

Dying We Live --- Romans 12:1,2

April 25, 2020

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable (or well-pleasing) to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Introduction

In Charles Dicken's novel, A Tale of Two Cities, a young wealthy Frenchman was condemned to die by the guillotine during the bloody French Revolution. The verdict against this young man was based on the so-called crimes of his ancestors against the peasantry.

The hour before his execution, he was visited by an English friend who too was a youth and could have passed for his twin. After the guard had left, the friend knocked out the doomed man with a sedative and exchanged clothes with him. Pretending to be the one condemned to die, he then called the jailor and asked that his unconscious visitor, supposedly overcome with grief, be removed and returned to his home. The French nobleman was saved from death because of a loving substitutionary death on his behalf.

That is a noble deed, but it pales in light of what Christ has done for us, because in our case we truly are criminals deserving of death. We were not friends of God but His enemies. Furthermore, God sacrificed His only Son in the place of condemned criminals. Christ was falsely accused of crimes He did not commit and died a long heinous death on a cross. Jesus suffered physical, mental, emotional, spiritual torment and death to pay the price for His enemies' crimes . . . the Just for the unjust.

We are always deeply moved by an account of someone who sacrifices himself for someone else. It is the ultimate proof of true love. Jesus died on the cross for our salvation. Now, because He loved us and gave Himself for us, we who love Him are likewise to give ourselves to Him as "*living sacrifices.*" Offering ourselves as a living sacrifice is not an atonement for sin in any sense; nonetheless, we are called to offer a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable (or well-pleasing) to*

God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

There is so much in every word and in every phrase in these two verses that we will take a couple of Sundays to grasp what God is teaching us through Paul.

Review

In our introduction of Romans 12 last week, we considered the fundamental connection between what a person believes and how he lives his life. Action is based on belief. What you believe and hold to be true determines what you do. Doctrine determines conduct. False doctrine or error will usher in distorted living. Where there is unbiblical theology, usually one of the first things that goes is morality. Conversely, biblical doctrine will put you on the path of right living.

When we study God's Word and believe it and submit to it, we grow in knowing God and His will; we learn to understand general principles of godly behavior; we grow in understanding how to apply those principles to life. That progression will result in godly character and practice. So the study of God's Word is vital and foundational to godly living. As believers, we must devote ourselves to in-depth study of the Word of God both corporately and individually. There are no substitutes.

Paul understood this vital need to study and know the Word of God before one can walk the walk of the Christian life. Colossians 1:9-10 states, *“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”*

In Ephesians, Paul spends the first three chapters conveying sound doctrine. Then beginning with chapter 4, Paul applies this sound theology to life. He begins in chapter 4 by saying in verses 1-3, *“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

God instructs us not to be consumed with the nonsense of this earth but to

purpose to think about heavenly truths. In Romans 12:2, Paul exhorts us, “. . . *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” There is a battle for the minds of men. Satan, from the beginning, worked hard at distorting truth in order to confuse Eve's thinking about what God had said, and Satan continues to do so today.

We considered the word “therefore” in verse 1. In this case, “therefore” points back to all that Paul has written thus far. As I said, doctrine has a purpose. Those who have received the revelation in the first 11 chapters must also act upon it. That is the very nature of revelation—it demands application. True conversion makes a difference in a person's life. If there are no differences, there is no genuine conversion. So we must have Romans 1-11 before we can go onto Romans 12-16.

“Therefore, by the mercies of God” in light of all that Paul has written concerning the crucified and resurrected Christ and the great grace that has been lavished upon us, in light of the glory of God and His faithfulness to us, in light of the provision of the Holy Spirit and His ongoing work, in light of all this amazing truth, our response is to sacrifice self. We will see that this is a vital part of worship. We tend to define worship with singing or having an emotional response to a song. But Paul defines worship here as the ongoing death of self—offering up ourselves as a living sacrifice. If you missed last week's study, I would encourage you to go back and listen to it.

Our focus this morning is on the first part of verse 1 concerning what it means to present our entire beings as a sacrifice to the triune God. There are two adjectives that describe this sacrifice that will serve as our outline: first, A Living Sacrifice; and second, A Holy Sacrifice.

I want to give you a working definition of what it means to sacrifice yourself that will function as the basis for our understanding. Offering yourself a living sacrifice means putting your personal desires behind you in order to put the desires of God and the needs of other people first.

The preeminent example of this is obviously Christ Himself. His one desire was to do the will of the father. He said in the garden before His crucifixion, “Not my will, but Your will be done.” He sacrificed Himself for the sake of others, and we are called to do the same. You are to offer your life to God so that, as a result, you will *“no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died for you and was raised again.”*

Living Sacrifice

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies a living sacrifice*

Romans 12:1a

A unique truth about the Christian life is that we must die in order to live. We find this teaching in many places in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, but the basic, foundational statement was made by Jesus in Luke 9:23-24, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life daily for me will save it.”* Taking up one's cross is a picture of death to self. It is Jesus' declaration of losing your life.

In Paul's culture, a sacrifice was always an animal that was presented to a priest to be killed. So what Paul is saying by this dramatic metaphor is that the Christian life begins by offering ourselves to God for death. By offering ourselves to God as a sacrifice, we are both worshipping Him and we are enabled to live for Him.

This foundational truth teaches that we are not our own but rather we belong to Jesus, if we are truly Christians. Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *“ . . . do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”* The same truth is repeated in 1 Corinthians 7:23, *“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.”*

If you ask what price was paid to buy you, the apostle Peter answers you in 1 Peter 1:18-19, *“ . . . knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”*

In that passage Peter uses the important word redeemed, which means to buy back or to be bought again. It is one of the key words for describing what the Lord Jesus accomplished for us by His death on the cross. The image is of a slave market in which we who are sinners are being offered to whomever will bid the highest price for us.

Jesus comes to the marketplace of the history of man and the price He bids to rescue enslaved sinners is His blood. He offers to die for them. God, who controls this auction, says, “Sold to the Lord Jesus Christ for the price of His

own blood.” As a result, we become Jesus’ purchased possession and must live for Him rather than ourselves as we have seen both Paul and Peter make clear. John Calvin rightly said, “We are redeemed by the Lord for the purpose of dedicating ourselves and all our members to Him.”

We have seen this imagery of death to self before in our study of Romans. You recall in Romans 6 that Paul uses the imagery of death to the old self. We have become new creatures if we are truly converted. Verses 3 and 4 of chapter 6 state, *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”* Verse 6 continues this thought, *“. . . knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”* The sacrifice of self is clearly interwoven into the salvation/sanctification process.

So as Romans 6:13 says, instead of offering our bodies *“to sin, as instruments of wickedness,”* as we used to do, we must instead offer ourselves *“to God, as those alive from the dead; and our bodies to Him as instruments of righteousness.”* Romans 6:22 provides a powerful summation for us. *“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.”* Do you get the picture? You are dead, you have been purchased by Jesus Christ, and you are now enslaved to God.

You remember when we studied chapter 6 that we saw the very nature of conversion teaches that the true believer can never go back to how he once lived. Why? Because the old self is dead. It is impossible to resurrect the old self. The old self was enslaved to sin, the new self is enslaved to God. If a person goes back to his old way of living—never to return to Christ—it shows that the old self was never dead.

What exactly does it mean to die to self? What does it mean to offer up your bodies a living sacrifice? We have considered before in 1 John 2 that the temptations of the world come through 3 main avenues.

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

The lust of the flesh is anything that gives your body a jolt, i.e. drugs, alcohol, sex, food, whatever. The lust of the eyes is materialism: more cars, houses, money, travel, more and more wealth. The boastful pride of life is position, power, popularity, etc. Dying to self means putting your personal desires behind you in order to put the desires of God and the needs of other people first.

I want to quote extensively from a pastor concerning death to these three avenues of sin. Concerning materialism, he says, "Take for example a person who thinks that the way to happiness is wealth. He sets his heart on earning \$100,000. He gets it, yet he is not happy. He raises his goal to \$200,000. When he gets that he tries to accumulate a million dollars, but still he is not happy. John D. Rockefeller, one of the richest men in the world in his day, was asked on one occasion, 'How much money is enough?' He was honest enough to answer, 'Just a little bit more.' A Texas millionaire once said, 'I thought money could buy happiness. I have been miserably disillusioned.' "

Concerning power and position, the pastor writes, "Another person thinks that he will find happiness through power, so he goes into politics where he thinks power lies. He runs in a local election and wins. After that he sets his sight on a congressional seat, then on a place in the Senate. If he is talented enough and the circumstances are favorable, he wants to be president. But power never satisfies. One of the world's great statesmen once told Billy Graham, 'I am an old man. Life has lost all meaning. I am ready to take a fateful leap into the unknown.' "

Lastly the pastor writes concerning the lust of the flesh: "Still another person tries the path of sexual liberation. She launches into the swinging singles scene, where the average week consists of happy hours, Friday night parties, weekend overnight escapes into the country, and a rapid exchange of partners. But it does not work. Several years ago, CBS did a television documentary on the swinging singles lifestyle in southern California, interviewing about half a dozen women who all said essentially the same thing—"We were told that this was the fun way to live, but all the men want to do is get in bed with you. We have had enough of that to last a lifetime.' "

All of these avenues of self and sin are presented as a living sacrifice to Christ by the believer.

Paul conveys an amazing picture concerning this presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice. A sacrifice was something offered to God by a priest. A priest would take a sacrifice offered by a worshiper, carry it to the altar, kill it, pour out the blood, and then burn the victim's body. In that procedure the priest and the

offering were two separate entities. But in this incredible image of what it is to live a biblical, Christian life, Paul shows that the priest and the offering are the same. We are the priests who present the offering, and the offerings we present are our own bodies— *“present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice”*. You sacrifice your *self*.

We see this manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus. He was both the sacrifice and the priest who made the sacrifice. However as I said before, there is an enormous difference between the sacrifice Jesus made for us and our own sacrifices of ourselves. Jesus’ sacrifice was an atoning sacrifice. He died in our place, bearing the punishment of God for our sin so that we do not have to bear it. His death was substitutionary. Our sacrifices are not at all like that. They are not an atonement for sin in any sense. Nonetheless, the point is that you are the one who makes the sacrifice, and the sacrifice you offer is yourself.

“Sacrifice” is an unpleasant word in our day. No one wants to sacrifice anything. We want to acquire things instead. Nevertheless, this is where the Christian life starts.

The sacrifice is to be a living sacrifice rather than a dead one. This was a unique thought in Paul’s day. In Paul’s day, sacrifices were always killed. The animal was brought to the priest. The sins of the person bringing the sacrifice were confessed over the animal, thereby transferring them to it symbolically. Then the animal was put to death.

But now, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul reveals that the sacrifice you offer is not to be dead; but instead, a living sacrifice. You are to offer your life to God so that, as a result, you will *“no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died for you and was raised again.”*

I want to take a moment and consider some practical applications of what Paul means when he declares that we sacrifice our bodies *“present your bodies a living sacrifice”*

As I said, Paul has already discussed the issue of the body in chapter 6. Romans 6:12-13 *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”* Paul is making the same point in Romans 6, where he first begins to talk about sanctification, that he makes in 12:1—we are to serve God by offering Him our bodies.

Sin can control us through our bodies, but that does not have to be. So rather than offering your body as an instrument of sin, you are to offer God your body as an instrument for doing His will. This concerns specific body parts, so I want to consider some specific ways that we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Eyes

We are to offer our eyes as a living sacrifice to God. I remind you of the account of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, as he relates to the lust of the eyes. As you read the account of Lot in Genesis 13, you find stages of Lot's decline that are directly impacted by his relationship to the wicked city of Sodom. First, you find that Lot casts a longing eye towards Sodom...that wicked city was alluring to him. Next, Lot pitches his tent just on the outside of Sodom, flirting with disaster. Third, you find that Lot dwells in the city of Sodom and becomes involved with the daily activities of that wicked city. Lot did not guard his eyes; he did not offer his eyes as a living sacrifice. As a result, he was led into slavery to the materialism of that city.

The account in Genesis makes clear that Abraham and Lot knew that the cities in the Jordan valley were evil, nonetheless Lot could not resist the material allurements. Lot seized the opportunity for his own advantage. He looked out across the valley of the Jordan River. He saw the big city lights and decided that was where he wanted to be. This is the case many times for young adults as they get out on their own.

One bible scholar wrote this about Lot, "How many youths have stood on those heights overlooking Sodom? They stand upon a high mountain as it were and before them is spread all the kingdoms of this world. The tempter whispers that it can all be theirs. So have generations looked towards Sodom from afar and having given into the tempter, their soul is left a beggar in the wilderness."

He goes on to write, "There is a warning here concerning how we are to guard our eyes against materialism. We must offer our eyes as a living sacrifice. You may think that you are different than Lot. But if you have put your job ahead of your spiritual life and the spiritual life of your family, then you are on your way down to Sodom. If you have chosen the world's company over the fellowship of believers in the Church, then you are on your way to Sodom. If you have put anything before your growth and your walk with the Lord then you have moved from the heights overlooking Sodom and Gomorrah and you are on your way down into the valley."

Lot was not going down to Sodom to be a witness for God. I have heard young

people claim—and even thought it myself when I was young—that they are befriending the world in order to be a witness. However, instead of influencing their worldly friends, they end up being sucked into an ungodly lifestyle.

James 4:4 Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15,17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 17The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

It is significant that this account in Genesis 13 is the first place wealth is mentioned in the Bible. Both Abraham and Lot were wealthy. Whereas Abraham held loosely onto his wealth, Lot's wealth became the occasion for getting overwhelmed with the things of the world.

So one way to present yourself as a living sacrifice is in the area of the lust of the eyes. We must present our eyes to the Lord as instruments of righteousness. Next is our tongue.

Tongue

Another body part that you must present as a living sacrifice is your tongue. What we do with our speech is critically important. James, the brother of Jesus, says more than any other writer in the New Testament about the tongue and its power for either good or evil.

James 3:5-8 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

Ephesians 4:29-32 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (in the context, it is our unrighteous speech that grieves the Holy Spirit). Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be

kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

The tongue represents our speech, what we say. Do you present your speech to God as an instrument of righteousness. Have you giving your tongue as a living sacrifice to God? Is your speech edifying? Does your speech convey grace to others? Are you kind and forgiving of others?

If you are not continually giving your speech over as a living sacrifice to God, then what James writes here is true of you. A little gossip, a casual lie, a brief statement of slander can wreck havoc on others. The Bible has much to say about our speech, gossip, and slander.

Proverbs 11:13 He who goes about as a gossip reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.

Proverbs 20:19 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

Proverbs 17:9 He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.

Proverbs 26:20-22 For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a gossip are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

1 Timothy 5:13 refers to certain women who *“go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.”*

Instead of gossip, we should spend time in conversations that are godly, uplifting, encouraging and that which builds people up. You can use your tongue in praise and worship of God. Here is practical goal for you in regards to your tongue, instead of harsh language, or gossip, engage in godly conversation and talk about the Word of God and Christ with someone. Spend time talking to God.

We are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. We have considered our eyes and the tongue. Obviously these parts that we cover this morning are not

an exhaustive list. We could consider the appetites of our bodies, for example food or physical pleasure. The last body parts that I want to mention this morning are our hands and feet.

Hands and Feet

Our hands and feet are involved in what we do and where we go. God instructs us in many passages concerning our occupations, how we use our time and the places that we go.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 . . . *make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.*

Ephesians 4:28 *He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*

We have become a nation of people who amuse ourselves to death. We go to sports games, cruises, hunting, fishing, shopping, screen time and the list goes on. Don't get me wrong. I am not suggesting that we retreat into a commune and not engage culture. But our amusements must not overshadow our walk with the Lord.

Next, we present our bodies as a holy sacrifice.

Holy Sacrifice

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice*

Romans 12:1a

Holiness is the very heart of what we are talking about when we speak of “a *living sacrifice*.” Holiness is the goal of the matter—the point to which the entire book of Romans has been heading. Romans is about salvation. But as someone wisely said, salvation does not mean that Jesus died to save us in our sins but to save us from them.

One pastor expressed it this way, “Let us once more remember what we have seen all along in Romans, that holiness is the aim and issue of the entire Gospel. It is indeed an ‘evidence of life,’ infinitely weighty in the question whether a man truly knows God and is on the way to God's heaven. But it is much more; it is the expression of life. We who believe are ‘chosen’ and ‘ordained’ to ‘bring forth fruit’ (John 15:16). This fruit is a proof of new life.”

The issue of holiness in the believer's life has been debated for decades. For example, holiness is at the heart of the subject of Lordship Salvation. The question posed involves, "Must a believer exhibit growth towards holiness, or is holy living optional?"

I don't think any subject is more neglected in churches in modern America than holiness. Today we hardly know what holiness means. We do not seek out books or tapes on holiness or attend seminars designed to draw us closer to God. We want seminars entitled "How to Be Happy," "How to Raise Children," "How to Have a Good Sex Life," "How to Succeed in Business," and so on.

Fortunately, some Christian leaders have been concerned enough to write books about holiness. I want to recommend a few for you reading while you are at home in quarantine: J.C. Ryle's book entitled, Holiness; Jerry Bridges book, The Pursuit of Holiness; and John MacArthur's book, The Gospel According to Jesus is a classic on the subject.

1 Peter 1:14-15 *" . . . do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior."*

Holiness is a positive addition to life, not just a negative subtraction of sin. To the average person, holiness means to walk around in robes, humming some Gregorian chant, having almost an abnormal lifestyle. We see holiness as a superficial pretending.

That is not holiness. If there are pleasures in heaven (and there are), I believe God desires for us to enjoy life even now. I am not talking about sinful pleasures, I am talking about real enjoyment in the life that God has given you. Holiness is a healthy spiritual enjoyment of this life and the spiritual realities that Paul has written about.

As a believer matures, part of that enjoyment in life involves a joy in interacting with God in His creation and through His Word. There is an enjoyment in learning how to live a life that is pleasing to Him. There is enjoyment of all that God has created to be enjoyed. Offering our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice involves a daily interaction with God through His Word and in prayer. You will always hear me encouraging you towards this end.

Romans 8:12-13 *So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you*

will live.

Conclusion

In Romans 12:2, we will consider this enjoyment of God through His Word in more detail. Have you ever considered that what you do with your mind will determine a great deal of what you will become as a Christian? If you fill your mind only with the products of our secular culture, you will remain secular in your thinking. For example, if you fill your head with trashy novels, you will begin to live like the characters you read about. If you do nothing but watch television and movies, you will begin to act like the worldly people that you watch.

On the other hand, if you feed your mind on the Bible and Christian literature, and train it by godly conversation, and discipline it to critique what you see and hear by applying biblical truths to the world's ideas, you will grow in godliness and become increasingly useful to God. Boice, "For every secular book you read, make it your goal also to read one good Christian book, a book that can stretch your mind spiritually." I would add to that, for every hour that you watch something on a screen, spend an hour in the Word of God.

Sociologists tell us that by the age of twenty-one the average young person has been bombarded by three hundred thousand commercial messages, all arguing from the assumption that personal gratification is the dominant goal in life. Every means of communication puts the gratification of self before godliness. In fact, they never mention godliness at all.

Somehow the secular input must be counterbalanced by the spiritual. I was reading of an illustration that a Sunday School teacher used with her students teaching the importance of abiding in Christ in order to live life in a manner that glorifies God and is worthy of Christ. She held up a light bulb and asked her class, "Do you think this is a good bulb? You cannot tell unless I screw it in to the socket, can you?" (as she screws it into the socket and the bulb lights up).

She goes on to explain the illustration, "This bulb unattached is like many Christians. They do not give out light because they are not continually plugged into the power source of God's Word and fellowship with Christ through prayer." She unscrewed the bulb and said, "When believers look like this unlit light bulb, you cannot tell if they are Christians or not. But when they are screwed into the source of power, then you know for certain that they are."

What makes the difference? It is simple, the bulb does not light up unless it has

contact with the power source. Jesus said in John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

She was illustrating a simple but profound truth that unless you are in consistent fellowship with Christ, you cannot shine as He desires for you to shine. One thing that breaks our fellowship, that breaks our connection with the power source is sin. It is vital that you present your body a living and holy sacrifice to the Triune God.