

Speaking to the soul



Thanksgiving and service

Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don't forget to do good and to share

with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God. Hebrews 13:15-16

The writer to the Hebrews devotes a great deal of attention to the old sacrificial system. He does so in order to make it clear that in Christ it has completely come to an end. Jesus sacrificed his life on the cross and made it unnecessary for any further sacrifices. However, the language of sacrifice is still important and the writer encourages his readers to offer up their sacrifices of praise continually through Jesus as a sign of their commitment to God. This reminds us of the language of the apostle Paul who frequently told his readers to give thanks continually. These New Testament writers thought of thanksgiving not as an occasional religious duty but as a joyful way of life.

Living a life of thanksgiving is vital but there is another sacrifice that we are urged to make as well: doing good and sharing with those in need. There is something incredibly down-to-earth about Christian faith. It is never just a matter of having the right beliefs and singing lovely songs, important as both of those are. We are to live a life of getting stuck into helping those around us. There is no doubt that this is costly and demanding. But it is our privilege as we follow in the footsteps of the Lord who gave absolutely everything for us. I count it a privilege to see what this means in practice as I watch my Christian friends generously and unself-consciously pouring out their lives on behalf of those around them. I thank God for their example and long, too, to live such a life of thanksgiving and service.

QUESTION

In what ways are you able to do good and share with those in need at the moment?

PRAYER

Lord God, help me to live a life of continual thanksgiving and service. Amen

Photograph - View of Hereford Cathedral and statue of Sir Edward Elgar

