

COSTLY DEVOTION

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Text: II Samuel 24:24

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

Some might not understand David's insistence on paying a man for the elements to offer a sacrifice. After all, what difference does it make? Isn't the important thing that the sacrifice got made? Why go to the expense? The trouble?

Why? Because serving God is a personal matter.

No one else can do it for you.

The bottom line is NOT that somebody worshiped—
the question is did I worship?

The bottom line is NOT that somebody will obey—
the question is will I obey?

The bottom line is NOT that somebody will pray—
the question is will I pray?

The bottom line is NOT that somebody will be devoted—
the question is will I be devoted?

We can blend in at church, go through the motions, act the part, and talk the talk, but if living for Christ is not costing us something we have become believers in a substandard life. We have become believers in “Cheap grace.”

Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. Costly grace ... is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer in The Cost of Discipleship. Christianity Today, Vol. 38, no. 2.

King David had that kind of relationship with God. And as we look at this story we can see the effect that his understanding a life of devotion had on his actions. Allow me to point two of the primary *factors* that motivated David's devotion.

I. DAVID'S SACRIFICE WAS MOTIVATED BY RESPECT.

A. He had a heart that revered the holy God of Israel (2 Samuel 24:17-19).

He knew what it was to please the Lord and he knew the perils of displeasing Him as well. Because of this, he was willing to do whatever it took to please the Lord.

One who trusts in Christ alone [will] completely give up his idols, horoscopes and other such practices of his old life that go against Christ's Lordship. When a true believer is made aware of any area of his life that is not yielded to Christ, he will yield it. When he is made aware of a Christian principal to be followed, he will follow it whatever the cost.

-- Ajith Fernando in The Christian's Attitude Toward World Religions. Christianity Today, Vol. 36, no. 5.

B. He knew the blessings and power of putting God first.

T.D. Jakes said, "What you pursue, you worship. So be careful what you choose to be your God!"

We could say that worship stopped the plague. Some would say that obedience was responsible. Some would say that sacrifice was responsible. But David knew that **only through worship could obedience and sacrifice be made meaningful.**

II. DAVID'S SACRIFICE REQUIRED A PERSONAL INVESTMENT (vv. 21-24).

A. He knew that a pleasing sacrifice would cost him something.

Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

Many Christians are only "Christaholics" and not disciples at all. Disciples are cross-bearers; they seek Christ. Christaholics seek happiness. Disciples dare to discipline themselves, and the demands they place on themselves leave them enjoying the happiness of their growth. Christaholics are escapists looking for a shortcut to nirvana. Like drug addicts, they are trying to "bomb out" of their depressing world.

There is no automatic joy. Christ is not a happiness capsule; he is the way to the Father.

-- Calvin Miller in The Taste of Joy. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 17.

B. He had embraced a life that was upside-down by the world's standards.

Billy Graham reminds us that, “Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have.”

CONCLUSION

Ultimately what inspired David to consider the cost of his sacrifice and be determined to pay it, was that **he understood the value of the One he served.**

In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Mansoul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

