BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD AND YOUR ALTAR

***Written by: Tommy Romans July 2022***

**Ps 26:2** - Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

 **6** I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine Altar, O LORD:

 **8** LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

**Ps 43:3** - O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me to thy tabernacles.

 **4** Then will I go unto the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

**1Ch 16:29** - Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an Offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

 All three of these portions of scripture were written by the Psalmist David. No one ever had a heart for God and loved His house and the place of worship like he did. David loved the Altar and loved to bring God offerings and sacrifices!

 I want to ask you – Do you know what an Altar is? What was the purpose of it and what was it used for in the O.T.? Did God ordain it? What is the significance of an Altar for God’s people today in the N.T. since Jesus came? Are we supposed to have one? Will it take an Altar for us to successfully serve God and make it to Heaven? Well, let’s answer these questions.

 The Hebrew and Greek words for Altar mean: “A place of sacrifice, of giving up a life as an offering to God.” We find in the Bible that an Altar was the dedicated sacred place to meet God, a place where you came before Him to bring Him a present, a gift, an offering – and ultimately a Sacrifice! It was there that you came to worship the Lord, to present to your Maker a gift from not only a glad thankful heart but a needy one! It was the only way and route to the heart of God and true Worship. Your offering and sacrifice were to be laid upon the Altar and completely surrendered. You could not fully worship without surrendering something. There was never true Worship without Sacrifice. Dear reader, it is the same today – real genuine Worship will cost you something – it is the giving up of something special that is dear to you and offering it to God with Thanksgiving & Praise! You can never approach God and come into His presence without a sacrifice. The very essence of Sacrifice involved surrendering ALL to Him and it involves pain. You must know – there is strain and effort in true Worship. To please the Lord and come

into His presence it will cost you physically, mentally and spiritually! Remember, God owns you, He owns everything about you - it belongs to Him. The Holy Ghost said ye are bought with a price, therefore Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s. (1 Cor. 6:20)

 Before Jesus ever came to die, shed His blood and give His life to make atonement for sins, animals were placed on the top of a stone Altar and bound with cords that were tied to the four horns until every bit and drop of the blood drained from the body. There was no getting off that Altar until the sacrifice was complete! That life had to be given for sin, to overcome sin and be purged and forgiven. God would not accept the offering and be pleased until all was given and the sacrifice complete. This was the only route to having peace and being justified with your Maker and blessed.

THE LAW OF BURNT OFFERING

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

 When you brought an offering to God before Christ came, the life of the animal was placed upon the Altar. Upon that Altar a fire burned. Once you placed the sacrificial Lamb upon the Altar, there was no taking it back. In the Sacrificial Flame, the ultimate nature of that animal, everything about it, everything that it was – every atom and cell of its whole body and being was resolved into Vapor from the burning flame, so that when the person presented their sacrifice in the Fire, their heart and inmost being ascended up to God in the vapor – their sacrifice brought the feeling of their heart in worship before God. It was like saying: “Lord, here is my offering, my whole heart is in it”, and God would smell a sweet smelling savour and He would be well pleased.

 This was all done under the Old Covenant in order to approach God and come into His presence to obtain His favor and blessings. There could be no atonement, no forgiveness, no justification and peace with God your Creator without giving your all to Him in obedience and service, and this required Sacrifice!

 You might say – “What does God’s sacrificial system in the O.T. of giving up of the life of animals have to do with us today?” What is the meaning? What is God requiring and wanting from us? How can we come into His presence and please Him today?

 It is the same principle, but instead of offering God the life of an animal, you are offering yourself to Him with all your heart. The animals were dead sacrifices – but you are a Living One! The animals could not sing or testify, they could not praise and worship – but you can. They were not made in God’s image but you are. God wants you – He wants all of you – spirit, soul, mind and body! He wants your very life to glorify and honor Him in service!

**Rom. 12:1** ¶ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

 **2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

OUR ALTAR TODAY

 In this Newsletter, I cannot express it enough how very important the Altar is to you! Our Altar today is not of stone to offer sheep, bullocks, goats and other animals on to God. Your Altar is the dedicated place where you pray, where you seek God and His Divine Will. It could be at your chair, couch, bed side, a dedicated place in your home. Thank God for the Altar at the front of the Church before the sacred desk and pulpit where the Word of God is preached and taught! It is your place of commitment where you offer God your whole life, your All – Spirit, soul, mind and body. Every day you offer yourself as a living sacrifice. You place yourself upon the Altar – all your feelings, emotions, desires, plans, goals and dreams and say – O Lord my God, all my life I give to you, not my Will but thine be done! I’m yours, all yours to give you glory and praise!

 Remember, your Altar and the time and effort you spend there will determine whether you will go on with God or not. Between you and God’s good Heaven, there must be an Altar, a place of dying out, a place of crucifying self and yielding to the Lord. The Altar is your place of dedication, without it you will never go any farther in the Lord. It’s at the Altar where victories are won before you ever go on the battlefield to fight. Your success or failure in life – victory or defeat will be determined at the Altar whether you will truly serve God or not.

**The most neglected place** in the time we are living is the Altar of God. People are too busy! The problem is – souls will not stay long enough for God to deal with them and work on them to help them! The Lord barely gets 2 to 5 minutes out of His children before they rush off to their work, pleasures and entertainments. Where O where are the seekers who are hungry and wanting more of God and His blessings? Could this be our prayer: “Lord, I want you more than anything! I need and desire your Spirit and power. Work on me sweet Holy Ghost, show me what to do, what to surrender and give up so I can have more joy and victory in my soul! God, I need and want your Divine presence.” Children, God’s presence is His Anointing that breaks and destroys yokes and it is in the Word of God and on your knees at the Altar!

 Do you know why we suffer such mind battles, why we’re torn and tossed between pillar and post? Do you understand why we suffer aggravation, depression and oppression? Why we live our lives in turmoil and have no true peace? The reason for it all is because we do not spend enough quality time in God’s presence in Prayer at the Altar! Praying through is a phrase this modern church world knows nothing about. They do not know what it means.

 I want to ask you – “Have you been to the Altar and brought the Lord your sacrifice of praise and worship in obedience? Have you made and do you make time for Him? True worship is the giving up of something that is special and dear to you to obtain something far greater and better, sweeter and enduring!

NOAH THE ARK BUILDER

HIS ALTAR AND OBEDIENCE

 We are going to look closely at this man and his family and examine his obedience! The Bible said of him – He was a Just man, perfect in his generation and he Walked with God. (Gen. 6:9) Peter said of Noah – He was a Preacher of Righteousness. He faithfully walked with God and was obedient! This blessed man made it into the Faith Hall of Fame because he BELIEVED God and was Faithful to his Altar and his call!! **Heb 11:6** - But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. **7** - By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, **Prepared** an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

 The Bible said that the very first thing Noah did when he came off the Ark after the flood was over was: **Gen. 8:20** ¶ And Noah builded an Altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** - And the LORD smelled a sweet savour.

 This shows that Noah was committed to God and dedicated to his Altar, if he wasn’t he could never have fulfilled his monumental task in laboring and building the Ark for a 120 years (some scholars argue that it was closer to a 100)! He was committed before the Flood and his heart was faithful after. This man had a thankful heart! This lets us know that we’ll never go anywhere and do anything good and lasting for God unless we are Thankful and dedicated to Him, not only in the good times but also in the hard.

FAITH FOR THE BIG THINGS

 Is there a lesson for us in Noah and his family’s experience? Yes! You’ve heard preachers say – God saved Noah from the flood, that is true. But you must know that Noah’s enduring Faith and **Work** delivered him and his family! Had he not believed God and obeyed, they would not have been delivered. Dear reader, God wants you to know - you are working on your deliverance right now that will save you in the end. Had not Noah feared the Lord and took His command serious and started laboring when he did, and had he put it off – What do you think would have happened? Not only his family’s future was at stake, but the whole world after him.

 What do you think life was like being enclosed in a big wooden vessel that was 500 ft. long, 83 ft. wide and 50 ft. tall with a whole bunch of different smelly noisy animals for over a year (375 days)? The Bible is silent on what life was really like day and night for this family inside the Ark.

 Remember, it will cost you in serving God! In order to make it, there will be much patience, labors, and toils! Yes, there will be hard times and trials, things that we will not like that we’d rather not do. One way in looking at it in this story – “What constituted their deliverance and preservation in one sense became their Trial of endurance!” Every one of them in this family had their work cut out in order to maintain life on board. Life was not easy, it was menial and servile work. God instructed Noah before the great universal Flood: **Gen. 6:17** And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. **18** But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

 **19** And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

 **20** Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. (Some people say that God put all the animals to sleep in a hibernation mode, not so!) **21** And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. (If all these animals ate, they were active and awake in the enclosures to burn off their energy. How would you like to live inside an enclosed zoo for a whole year taking care of animals?) **22** Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. The Lord had also told him to take of the Clean beasts: 7 pairs, 7 males and 7 females - these would be used for Sacrifice after the earth was purged and they came off the Ark.

TIME TO WORK WHILE YOU WAIT

 If you think that once you are saved that you won’t have to do much or anything hard, that you won’t have to sacrifice and endure and life will be easy and all you have to do is just wait till Jesus comes and you’ll be saved – that’s not true! There’s some enduring! There will be strain and pain living for God in this world. There’ll be labor and toil. You are going to have to work on your Salvation! How long and how hard do you think Noah and his sons labored in the fields plowing and sowing seeds and gathering in food to feed his whole family and all the animals for a whole year and ten days? Just think of the toil and sweat and calluses on this family’s hands. Can you see him and his family gathering the food and storing it inside the giant ship? I’ll say it again – you have your part to play, your work to do every day to Maintain your Preservation. Remember, the Ark is a type of Christ and the Cross – a place of safety in the time of storm and trouble. Jesus is our Salvation and refuge! In Him we are Saved from God’s wrath and judgment.

 To obey God and stay saved is going to COST you something! If you think that Noah and the Ark is just a child’s story for kids, you better think again! Did the Lord tell Noah and his family before they entered the Ark and He closed them in that they would be inside for over a year before they could ever get out and step foot on earth again? I don’t believe He did. If God told you everything you would go through and endure in your life when you came to the Altar to be saved, if He told you every trial and hardship you would face for the months and years down the road – What do you think you would do? You would feel Overwhelmed and not able to do the tasks and you might would turn away from God’s Will. The Lord does not tell us everything we will face but as we go, He gives us His Divine Grace!!

HOW MUCH LONGER O GOD?

 It doesn’t take much to use your imagination and place yourself inside the Ark with this family and all the work that had to be done for a whole year. Did they get tired and weary? Did they long for freedom? Did they desire to be off board that huge vessel with all the animals and enter a new world? Did Noah’s wife ever say to him 2 months into the voyage as they were laying down to go to sleep one night – “Honey, how much longer do we have to do this? Did this question repeat itself again and again – 6 months, 8 months, 10 months and on and on? “When is God going to get us out of here?” Noah could have answered her – “Listen dear Wife, I do not know! All I know is that when God spoke to me about building, there was a GREAT fear that gripped my heart like I never felt before and I was afraid not to obey Him! I knew I had to work and get busy in order to save us from God’s judgment. We must let God have His way, He’s purging the earth and getting it ready for us! I still believe Him dear, we must trust Him and in due time He will get us out! Our final deliverance will come!”

 Did Noah’s sons ever question? Did they complain? “Dad, we’re tired of taking care of all these animals, having to feed them and cleaning up all the mess every day! This is hard work, it keeps us busy. How much longer do we have to do all this?” Noah could have answered – “Boys, the Lord whom I serve said He would Save us if I would believe and obey His Word and I have done my best to do His Will and I believe in due time, the waters will go down and He will bring us out and set us free! Just hold on boys, trust God and let Him have His way and one day it will all be over. We’ll be free! Just be faithful and keep on doing what you’re doing, our labors will all pay off after while!!” Did the sons’ wives complain and say to their husbands – “We are so tired of being closed up in this Ole Ark. This place is a mess with all these animals. We are tired of the smell and all the noise! I know your Dad said that God is preserving life and that He will deliver, but when? We want to have our own homes and be free!”

IT’S ALL OVER – WE ARE FREE AT LAST

 Finally the long trial was over, all the waters went down and the land was clean. God told Noah to go forth. Noah removed the covering of the Ark and the family came out and stepped on a clean renovated earth, a new world for them. O the sigh of relief as they lifted up their eyes and beheld the blue skies and smelled the fresh air and felt the sun’s warm rays! O the dreams that sprang back to life in their eager hearts. The sons and their wives longed for their new homes.

 But Noah said to his family – “Wait children, first things first. Before we go any farther and do anything, and before we go and build our homes and our lives, we are going to give God Thanks and Worship Him for bringing us through and delivering us! Noah builds a big stone Altar. His sons help him carry and erect the big stones. Noah had saved a few of the clean animals to offer as a sacrifice to God. I wonder what it was like as they all gathered around the Altar and the fire burned and the vapors of the sacrifice arose as a sweet smelling savour unto the Lord? It was an awesome Thanksgiving Offering from their glad hearts! I can see Noah’s wife grab him and say – “Honey I know I got mighty weary, but I’m sure glad you obeyed God! I know you woke up many mornings tired and sore, but you rose anyway – there was something driving you as you headed for your tools to continue laboring!” We don’t really know but maybe his 3 sons could have said – “Dad, there were many times we wished we didn’t have to do all that hard work year after year on building that Ark, we would like to have done other things. Honest Dad, there were times we felt robbed and thought that this was too much of a Sacrifice and task!” As the smoke of the Sacrifice rose into the air from the Altar, I can hear the 3 son’s wives speak up and say – “Yeah, you wouldn’t believe the times that we saw people go by when you all were building on the Ark and heard them laughing and making fun! Our whole family was a laughing stock. It seemed that everyone around us were having a good time while we had to work and sacrifice. We did without a lot of pleasures! Honest dear father-in-law, there were times we doubted you and thought you were taking it too far.” I can hear Noah answer – “Children, I knew that God couldn’t let the sin go on any longer, judgment was coming. I’m glad I stayed Faithful to the Lord and my Altar. I obeyed the Call of God to the best of my ability and I have no regrets!! Here we are today, in a new world. Children, I am glad and thankful for my family – we’re now Saved, Happy and Free!!!”

 In closing, I want to say to each of my readers: Some of you have the Call of God on you and a work to do. I say to all the Ministers – Preachers, teachers, singers, musicians, workers and givers, whatever the capacity your service may be, whether it be large or small – **Don’t let up, keep the fire and desire!** Don’t be discouraged, you may be tired but Keep Working and laboring for your Lord – Your Labors are not in vain!! Your work will be rewarded – We’re almost HOME! ***God Bless all my readers!!***