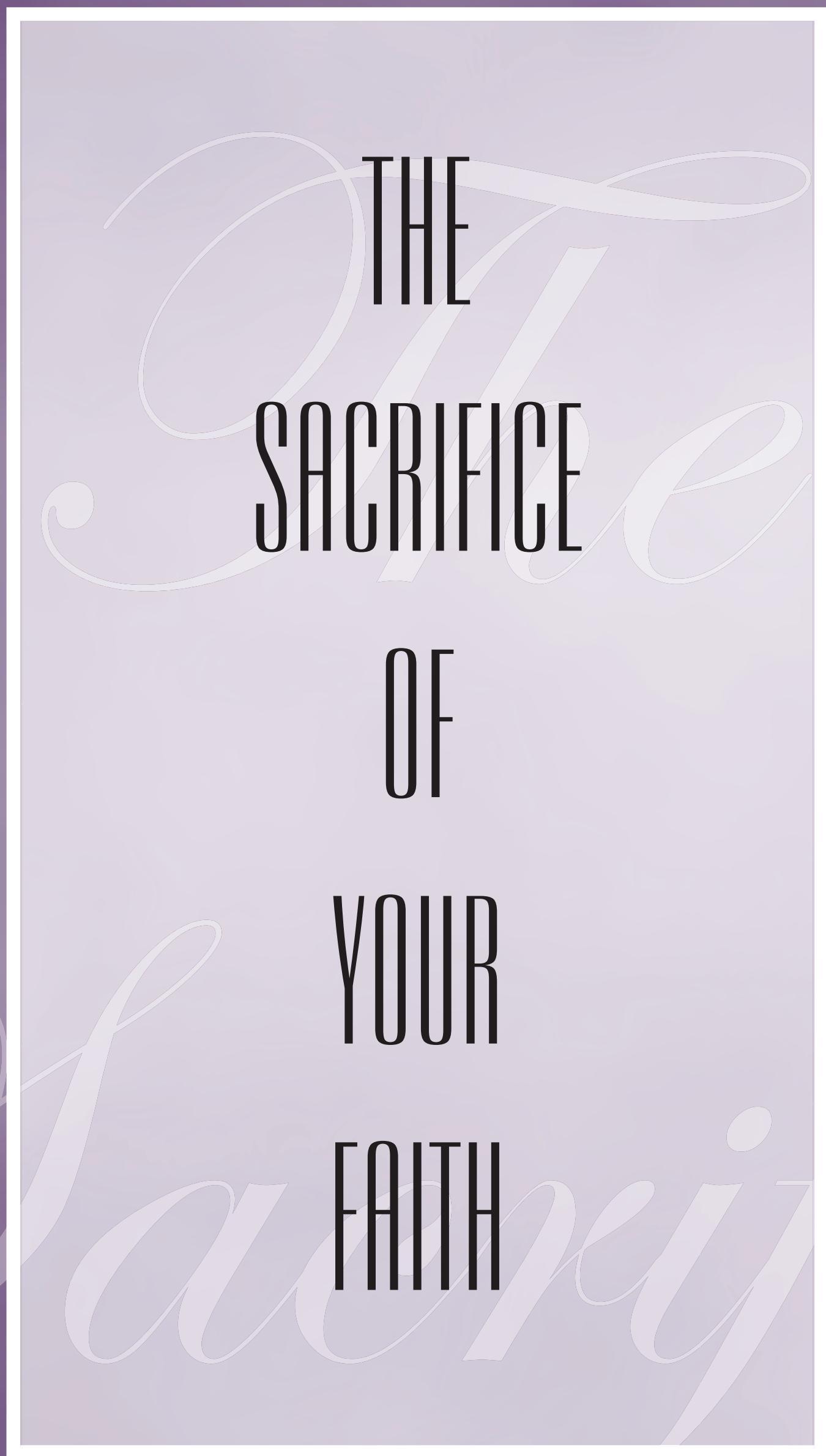


Nuggets and Gems from the Bible



WITNESS LEE

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THE
SACRIFICE
OF
YOUR
FAITH

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THE SACRIFICE OF YOUR FAITH

In [Philippians 2:17](#) Paul says, “But if even I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith, I rejoice and rejoice together with you all.” In this verse Paul speaks of “the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith,” a phrase which is difficult for students of the Bible to understand. Paul regards the believers’ faith as a sacrifice offered to God. The priestly service refers to the offering of sacrifices by a priest. In this verse Paul seems to be saying, “Philippians, I consider your faith as a sacrifice offered to God, and my offering of this sacrifice to Him is a priestly service.”

FAITH AS A SACRIFICE OFFERED TO GOD

What is the faith that can constitute a sacrifice offered to God? As believers, we all have some amount of faith. If we did not have faith, we could not be believers in Christ. Although we have faith, the question remains whether or not this faith can be regarded as a sacrifice offered to God in a joyful way by the apostles. Paul was a

New Testament priest. He says in [Romans 15:16](#), “That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the nations, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that the offering of the nations might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.” As a gospel priest, Paul offered his converts to God as a sacrifice. In [Philippians 2:17](#) it is not the believers themselves which are the sacrifice; it is the faith of the believers which is considered a sacrifice. The thought in [Philippians 2:17](#) is deeper than that in [Romans 15:16](#). Do you think of your faith as a sacrifice which such a ministering one can offer to God?

According to [Philippians 2:17](#), Paul was willing to be poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and priestly service of the believers’ faith. Paul realized that one day he would be martyred. As a martyr, he would be a drink offering poured out upon the sacrifice of their faith. In the Old Testament a drink offering was poured out on one of the basic offerings. Without a basic offering, there could not have been the drink offering. Paul regarded his death as a martyr as a drink offering. The basic offering upon which this drink offering was to be poured was the faith of the believers in Philippi. It is very important for us to understand what kind of faith can become the

sacrifice on which the drink offering is poured. Thus, in this booklet we shall seek to understand the faith to which Paul refers in [Philippians 2:17](#).

FAITH, THE WORD, AND THE SPIRIT

The faith in this verse is somewhat different from that mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. [Ephesians 1:13](#) says, “In whom you also, hearing the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise.” As a result of hearing the word of the truth and of believing in Christ, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit. In this verse we have the word, faith, and the Spirit. By hearing the word and believing it, we receive the Spirit. The word, faith, and the Spirit are one.

The Word is the expression of God ([John 1:1](#)). God is the source of the Word. When we have the Word, we have God, for the Word is God’s expression.

According to the Gospel of John, the Word is both God and the Spirit. Furthermore, Christ is also God, the Spirit, and the Word. Christ is the Word, and the Word is God. Thus, there is a marvelous interrelationship between God, Christ, the Spirit, and the Word. The Word is God and also the Spirit. At the same time Christ is both God

and the Spirit. On the one hand, Christ is the Word; on the other hand, the Word is Christ. Likewise, God is the Spirit and the Spirit is God. Here we see the Triune God embodied in the Word.

The Triune God is embodied in the Word, and the Word has come to us. The very Word which was with God and which is God became flesh and tabernacled among us ([John 1:1, 14](#)). According to [John 20](#), this Word who became flesh was worshipped as God. Thomas said concerning Him, “My Lord and my God” ([John 20:28](#)). The Word is not only our God, but also the coming of our God to us. Our God comes to us embodied in the Word. Furthermore, according to [Ephesians 6:17](#), the Spirit is the Word. The wonderful Triune God is embodied in the Word, and the Word has come to us. When the Word comes, God, Christ, and the Spirit come. The Three of the Triune God come with the Word.

The first function of the Word is to infuse us with faith. I do not believe it is possible for someone to repeat a Bible verse ten times without being infused with faith. Suppose an atheist reads [John 3:16](#) and repeats this verse again and again. Even this atheist would be infused with faith through the Word.

The faith infused into us through the Word is the function of the Spirit. Faith is both the issue of the Word and the function of the Spirit. When the Word comes to us and is contacted by us, we receive the Spirit. This means that when the Word reaches us and we touch it, the Word becomes the Spirit in our experience. Thus, the Word first comes to us and then it becomes the Spirit in us.

The Word becoming the Spirit in our experience can be illustrated by the lighting of a match. The head of a match is a ball made of phosphorus. When we strike a match in a proper way, the phosphorus bursts into flame. Is the flame different from the phosphorus? No, it is simply the explosion of the phosphorus. In like manner, the Spirit is the “explosion” of the Word. When we experience this explosion, we are “burned” by the “fire.” This burning is faith.

As a young Christian, I earnestly desired to have faith. I read a number of books about faith. However, none of these books told me what faith is in actuality. Only in recent years have I discovered through my experience what faith is. Faith comes out of the Word that infuses us with the divine element. Hence, faith is the issue of the Word and of the Spirit’s function. When we have the Word with the Spirit, we spontaneously

have faith. As we have pointed out, faith, the Word, and the Spirit are one. If you consider this definition of faith in the presence of the Lord, you will worship Him. You will see that whenever there is genuine faith in you, the Word is implied and the Spirit is realized. Apart from the Word and the Spirit, it is impossible for us to have faith.

STRENGTHENED BY THE ELEMENT OF FAITH

[Ephesians 3:16-19](#) says that when the Father grants us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into our inner man, Christ will make His home in our hearts by faith. Then, being rooted and grounded in love, we shall be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height, and depth, and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God. If we take time to pray-read these verses and to muse upon them, our faith will be strengthened. Something within us will be strengthened to realize that Christ is making His home in our hearts, that we are being rooted and grounded in love, that we are apprehending the dimensions of Christ, and that we

are even being filled unto all the fullness of God. A certain element has been infused into us to strengthen us, and this element is faith.

Before we pray-read these verses, we may feel weak. But after we pray-read them, we shall be empowered. We shall be like an automobile tire that has been filled with air. In our experience we shall realize that faith, the Word, and the Spirit are truly one as our portion. Furthermore, we shall have the enjoyment of Christ in faith. We shall enjoy being strengthened with power, having Christ make His home in our hearts, being rooted and grounded in love, experiencing the dimensions of Christ, and being filled unto all the fullness of God.

THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST

If we take a portion from Paul's Epistles and dwell on it for a period of time, we shall sense something rising up in us with power. This is the mingling of the Word and the Spirit with our faith. This mingling always results in the enjoyment of Christ. What we enjoy in particular will depend on what specifically the Word conveys to us.

With genuine faith there is both the joy, or enjoyment, of faith and the sacrifice of faith. We

have seen that Ephesians 1:13 speaks of faith. Faith is the issue of the Word and the function of the Spirit.

At least two verses in the book of Ephesians indicate that faith brings us the enjoyment of Christ. Ephesians 2:8 says, “By grace you have been saved through faith.” Because we have been saved through faith, it is by faith that we enjoy Christ as our Savior. Thus, faith brings us the enjoyment of the Savior with His salvation. Ephesians 3:17 says that Christ makes His home in our hearts through faith. This indicates that faith brings us the enjoyment of Christ making His home in us. If we would enjoy Christ making His home in our hearts, we need to read Ephesians 3:16-19 and dwell on these verses. Furthermore, we should pray-read this portion of the Word and even sing it.

Galatians 2:20 also indicates that faith is related to the enjoyment of Christ: “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” According to this verse, Christ lives in us, and the life which we now live we live in faith. Therefore, according to this verse, faith brings

the enjoyment of Christ living in us. What a marvelous enjoyment this is!

In [Galatians 5:6](#) Paul goes on to say, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith operating through love.” The Christ revealed in Galatians can be enjoyed only through faith. It is faith which brings us the enjoyment of Christ.

The book of Colossians also relates faith to the enjoyment of Christ. After referring to the believers’ “faith in Christ Jesus” ([1:4](#)), Paul says that the Colossians were “buried together with Him in baptism” and in Him “were raised together through the faith of the operation of God” ([2:12](#)). Faith brings us the enjoyment of God’s operation. Once we were dead, but now we can enjoy being raised up from the dead. Faith brings us the enjoyment of the operating God who raises us from the dead.

All these verses illustrate the fact that with genuine faith there is joy or enjoyment. The particular enjoyment we have depends on what portion of the Word we are receiving by faith. In other words, the enjoyment of faith depends on what a certain verse conveys to us.

In [Colossians 1:25](#) Paul speaks of completing the Word of God. If it were not for Paul’s ministry,

especially as contained in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the Word of God would not be complete. This means that if we do not get into Paul's words in these four books, our enjoyment of Christ through faith will not be adequate. It will not match the riches contained in these books.

THE JOY OF FAITH

To have the enjoyment of Christ is to have the joy of faith. Paul speaks of the joy of faith in [Philippians 1:25](#): "And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith." Paul was constrained by two things: the desire to depart and be with Christ and the need to remain in the flesh for the sake of the saints ([Phil. 1:23-24](#)). Eventually he concluded that he would remain and continue with the believers for their progress and enjoyment of faith. Paul's expectation was that he would minister more of Christ to the saints so that they would have more experience of Him. Through Paul's ministry they would receive more infusion and as a result would have more faith. This faith would then bring them a greater enjoyment of Christ. In this way they would have the progress and joy of the faith.

CONSTITUTED OF CHRIST TO BE A SACRIFICE

The enjoyment of faith constitutes us into a sacrifice. This sacrifice is the very Christ experienced and enjoyed by us. Through the enjoyment of Christ, we experience Christ, gain Christ, and possess Christ. Our being is even constituted of Christ. In this way our faith becomes a sacrifice which can be offered to God. In order to have the sacrifice of faith, we need to touch the word of life in such a way that it becomes in our experience the bountiful supply of the Spirit. Then we shall have faith, faith which is the result of the Word and the Spirit mingled with our appreciation. This is the sacrifice which can be offered to God.

As used in [Philippians 2:17](#), faith stands for the enjoyment of Christ, the experience of Christ, and the gaining of Christ. Our enjoyment, experience, and gaining of Christ become a sweet sacrifice offered to God. Then the ministering one will be happy to offer this sacrifice to God and at the same time pour out himself upon it as a drink offering.

I encourage all the saints to spend more time in the books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,

and Colossians, musing upon them, pray-reading them, and even singing them. We need to “strike the match” and experience the “burning” that we may gain Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, and possess Christ. Then we shall have the faith as a sacrifice offered to God. We all need to have a faith which is mingled with the Word of God and the bountiful supply of the Spirit that we may have the sacrifice for God’s enjoyment.

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