

THE ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN STEWARD

We have looked at the Christian Life for the past 5 days, let us now look at The Anatomy of a Christian. I can't think of this subject without being reminded of the following:

A Small Boy's Essay On Anatomy

"Your head is kind of round and hard, and your brains are in it and your hair on it...your face is the front of your head where you eat and make faces...your neck is what keeps your head out of your collar...your shoulders are kind of shelves...your spine is a long bone in your back that keeps you from folding up...your back is always behind you no matter how quick you turn around...your arms you got to have to pitch with, and so you can reach the butter...your legs are what if you have not got two of you can't get to first base...your feet are what you run on...your toes are what always get stubbed...And that's all there is of you except what's inside and I never saw it. The end."

As Christians we are all of this and much more. Each of us has a "body" however and the Bible has much to say concerning it. Consider today:

I. A Body That Belongs

Romans 12:1

In Romans 12:1 Paul says, "I plead with you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."

Here we are confronted with the truth that our bodies are not our own. They belong to God. We are reminded of this in I Corinthians 6:19-20, "You are not your own for you are bought with a price." Our bodies belong to Christ therefore, because He paid the price by his sacrifice on Calvary's cross.

This relationship to Christ dominates and determines (or should) our attitude, action and availability for service. This is where "the rubber hits the road". It is where our relationship is revealed.

Since we belong to Him, our bodies, which here means our entire being of body, soul and spirit, the entire person is to be presented to Him as a "living sacrifice." In the Old Testament we find dead sacrifices being offered to God, but here we are not called upon to die but to live for Him. Someone has said, "we may die in a moment of time but to live for Him will require a lifetime" – a lifetime of service and sacrifice.

Our problem may be like that of the little boy who heard the preacher ask, "What can we do for God? He even gave His Son for us." He spoke up saying, "I'll be happy to give my little sister!" Our idea of sacrifice is for someone else to make it.

The verse gives three (3) characteristics of our commitment to Christ. The Holy Spirit says our bodies (our life) to be "a living sacrifice" must be:

Holy – This word scares many Christians who picture some "Holy One" in a white robe, living in seclusion. Actually the word means to be set apart for God's use much as a vessel in the Temple was set apart for divine use.

When you became a Christian you were set apart for God's use. You were saved to serve.

Acceptable – It means approved by God – well pleasing to Him. Concerning Jesus, God the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Our goal in life is to be like Jesus – well pleasing to the Father.

A visitor to a children's home in Ashville, North Carolina was trying to stress the importance of practicing safety measures. He told the children that in New York they placed signs everywhere with the slogan, "Safety First."

One little fellow jumped up and said, "Down here we put God first!" So should we. This is the meaning of our being "well pleasing" and "acceptable" to our Savior.

Reasonable – The word means "logical" and/or "spiritual". It is only logical that when one has given himself in complete surrender, set apart for God's service and well pleasing to Him certain things follow. We will seek His will and be ready to obey.

Stephen Olford reminds us: "Who among us does not long to live a life of fruitfulness, joyfulness, usefulness and thankfulness? But Paul maintains this cannot happen and will not happen until we know how to give, not only of ourselves and our service but also of our substance. Indeed, the more we have studied this subject, the more it has become apparent that the true measure of yieldedness to the Lordship of Christ is the measure of our discipline and devotion in Christian stewardship. We can talk until doomsday about being surrendered Christians, but it is just words until we give evidence of our surrender through our

stewardship. And make no mistake about it, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ to render an account of our stewardship, we will wish that we had given more, since it is inescapably true that "what we spend, we lose; what we keep will be left to others; what we give will remain forever ours." Missionary Jim Elliott said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to receive that which he cannot lose."

We can and will be used by God. This is true in a unique way during this time of **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT**. Our bodies can be used like that of:

™ Moses who raised the money to build and furnish the tabernacle;

™ David who raised the money and materials to build the Temple;

™ Solomon who directed the building of the Temple;

™ Nehemiah who supervised the rebuilding of the Walls of Jerusalem; and

™ Paul who raised money for the Saints in Jerusalem.

Yes, God can use you to accomplish His will for our church. You can be the "living sacrifice" He needs in our church. You can be a body that belongs to Christ! A body that is used by Christ!

Some years ago a successful artist spent days, even months trying to depict the Savior on canvas. Time and again he would re-do or add additional strokes and colors until he felt he had done his best.

Some time later a friend was allowed to see it. The friend viewed it intently with admiration and then said, "You must love Him greatly."

The artist replied: "Yes, and when I love Him more, I'll paint Him better." In like manner we can say: "When we love the Savior more, we'll paint Him better before the world." Our lives which are sacrificed to Him will depict Him more completely.

When we love Him more...!

Lord, I love you more each day and want to serve you better each day.