

Lesson Five – First Quarter

Theme: *The Meaning of Sacrifice in Paul's Experience*

Outline (Notation Form)

I. Paul's Awareness of Possible Execution (Philippians)

1. Paul recognizes death as a real possibility

- In Philippians, Paul senses the **possibility** of execution—not its certainty.
- Contrast: in **2 Timothy 4:6–8**, Paul clearly sees death as **imminent** (“I have fought a good fight...”).

2. Tone in Philippians

- Calm.
 - Joyful.
 - Sacrificial, not sorrowful.
 - He views his imprisonment as part of his **offering to Christ**.
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II. Sacrificial Terminology in Philippians

1. Paul uses **Temple language**, especially language of offerings and libations.
2. He frames his suffering as a **joyful sacrifice**:
 - Not accidental.
 - Not wasted.

- **Deliberate devotion** to Christ.
 - 3. He encourages the church to see suffering for Christ as a **sacred act**, not a tragedy.
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III. Background: Libations and Sacrificial Rituals (Numbers 15; Numbers 28)

1. Definition of Libation

- A liquid offering (often wine) **poured out** before the Lord.
- Symbol of dedication, surrender, and honor toward God.

2. Misinterpretation

- Outsiders might see a libation as a **waste** (liquid poured out “for nothing”).
- Scripture frames it as **valuable worship**:
 - You offer something precious because God is more precious than what you surrender.

3. Connection to Paul

- Paul sees his life as a **libation**—poured out for Christ.
 - Others may see it as a waste (“Why throw away your life?”).
 - But in Paul’s view, it is an **act of worship and devotion**.
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IV. The Nature of Sacrifice in Scripture

1. Sacrifice does not always mean death.

- Many offerings in Temple service involved **life**, dedication, and thanksgiving—not bloodshed.

2. But ultimate sacrifice often involves cost

- The slain lamb
- The altar rituals
- The surrender of something valuable

3. Paul acknowledges the **cost** of discipleship but emphasizes the **joy** in giving oneself to Christ.

V. Paul's New Category: The "Living Sacrifice" (Romans 12:1)

1. Innovation in biblical imagery

- Instead of dying *for* Christ, Paul emphasizes **living for Christ**.
- Present your bodies as a **living sacrifice** → ongoing dedication.

2. Meaning

- Daily surrender
 - Daily obedience
 - Daily dying to self without physical death
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VI. Illustration: Peter in the Garden

1. Peter was **ready to die for Christ** (drawing the sword).
2. But Peter had not yet learned how to **live for Christ**:
 - Self-control

- Obedience
 - Trust in God's plan
3. Ultimately Peter does die for Christ, but **living for Him was the first lesson**.
 4. This example shows the difference between:
 - *Dramatic sacrifice* (willingness to die)
 - *Daily sacrifice* (willingness to live faithfully)
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VII. Application

1. Sacrifice is not measured in **death**, but in **devotion**.
 2. Paul shows that:
 - A life poured out for Christ is never wasted.
 - Our sacrifices—time, energy, reputation, resources—are meaningful worship.
 3. The call today is the same:
 - Will you **live** as a sacrifice first?
 - If necessary, will you **die** for Christ?
 4. True sacrifice is valuing Christ above anything the world considers valuable.
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VIII. Closing Thought

Paul teaches that sacrifice is not tragic—it is sacred.
A life poured out for Jesus is the most valuable thing a believer can offer.
