

## Sacrifice – Home Group Notes – 31 March 2019

(Pastoral warning: this sermon does not apply to all types of suffering. Please encourage people to use discernment as they apply it to their own situations.)

Sacrifice can be a source of blessing...

The sermon started with two Christian viewpoints colliding: God wants to bless us, and we should be willing to sacrifice.

- Have you ever felt the tension between these two views, or seen their extremes?

Both views, when pushed can be wrong. Somehow, in scripture, these views live together. Like when we looked at 1 Tim 6:17-19 in the Be Rich series... we have been given everything for our enjoyment... but we are also to live for others and live for the 'life that is truly life'.

Which brings to what we are looking at today...  
Sacrifice can be a source of blessing.

Our plan...

Think about Jesus' example of sacrifice... leading to two ways that sacrifice can bless us...

Firstly, Jesus' attitude toward sacrifice can help us in times of suffering

Secondly, Sacrifice is key for your spiritual growth

### Jesus' example of sacrifice

Often things that are profound are better expressed using poetry.

Read Psalms 22:14-15 (ANIV) - <sup>14</sup> **I am poured out like water**, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. <sup>15</sup> **My strength is dried up like a potsherd**, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; **you lay me in the dust of death.**

- What imagery here stands out to you?
- How are these images connected to what Jesus went through for us?
- How would you define sacrifice?
- How is Jesus' example an ideal model of sacrifice?
- What has helped you come to understand what Jesus went through for us?

Jesus chose to die.

Read Luke 9:51 - As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Read John 12:27-28a - <sup>27</sup> "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name!"

- What might have been Jesus' motivation in going to Jerusalem knowing that he would die?

## Sacrifice can change how we experience pain

- How many of you know that our attitude toward suffering... can change your experience of suffering?!

Of course, this doesn't work with all types of suffering, but sometimes your attitude can make all the difference.

- Can you think of a time you went through something that should have been difficult, but wasn't because of your attitude? What made the difference?

Read 1 Peter 4:1 - Therefore, since **Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude**, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

This passage refers to Jesus' example, is written to persecuted Christians (referred to as scattered at the beginning of 1 Peter) and challenges them to arm themselves with the same attitude as Christ.

- What might this have meant for the early church?
- How do you arm yourself with an attitude?
- What was Jesus' attitude toward suffering that we should put on?
- What examples can you think of... where people used their suffering to bring about something great?

## Sacrifice is key for your spiritual growth

The example that Jesus sets he uses to challenge his disciples...

Read Matthew 16:24-25 - Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself and take up his cross and follow me**.<sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

- What do you think stands out in these verses about the challenge Jesus' gives to the disciples to sacrifice?

The sermon was closed with an example of sacrifice leading to someone's faith growing significantly.

- What examples of this can you see in scripture, or with people you have known?
- Why are sacrifice and spiritual growth so linked (whoever loses his/her life for my sake will find it)?