

AN OFFERED LIFE



The Altar Kate Austin

What better way to live than to pour out our life as an offering to God!

It's not just a lamb to be sacrificed, or some wheat from your harvest, or some money you put on the plate.

Such things are but tokens of the only true offering *which is your life*.

In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

Genesis 4

There are two ways we can give ourselves to God.

We can give ourselves to God as an offering.

We can give ourselves to God as an investment.

We give our life to God as an offering out of thanksgiving for who God is.

His kindness to us is a fathomless mystery.

So we give ourselves to God in gratitude, without looking for a reward.

We give our lives to God as an investment when we calculate,

"If I give myself to God, he's obligated to do special things for me."

In this case we've merely deposited our life with God like a money-market certificate. And we're looking for a pay-off!

I remember a friend in high school who complained at the end of his date, "After all the money I spent on her she wouldn't even give me a kiss." That money he spent on her was a risky investment, and he lost.

So often the life we claim to be spending for God is merely a risky investment.

We're expecting a return.

And when there is no return, we decide that God is cheating us.

"Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!"

Luke 15

Like the Older Brother in this parable we throw in the towel and say,

"It doesn't pay to follow Jesus!"

"What's the use of prayer?"

"I'm tired of being good!"

A "right offering"

"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord."

Malachi 3

The leper, when he saw that he was healed, turned back praising God with a loud voice and fell at Jesus' feet giving him thanks, was presenting a "right offering".

He was saying 'Thank You' with his body, soul and spirit.

The woman who took an alabaster box of ointment worth a year's wages and lavished it on Jesus before his crucifixion was presenting a "right offering".



The Anointing

Kate Austin

She was overwhelmed with gratitude for the new life Jesus was giving her!

What shall I render to the Lord?

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people....

...I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

Psalm 116

What can I do to show God my thanks?

I will live in his presence, calling on his name, speaking to him, thanking him, communing with him, joyfully seeking to please him.

*"I will pay my vows to the Lord **now** in the presence of all his people..."*

I will offer myself to God here, in the congregation---before these witnesses.

"Thank you, Lord, for your salvation.

- I receive it.
- I live by its power.
- I call on your name.
- I commit myself to you afresh.

*"I will offer to thee the **sacrifice of thanksgiving** and will call upon the name of the Lord."*

A sacrifice of thanksgiving is a life poured out in gratitude to God!



Like Incense

I thank God with my mouth, but also with deeds of mercy toward those God sends across my path.

Suppose the person I help doesn't even say thank you.

No problem ... my deed was an offering to God, not an investment.

Suppose this person never returns the kindness. No problem.

It was an offering not an investment!

What a difference it makes when the things we do for people are done as an offering of thanksgiving!

- The prayers we pray.
- The visits we make.
- The letters we write.
- The meals we cook.
- The gifts we give.
- The time we spend listening, serving.

What freedom, when we can do these things in thanksgiving to God!

Our body as a living sacrifice

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12

Spiritual worship, is not a business transaction...

"I'll give you my life, Lord, if you give me a reserved seat in heaven."

You already have a reserved seat in heaven if you're crucified with Christ.

The Spirit of heaven is breathing upon you as you read these words.

God help us,

- to turn our invested lives into offered lives,
- to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship.

Prayer- Oh kind and merciful Lord, who bears the weight of our shame and yet still tenderly loves us, how precious your gifts are to us, how precious your tender love. We abandon ourselves to you in thanksgiving. We offer ourselves to you. May our offering be one of joy and love with no intent of a reward. May our offerings be acceptable to you precious Lord. MM

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Abandoned



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN