

Local Church

A Sacrificial Offering

John 3:16 — “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

In 1857, David Livingstone was invited to receive a tribute and speak to students at Cambridge University, in England. He had left behind a prosperous life in Europe to devote himself to preaching the gospel on the African continent. As he stood in front of the students, he was just a thin, slender man who had been stricken thirty-one times by deadly African fevers and had one of his arms resting in a sling after an encounter with a lion. Throughout England, that humble servant was welcomed as a hero. But now, in front of those attentive students, he uttered the following words:

People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? — Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? — Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! . . . I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which HE made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us.

Words like these remind us that the true sacrificial offering came from Calvary. Everything we give to the cause of God is infinitely less than what we receive from the gift of the cross. However, in our sphere, we are called to offer a sacrificial offering to God. This means that when establishing the percentage of the regular offering that we give, we must choose a percentage that challenges us to trust in God's care and blessings. This is one of the reasons God decided that while the tithe would be ten percent of our income, it is for the worshipper to set the percentage of offerings.

Ellen G. White says: “In the Bible system of tithes and offerings the amounts paid by different persons will of course vary greatly, since they are proportioned to the income” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 73). She also writes: “How much more eager will every faithful steward be to enlarge the proportion of gifts to be placed in the Lord's treasure house” *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 200

Appeal: You should regularly review your income and ask yourself if the percentage you are returning represents a real sacrifice. Only then you will respond with gratitude to the great sacrifice made for you on the cross.