

Series – Part 5: How to Live as a Christian:

Be a Living Sacrifice!

James 1:17-18 ESV

The Holy Trinity – 2013

Sunday, May 26 at 8:00 & 10:45

Monday's Resume on June 3 at 7 PM in the CLR

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, *on this Sunday of the Holy Trinity*, as we return to the book of James, we focus on → some wonderful qualities of God, → God's work to make us alive in Christ, and → what it means to be a firstfruit, *thus a living sacrifice!*

1. **God – Creator and Gift Giver:** ¹⁷ **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of [the] lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. //**
 - a. The Giver and His ability to give – God the Father (*along with the Son and the Holy Spirit*) is the Almighty God! The Father designed the entire universe; *then the Son spoke it into existence* (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16)! Astrophysicists estimate there to be **100 billion stars in our galaxy** and **100 billion galaxies in the universe**. That super-awesome work of God is recorded in Genesis with these few words: “**And God made...the stars.**” (1:16 ESV) **So let know that God, who is super-powerful, can give gifts that are super-wonderful!**

- b. Change and Changeless – “**Though the heavenly bodies change and move, God and His Word remain constant and sure.**” (LSB, 2135)
 - i. The LORD declared: “**...I the LORD do not change...**” (Mal 3:6 ESV)
 - ii. God's Word tells us: “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**” (Heb 13:8 ESV) “**According to [God's] eternal divinity, He is unchangeable.**” (LSB, 2127)

*So, there is good news, **God**, who is almighty and does not change, is the giver of every good and perfect gift! Let us give Him thanks!*

2. **God – Eternal Life Giver:** ¹⁸ “**Of [God's] own will** [*by His determination*] **he brought us forth** [*lit. gave us birth*] **by the word of truth...**” // In verse 15 there is a reference to *desire conceiving*; then *giving birth to sin and death*. Here we have the opposite as God gave us *spiritual birth and eternal life* through the Word of Truth; the **Father** worked by the **Spirit** *through the Word* to unite us to the **Son**! These verses describe **God's work**:
 - a. ^{ESV} **Ephesians 1:13** “**In [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...**”
 - b. ^{ESV} **1 Peter 1:23** “**...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...**” (1Pe 1:23 ESV)

3. **Us – Our Response as Firstfruits Creatures:** “...that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” // God has made us alive in Christ for a **definite purpose** – in order “that we should be a kind of firstfruits...” What does that mean?

- a. The LORD said to the people through Moses: “You shall not delay to offer from the **fullness of your harvest** and from the **outflow of your presses**. The **firstborn of your sons** you shall give to me.³⁰ You shall do the same with your **oxen** and with your **sheep...**” (Exo 22:29-30 ESV) So **the first** of the crops, animals, and sons are to be given to the LORD; **they belong to Him!**
- b. So what does it mean that we belong to the LORD? He is our head, we are His body! So we say “no” to our sinful desires and “yes” to His will for our lives. Based on all that God has done for us in Christ (Romans 1-11), Paul wrote this response: “I urge you therefore, brethren [fellow believers], by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Rom 12:1 NAS) Since God came to us when we were *dead in sin* and has made us *alive in Christ*, it is now right and fitting that we – *His firstfruits* – would function as living sacrifices in our daily Christian lives!

Conclusion: Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

1. Who is the source of every good and perfect gift? God the _____!
2. How powerful is God? He is _____ in power!
3. As the earth rotates, so shadows change; does God also change? Y N
4. Sin gives birth unto death, but God gives us spiritual birth unto life eternal; what is the means through which God works? “the _____ of _____”
5. The firstfruits belong to the LORD – crops, paychecks, etc.; we, *as Christians*, are also firstfruits, *so we belong to the LORD*. That means we live as holy sacrifices by saying “_____” to His will for our lives.

In Christ we are **completely saved** and **eternally blessed**; therefore, let us gladly be living sacrifices!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**