

Altared, A Biblical History, Message Two

Romans 12: 1-3 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transform\ed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

1 Cor 1: 27-29 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Introduction:

The word “salvation” is mentioned 156 times

The word “mercy” is mentioned 269 times

The word “grace” is mentioned 137 times

That’s a total of 562.

The word “altar” is mentioned 322 times

The word “sacrifice” is mentioned 302 times

That’s a total of 624.

There’s a lot of emphasis placed on “salvation, mercy and grace” and there should be because that’s the major theme of redemption.



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But without the altar and sacrifice there would be no mercy.

There would be no grace and there would be no salvation.

Redemption is beautiful but it was graphic.

What and where is the altar?

Where – it could be anywhere – it’s the intent of the heart that makes the altar successful.

I. What is the altar?

It’s not just some old religious relic or icon.

The altar is a place where God and man meet.

It is a place where you come to be with your High Priest.

Hebrews 4: 14-16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Hebrew word for altar comes from the word “to slay”

II. The Altar in the Old Testament was recognized by it’s:

Blood

Pain

Covenant



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III. The altar is not a glamorous place.

The altar was not a sterile place, it's a place of death.

It's was a dirty place – where sin is dealt with.

IV. It is a place to bring your broken life.

your broken marriage,

your wayward children

your unsaved loved ones.

your sickness

your anxieties and fears

your cares

It's a place to bring the impossible to God

1 Peter 5: 6-7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

V. It's a place to bring your desires.

You are to be a living sacrifice.

The problem with living sacrifices is that they keep crawling off the altar.

Consider the biblical account of Abraham and his son Isaac.

Abraham had the knife up ready to thrust it into the chest of Isaac, God's promise.

That's the precise moment that God gave Abraham a breakthrough.

The altar is a place where you pour yourself out to God.

Hanna is an outstanding example of how one pours themselves out at the altar.

1 Samuel 1: 9-18 *After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.*

10 *She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.*

11 *And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."*

12 *As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.*

13 *Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman.*

14 *And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you."*

15 *But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD.*

16 *Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation."*

17 *Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him."*

18 *And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

Psalm 34: 17-19 *When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

18 *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

Psalm 141: 1-2 O LORD, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you!

2 Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

Psalm 142: 1-7 With my voice I cry out to the LORD; with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.

2 I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.

3 When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me.

4 Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul.

5 I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me!

7 Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

What do I have to look forward to at the altar?

The altar is a place where your faith in God is expressed.

Jerimiah 33: 3 Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Jerimiah 29: 12-13 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.



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1 Peter 3: 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

When you get up from the altar your faith is expressed in your obedience.

In a little country church each week when the pastor gave the altar call, a man named Bill would go to the altar to spend some time with the Lord and reflect upon the message the pastor had preached that morning. Invariably Tom would kneel beside him and pray that same prayer each week. “Lord I need you to clean the webs out of my life. Lord each week the devil spins his web of sin in my life, so Lord, clean the webs out of my life”. Week after week Bill would hear this same prayer. Finally, one day Bill got fed up with Tom praying the same prayer every single week. This week when Tom knelt at the altar beside Bill and prayed his same prayer, Bill laid his hand on Tom’s shoulder and prayed, “Lord each week my brother comes to you with the webs of his life and asks you to clean them out, but Lord I pray that you will just kill the spider”.

The altar is a place of worship!

Even if you didn’t have sin, sickness, etc...why wouldn’t you want to offer a sacrifice of worship unto the Lord.

A good example is when King David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, he did it wrong the first time but got it right the second time and that time it involved obedience to God’s Word, sacrifice and worship, all in that order.

The altar is a place where you encounter the presence of a holy and mighty God!

Isaiah received a glorious experience and a call from God at the altar.

Isaiah 6: 1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;



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the whole earth is full of his glory!”

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.

7 And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

VI. The biggest obstacle for many to getting their breakthrough and deliverance is pride.

What about sin, isn't it the biggest obstacle to getting your breakthrough?

Why will people NOT get rid of known sin in their life? Pride!

The altar is foolishness! Crying out to God, tears flowing, snot blowing!

I do not believe that you can receive from God ALL the glory and goodness He has for you until you take it to the altar and get dirty.

The carnal nature shrinks from the idea of the altar!

But your spirit man longs for the altar for it is a place of breakthrough!

The altar is a place of humility.



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28 *God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,*

29 *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*

Psalm 51: 17 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;*

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Isaiah 57: 15 *For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

1 Peter 5: 6-7 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,*

7 *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

God wants to give you miracles and breakthroughs in your life, but He can't until you bring it to the altar and truly give it all to Him.

Take-Aways

What do you have that needs to be brought to the altar?

What cares do you need to cast at His feet?

The High Priest of Heaven will meet you there to receive your sacrifice and give you mercy, grace, salvation, deliverance, healing, peace, and joy.



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