Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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October 5, 2014 by Steve Brandon

The Peace Offering

Leviticus 3

1. The Details
2. Peace with God
3. Peace with Others

After the death of Moses, Joshua assumed the leadership role in Israel. And the LORDcommissioned him, saying, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel" (Joshua 1:2). In this commission the LORDpromised His presence, saying, "I will not leave you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). The LORD followed this up with some advice for Joshua. He said, ...

> Joshua 1:6-8
> "Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Obviously, this was great counsel to Joshua. His task was difficult. He would find the way challenging. Yet, the LORD promised to be with Joshua every step of the way -- never leaving him, never forsaking him. That should have given Joshua the strength to "be strong and courageous."

But, did you notice what the LORD told Joshua to do? He told him to obey the law. He told him to keep it, carefully, not swerving to the right or to the left of it. God told Joshua to talk about it. God told Joshua to think about it "day and night." And then, his way would be made prosperous. And then, he would have success.

Now, I believe that this is a great word for us this morning. When facing a difficult challenge, know that the LORD has promised to be with us. So, be strong and courageous. What to do? Be careful to do according to all that is written in the Bible. Don't turn away from it in any way. Don't come short in your obedience. Don't go beyond what is written. Speak the Bible often. Think of it often. "Meditate on it day and night." "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8). And I believe that the promise will come to you: "then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." God's blessing comes upon those who adhere diligently to His word.

But, I want for you to consider what the LORD was saying to Joshua. It wasn't the totality of the Bible that should occupy his attention. Much of it wasn't even written at the time. What was written, however, was the law of Moses -- the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books were at the heart of God's command to Joshua. He was to think on Genesis. He was to contemplate Exodus. He was to meditate upon Leviticus. He was to reflect upon Numbers. He was to mull over Deuteronomy.

These are the books that would lead Joshua to be prosperous. These were the books that would lead Joshua to have good success. The books of the New Testament aren't the only books in the Bible that are profitable for us. If Genesis was profitable for Joshua, then Genesis is profitable for us. If Exodus was helpful for Joshua, then Exodus is helpful for us. If Leviticus was useful for Joshua, then Leviticus is useful for us.

So, let us turn to the third chapter of Leviticus and see what God has for us this morning. Now, with the third chapter comes the peace offering. This is the third of five offerings spelled out for us in the first five chapters of Leviticus. Do you remember my story about the farmer and the pigs? "Burney Grains pacifies

Cindy's gilt." Chapter 1 covers Burnt offerings. Chapter 2 describes Grain offerings. Chapter 3 talks about Peace offerings. Chapter 4 spells out Sin offerings. And Chapter 5 instructs about Guilt offerings.

With the burnt offerings, we learned that they were totally consumed, which tells us a thing or two about worship. Worship is costly and appears to be wasteful. But, it's what the LORD wants of us.

With the grain offerings, we learned that they were to be partially consumed, and the rest was to be given to the priests for food. The ingredients were simple: fine flour, oil, salt, and sometimes frankincense. Honey and leaven were prohibited. If anything, these offerings were expressions of thanksgiving, an overflow of what we have to give to the LORD.

This morning, we come to the peace offering in Leviticus, chapter 3. Let's begin by reading the chapter.

> Leviticus 3
> If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar. And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the Lord, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. Then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire; it is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.
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> "If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the Lord, lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering he shall offer as a food offering to the Lord its fat; he shall remove the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the

kidneys.
And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the Lord.

"If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord and lay his hand on its head and kill it in front of the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for a food offering to the Lord, the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the Lord's. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

At first glance, this sounds a lot like the burnt offering. We have different animals brought to the priest. The animals can come from either the herd or the flock. But, they must be unblemished. The worshiper lays his hand upon the animal to be sacrificed. The worshiper then kills the animal. The priest then takes the blood of the animal and sprinkles it upon the side of the altar. Then, the priest burns the animal upon the altar. That's the pattern of the peace offering.

Now, there are some differences between the peace offering and the burnt offering. One subtle difference is the gender of the animal to be sacrificed. In the burnt offering, the animal must be a male. In the peace offering, the animal may be either male or female. The main difference is what is burnt upon the altar. In the burnt offering, the entire sacrifice was consumed. In the peace offering, only the fat was consumed. And much like the grain offering, the portion of the peace offering that was not consumed on the altar was to be eaten.

If you want a hook to hang your thoughts on, I have four words for you. Here's my first point:

1. Food

The animal of this sacrifice was to be eaten by the priest. And, it was to be eaten by the worshiper. This is unique in all of the sacrifices.

Remember last week when we looked at the grain offering? A portion of it was to be burned. And the majority of it was to be given to the priest as food. Those who offered the grain offering were not to eat the offering, only the priests were to eat

it. And we shall see in future weeks that the sin offering and grain offering were only to be consumed by the priests (and their families). But, not so the peace offering.

In the peace offering, both priest and worshiper would eat of the sacrifice. After the blood was sprinkled and the fat was burned, the priests were given their part, and the worshiper had the rest. In fact, in chapter 7, we are told what to give to the priest. They are to receive the breast of the sacrificed animal. They are to receive the right thigh of the sacrificed animal. The worshiper was to receive the rest.

> Leviticus 7:28-35
> The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the Lord shall bring his offering to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the Lord's food offerings. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be waved as a wave offering before the Lord. The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons. And the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifice of your peace offerings. Whoever among the sons of Aaron offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat shall have the right thigh for a portion. For the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed I have taken from the people of Israel, out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel. This is the portion of Aaron and of his sons from the Lord's food offerings, from the day they were presented to serve as priests of the Lord.

The implication is that the worshiper ate what was left. By giving to the LORD, you would help the priests, and enjoy a feast for yourself. The peace offerings were often offered in times of joy and gladness. Deuteronomy 27:7 says, "And you shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God." Thus, the peace offering often became a party!

Because of the joy and gladness of the peace offering, many have called the it, "the fellowship offering," that is, the offering that is shared. In fact, that's how the NIV translates this word in Leviticus 3:1, "If your offering is a fellowship offering" ...(NIV).

Now, personally, I think that "peace offering" is a better translation of this word. The Hebrew word here is "Shalom" (although technically in the plural). You have

probably heard of the word. It's the word used in Psalm 122, which we prayed at the beginning of our service.

> Psalm 122:6-7
> Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
> May they prosper who love you.
> May peace be within your walls,
> And prosperity within your palaces.

The Biblical idea of "Shalom" goes far beyond mere "peace from enemies." The idea includes well-being, blessing, prosperity, favor with God, and favor with men. And you can see the idea of "fellowship" in these ideas. Well-being, sharing, community. So, the difference between a "fellowship offering" and a "peace offering" isn't really too far off from each other. They both paint a picture of a community at peace and harmony with each other. And this atmosphere was cultivated through the peace offering, as the sacrifice was offered and food was shared all around afterwards.

And I can see some direct parallels with our practice at Rock Valley Bible Church of sharing a meal together on the first Sunday of each month. We call it, our "fellowship meal." We bring our food to church. We worship the Lord. Then, we share in the joy of the food and fellowship together. In fact, that is what we will do today after the service. How appropriate that I'm preaching this on the first Sunday of the month, when we have come to worship the Lord and afterwards share a meal together.

This is everything that the peace offering is about. It's about peace with God. It's about peace with others. It's about celebrating God's blessing in our lives!

Peace with God comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace with others comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking of Jews and Gentiles, Paul writes in Ephesians 2:14-16:

> Ephesians 2:14-16
> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility

May Rock Valley Bible Church be a place that celebrates these realities in our lives: that we have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ and that we have been reconciled to each other through His blood.

Perhaps an even better picture is the picture of the Lord's Supper. It's a picture of a meal within the context of worship. That's why we are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper at the end of my message this morning.

Let's move on to my second point. Let's think about the ...

2. Fat

This is one of the things that isn't eaten in the sacrifice. Back in chapter 3 and verse 16, we read, "All fat is the LORD's." It was always to be burned, and not eaten. This is true of the sin offering (4:8-10, 19). This is true of the guilt offering (7:3-5). The fat was to be burned, and never eaten. So, the question naturally comes up, "Why?" "Why is the fat of the sacrifices to be burned and not eaten?" The Bible nowhere tells us exactly why the fat is the LORD's. But, I would suspect that we have a good guess. I think that the reason has something to do with the fact that the fat in the Old Testament is seen as a good thing.

In a day and age where the average person had to labor long and hard for the food on their table, being fat was a sign of prosperity. It was a sign of health. It was a sign of blessing. It's only because we live in such affluence that we see fat as a bad thing. The ancient Israelites loved their fat!

A few years ago, I was in Nepal, training pastors. At the end of our week of training, we had a special dinner for all of us. We had pork. We had an abundance of pork. The native Nepali's were very excited, as beans or a small amount of chicken is the source of their protein. When the meal came, almost half of it was fat, all fried up and tasty! As a health-conscious American, I couldn't bring myself to eat the fat. One of the pastors was more than willing to take and eat what I didn't eat.

Many children (who aren't concerned for their health) enjoy their fat. For instance, one of our favorite meals is rotisserie chicken from Sam's Club. It's quick. It's hot. It's good tasting. And best of all, it's cheap. Add a little rice and some veggies, and we have a wonderful meal.

Anyway, whenever we have our rotisserie chicken, it's David who always asks for the skin, the outer layer of fat that tastes so good. But, we older folk, who are concerned for our health and for our waistline, we stay away. Not so those in the ancient world.

In Genesis 45:18, we read of Pharaoh's kindness to Joseph's father, who would be coming to live in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh told Joseph, "Take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land" (Genesis 45:18). This "fat of the land," meant, "the best of the land."

Being fat is a sign of blessing. Proverbs 13:2 says, "The soul of the diligent is made fat." Proverbs 15:30 says, "The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, And good news puts fat on the bones." And so, offering up the fat on the altar is a bit like giving to the LORD from the firstfruits of your produce. It's giving to God your best. God doesn't want your leftovers. He wants your best!

This is a principle that comes straight to us. We should give God the fat! We should give God the best! The best of our time. The best of our resources. The best of our energy. Give God the best, and He will be faithful to you. Let us trust the promise of Proverbs 3:9-10.

> Proverbs 3:9-10
> Honor the Lord with your wealth
> and with the firstfruits of all your produce;
> then your barns will be filled with plenty,
> and your vats will be bursting with wine.

So let us give to the LORD the fat, the best. Isn't this what Leviticus is all about? The phrase, "You shall be holy," is about giving your all to the LORD. It is about turning from sinful desires and giving total devotion to Him!

This is what God requires of all of us! He requires that we love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength! And giving the fat to God is simply a representation that the best that I have, I give to the LORD.

Are you giving your best? Perhaps there are some things this morning that the LORD is bringing to thought in your mind. Perhaps there are areas where the LORD isn't getting your best. Oh! May the LORDgrant repentance in your heart and in mine.

Let's move on. Let's look at ...

3. Blood

This is another prohibition with the peace offering. It's found in verse 17.

> Leviticus 3:17
> It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

When it comes to the sacrificial animals, you are not to eat the fat, nor drink the blood. Again, the question naturally comes up, "Why?" "Why is the blood of the sacrifices to be burned and not eaten?"

And here there is no speculation as to why the Israelites were to abstain from the blood of the sacrifice. It comes later in the book, in chapter 17, and verses 10-12.

> Leviticus 17:10-12
> "If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.

You are not to eat the blood, because life is in the blood; because atonement is in the blood. And you need a death to atone for your sins. And of course, this screams Jesus to us! He was our sacrifice. His death upon the cross atoned for our sins. His death means our life! And there was something special about His blood. Peter calls it "the precious blood, ... like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1

Peter 1:19). It was His blood that purchased men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:12). His spilt blood is the blood to which every bloody sacrifice points.

And for this reason, because the life-giving blood "is the blood that makes atonement by the life" (Lev. 17:11), the Israelites were told not to eat the blood. This commandment ran deep in the heart of the Jewish people. Perhaps you remember the Jerusalem counsel, as recorded in Acts 15. There were Jews who were saying that the Gentiles who were believing in Jesus had to submit themselves to the law of Moses and be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15: 1). When Paul and Barnabas heard about this, they rushed to Jerusalem to dispute with those who were saying these things. They (and Peter and James) argued that you are saved by faith alone, not by keeping the law in any way.

Thus was the conclusion of the counsel: You are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. You do not need to submit yourself to circumcision. And yet, so great was the Jewish abhorrence to eating blood, that the counsel wrote a letter to the Gentiles who had come to faith in Christ, requiring them to "abstain ... from blood" (Acts 15:28-29).

This probably has reference to the practice of some Gentiles to drink blood, perhaps as a part of idol worship. This would have been so offensive to the Jews, that church unity would have been well nigh impossible without this restriction. That's how deep it ran in the Jewish culture. How ironic that Jesus instituted Lord's Supper by lifting a glass of wine and saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28). It shows that not every detail in these sacrifices is exactly similar to the sacrifice of Christ.

In none of the sacrifices would the worshipers eat the blood. But, in the sacrifice of Christ, we must eat the blood. Jesus said, ...

> John 6:53-56
> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

Of course, Jesus isn't saying that we drink his physical blood. This he made clear, later in the context, when he told the Jews, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6: 63). In other words, we drink of Jesus, not by bringing his blood to our lips. But, rather, we drink of him by abiding in him.

Jesus uses the metaphor of eating and drinking to picture Him coming into our lives. The picture is of dependence, as we are dependent upon Him for life itself. The picture is one of desire -- as we crave our food and drink, so also are we to crave our Christ. Are you abiding in him? Are you drinking of that blood that can forgive your sins?

My last point is really a question:

4. Why?

"Why did the Jews offer up the peace offering?" Again, like the grain offering, there is nothing in Leviticus 3 that tells us why they would offer up a peace offering? Again, like the grain offering, the peace offering was often offered in conjunction with the burnt offering. In fact, look there at verse 5, ...

> Leviticus 3:5
> Then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire.

In other words, the peace offering assumes that the burnt offering has taken place first. The peace offering comes after the burnt offering. The burnt offering was for atonement (1:4). The grain offering was for thanksgiving (7:12). The peace offering had several purposes.

In fact, let's turn over to chapter 7. In this chapter, the peace offering is explained in a bit more detail. It's not given from the perspective of the worshiper. It's given from the perspective of the priest. Here we see three purposes given for the peace offering.

a. Thanksgiving.

> Leviticus 7:11-15
> "And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings that one may offer to the Lord. If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the

> thanksgiving sacrifice unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of fine flour well mixed with oil. With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving he shall bring his offering with loaves of leavened bread. And from it he shall offer one loaf from each offering, as a gift to the Lord. It shall belong to the priest who throws the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering. He shall not leave any of it until the morning.

Coming after the burnt offering, the peace offering was an expression of thanks to the LORD. We talked about this last week in conjunction with the grain offering. He has given to us and so, in return, we give to Him. We give not because we have to, but because we want to. We want to express our heart of gratitude to the Lord. And the peace offering was one but one way to do this.

For us, the opportunities for thanksgiving abound. We can thank the LORD in song, singing thanks to Him. We can thank the LORD in prayer, in private or in public. We can thank the LORD in giving. The Israelites expressed thanks in bringing the peace offering. Likewise, we can give something tangible in our lives to Him as well.

We can thank the LORD in testimony, telling others of the wonderful things that God has done for your soul. We can thank the LORD in writing, posting a note of thanks on Facebook, or writing an old-fashioned note to others in which we express our thanks to God. Isn't this what Paul did so often? Many of his letters to the churches begin, "I thank God for you" (Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:3; Phi. 1:3).

Perhaps today there is a peace offering of thanks that you would like to give to the LORD. So, sing the song, say the words, give the gift. Let it be known.

The peace offering had other purposes, however. Not only was it to give thanks to the LORD, it also ...

b. Sealing a vow.

> Leviticus 7:16
> But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow offering or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what remains of it shall be eaten.

In other words, if you were making some sort of vow to the LORD, you followed it up with a peace offering.

The New Testament example of this was Paul in Acts 21. He had entered Jerusalem, and was in danger of arrest for betraying the faith of the nation in believing in Jesus. The leaders of the church said to him, ...

> Acts 21:20-24
> ... You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.

And Paul followed their advice.

> Acts 21:26
> Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

Now, we are very short on details concerning the type of vow that this was. But, we do know this: their vow had something to do with purity and righteousness. That Paul was willing to help these men who had made a vow. And in a similar way, we may do well in making vows to the LORD, especially as it comes to walking rightly in holiness.

Perhaps there are sins in your life that you want to repent of. Perhaps a public repentance, followed by some vows, and a meal together. That wouldn't be a bad thing.

When you look in the Bible for when the peace offerings were offered, they were often offered during times of great events of the community. Peace offerings were offered when the tabernacle was consecrated (Numbers 7). Peace offerings were to

be offered when Israel entered the promised land (Deuteronomy 27:7). Peace offerings were offered when Saul became king (1 Samuel 11:15). Peace offerings were offered on the day that the ark of God came to Jerusalem and placed in the tabernacle there (1 Chronicles 16:1). Peace offerings were offered on the day that the temple was dedicated. On that day, "Solomon offered as peace offerings to the Lord 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep" (1 Kings 8:63). Certainly, on such occasions, they were marked with vows of consecration.

Let's look at a third purpose for the peace offering.

c. A freewill offering

> Leviticus 7:16
> But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow offering or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what remains of it shall be eaten.

This simply means that this offering is coming totally voluntarily. You aren't being compelled by your sin. You aren't being compelled by your parents. You aren't being compelled by your friends. If you notice, this has been true of the first three offerings.

> Leviticus 1:3
> *If* his offering is a burnt offering

> Leviticus 2:1
> *If* anyone brings a grain offering

> Leviticus 3:1
> *If* his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering.

Now, that will all change in chapter 4.

> Leviticus 4:2
> "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the LORD's commandments, ..."

In other words, "*If you sin,* here's what you must do to be right with God." Chapters 4 and 5 will live under this mandatory worship. But, not so with the freewill offering of the peace offering. The freewill offering comes from a true

desire of your heart to give to the LORD. My hope and prayer for Rock Valley Bible Church is that this is why you come and are involved in the church. Not because your name is on some list. Not because you feel under obligation to come. But, because you freely want to come and because you truly desire to be here. The LORDlooks to our heart in worship.

Let's finish up by looking at Amos 5:21-23. Consider his words carefully. He says, ...

> Amos 5:21-23
> I hate, I despise your feasts,
> and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
> I will not accept them;
> and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,
> I will not look upon them.
> Take away from me the noise of your songs;
> to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

The LORD says here that He despises the very offerings that He commanded. Now, if you have been following through this entire series in Leviticus, you recognize the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the peace offerings (all of which are mentioned in Amos 5:22). You know that they entail. They all bring with them the assumption that your heart is right in seeking atonement (burnt offering) in giving thanks (grain offering), and in seeking fellowship with God (peace offering). God's counsel to Israel through Amos is found in verse 24:

> Amos 5:24
> 24 But let justice roll down like waters,
> and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

How about you? How's your heart before the LORD? Are you seeking His righteousness and His justice with your life? Is your heart soft and tender before Him?

The LORDisn't seeking mere external ritual. This was David's affirmation, "You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering" (Psalm 51:16). God is much more concerned with the disposition of our heart than He is about our mere external obedience. David continued, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will

not despise" (Psalm 51:17). May the LORD break our hearts and our spirits, that we might present pure offerings to Him.

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