

## You are His – Every Day & Every Way!

NUMBERS 28:1-8

*(Reading: 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6)*

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ... How would you expect to live in heaven? Think about it. Perhaps thoughts come to your mind of a place of peace and joy. You've been told it's a very special place. But exactly what it will be like you're a bit lost on. To think more of what heaven will be like, though, will help us. And especially to try and understand the Lord's pattern for paradise in the Bible, will make us able to live more fruitfully in this world.

Maybe that doesn't seem to gel with you. You're a practical, hard-working person. You don't want to get all wrapped up in this right now. You don't want to be one of those of whom it's said, "He's so heavenly-minded, he's of no earthly use!" Still, you know you're going there, don't you? I mean, you believe. And knowing that it's actually going to be the place you end up, you'd want to be ready, wouldn't you? Indeed, it's how Scripture so often encourages us to live. We are constantly exhorted to look up. And not only because we're going to be there one day but especially because of the One who's up there right now. According to the writer of Hebrews, there is a proper heavenly-mindedness. This is what enabled Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to live by faith as tent-dwelling nomads in Canaan.

Now, you might be wondering what this has got to do with our text this morning. Aren't these verses just another series of Mosaic regulations? You know, those rules that were for God's people before Jesus came. But these words are also preparatory. They were to help get the people ready for a whole new future. Just like we are so close to heaven. You see, physical Israel would soon be in the Promised Land. The very place they could be so blessed by their covenant God. The land flowing with milk and honey.

Wouldn't that thought have enthused the Hebrews to look to the Lord even more? He had led them so far already. And He was going to keep looking after them – surely that would have made them so thankful! They would be so motivated to do things His way! However, the history of Israel tells a completely different story. From a people who were given so much, the Lord received so little in return.

Indeed, to study the way the Church of Christ is through the ages, is to see that only His grace allowed us to be. This is what we ourselves show with being so wrapped up with the things of this world it would be a real shock if the Lord came tomorrow. Because we're not ready for heaven. So let's turn again to Him. Let's learn once more the way we ought to be. Being heavenly-minded is actually of the most earthly use! Because that's living out here the way He is up there.

We see this already in the beginning of the text. "The LORD said to Moses, 'Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: "See that you present **to me**..." In the words of the first aspect to the text, you have to realise... **YOU ARE THE LORD'S**.

"**To Me**" the Lord God exhorts. He who stooped to love, looks to see that love returned. And if anything would typify heaven it would most definitely be the love from all within. That's His Family – the Church – after all! It's what we know in a loving marriage. Husband and wife are united. And over and over again they know

this is the best way to be. In fact, it's the only way to be! That's what the Lord lays before His people then. He says to them that this is the only way to be.

Gordon Keddie comments, "the Lord says that worship is to be offered, 'to me': not to whomever you may regard as your 'god,' not to whatever may be called 'God' by somebody somewhere, still less to 'the man upstairs'! "Worship is to be given exclusively, and with the utmost sincerity and personal reverence, to the living God who reveals himself in his Word. "'You shall have no other gods before me,' says the Lord in the First Commandment." We read that in Exodus 20 verse 3.

Hebrews 11 verse 6 confirms this. It says, "without faith it's impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Just think, what glory awaits! And it's all because YOU ARE THE LORD'S! "**Be mine**" declares the Lord. It's a command. You have to do it. But surely it's no burden to His dearly beloved? For has God ever told you do more that what He will also give you the grace to be able to do? He who has already done so much in your life isn't going to stop now! So let's be His! Then we'll have Him even more!

#### **Our second aspect to the text.**

This is why YOU ARE THE LORD'S, dear believer, WHEN YOUR DAY STARTS AND FINISHES. Because this is about how we are to be every single day. One commentator says of this passage, "In the daily burnt-offering the congregation of Israel, as a congregation of Israel, as a congregation of the LORD, was to sanctify its life, body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord its God." This is pointing the Church to her Head. Some might call it positive reinforcement, but really it's living out consistently what we are in our God. For this is faith in action. It's still true for us today.

The worship for the Old Testament saints was through the shadow – a pointing forward – of offering a lamb at each sunrise and sunset. Yet the fulfilment with **the** Lamb of God Himself coming hasn't taken away from each day beginning and finishing with him. Indeed, we have every reason for being more faithful in this. What they saw dimly in the future has become for us the most vivid light in Jesus Christ!

You see, looking for someone you haven't yet met is awkward. Even if you have a rough idea of what he looks like yet the reality is always a bit different. A photo doesn't tell how tall he is. But when you do finally meet him, you won't forget him! And because Jesus has come, we have in our hearts the proof that we'll know Him that much more when He returns. So there's no excuse for not beginning and ending the day with your Lord. You don't know Him any other way, do you?

And then, fellow Christian, it's most appropriate that this fire offering that made up the daily, regular offering, was basic to the whole sacrificial system. This was what counted most of all. That's why it is here first of all! For how could your worship of God on Sunday have any meaning at all, unless it comes from your worship every day? Then we appreciate Sunday as the special day that it is, as much, and even more, than the Israelites did with their Sabbath.

Congregation, tests have shown that the last thing you do before you sleep stays with you in your sleep. And don't we know that the way we start the day makes all the

difference to the rest of the day? So, have you made your sacrifice this morning? Will there be the offering in prayer tonight? Is it upon the willing altar of your life that the pure flame of **His** fire is cleansing?

### **The third aspect to this text.**

To follow our text further **YOU ARE THE LORD'S WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE**. For look at what's happening in these verses. There isn't only the one lamb at sunrise and the other at sunset. Verse 5 says that they come "together with a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil from pressed olives." And verse 7 continues this. It says, "The accompanying drink offering is to be a fourth of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb." It's quite some meal being made for the Lord! And don't think He's doing this to keep them out of mischief.

Actually, this is the most total claim of who they are! You see, there must be a completeness in what you give your Saviour God. Not some passing acknowledgement of a familiar tradition. That kind of custom doesn't demand anything from us. Honestly! No matter how involved the ceremony, and no matter how carefully it may be kept, it's worthless unless it realises the meaning underneath. This is what David confessed in Psalm 51. In the verses 15 till 17 he cried out, "O LORD ... You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you won't despise."

Congregation, anyone can come to church. To do what you've always done comes easily enough. But will you enter these doors **WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE**? Friend, are your footsteps those that make the sound of trepidation? Indeed, do your legs weigh that much more heavier because it is your Saviour and Lord Himself that **you** come to meet? You haven't just turned up here. You thought about it and you prayed for it. And you come ready for it. You have dressed appropriately. And you will give accordingly. I mean, that you are actually physically able to come is because the Heavenly Father has given to you first of all. It's the Holy Spirit and His Word which brought you to see this spiritually. No wonder that every day the priests offered up bread and drink to the Lord. And how much don't they point to the One who is the bread of life and the living water?

These are sacrifices in our text. They show that our sin has to be paid for. That's why they point to the one who would be the ultimate sacrifice for all our sin. That's the wrong we do every day and in every way! **YOU ARE THE LORD'S WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE** because it's all what He has given to you. You know that. And you also know how much He loves that you show that!

In the words of the fourth aspect to this text, **YOU ARE THE LORD'S ... FOR THAT'S WHAT HE LOVES!** Congregation, God has created us to take delight in us. He wants us to please Him. That's what the Westminster Shorter Catechism means when it says that our chief aim is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Because it's nothing to do with us! It's all about Him! In our text this thought comes through **three** times. Verse 2 ends in stating about the offering that it is to be "an aroma pleasing to me." Verse 6 states it again. It says, "This is the regular burnt offering instituted at

Mount Sinai as a **pleasing aroma...**". And verse 8 comes back to it again. It concludes our text, saying, "This is an offering made by fire, **an aroma pleasing to the LORD.**" It keeps coming back!

And throughout the rest of Scripture as well. For not only does it appear in describing these physical sacrifices in the Old Testament, it also came out loud and clear in our New Testament reading from 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. That aroma is what the covenant God truly loves! He so much sought after it from His people – the nation of Israel – in the Old Testament. And when it did not come from them, He gave of **Himself** so that in the New Testament Church what He loved to receive would come!

Paul's words in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2 describe it so well. As he wrote in the verses 14 and 15, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. "For we are to God the aroma of Christ..."

Congregation, the sense of smell can either attract or repel. But to know that from the rotting carcasses that we were the Lord would yet bring forth His most sweet smelling perfume, is to see so vividly what privilege you and I have!

Aren't these words in Numbers then such a clear and wonderful pointing to how our covenant God – YAHWEH – would completely provide in the Son of His love, Jesus Christ? He alone was and is the aroma perfectly pleasing to the LORD God. So just think of how much **in Jesus** our lives are the pure fire God loves!

Fire also figures prominently in our text. It points to what God takes up to Himself. And that's what pleases Him. My friend – is your life being burnt up for the Great Lover of your soul? Are you brought to your knees, here, in His presence? Have you laid your all before the One who alone can take that load? Then those words of Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4 will surely be true for you. As He says there in verse 4, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty."

To truly sacrifice as an Old Testament believer, in the way described in our text, took faith. It was so easy, as later history showed, to turn away from the clear word of the Lord. And to be properly prepared now takes faith too. In our age also it's easy to turn aside from the Lord. But it won't be easy to live apart from Him. For then you'll find out what happened when Israel of old went astray, in your own life. That's **not** what **you** were made to do. That not being His – every day and in every way! Amen.

**PRAYER:**

Let's pray...

O Lord Jesus, You were the supreme sacrifice all those sacrifices of old could only point to. You are the substance of which they were only the shadow. You fulfilled every single letter of the law. We cannot begin to thank you enough. And yet how often isn't it that we despise You? Even this past week again we have so often been the smell that repels instead of the aroma that pleases.

Please convict us. Stir us deep within. Make us the purer flame of passion for You. In Your Name alone, we pray, Amen.