



Maranatha

ADULTS 55+ MINISTRY

COMMUNICATION #36

June 25, 2021

Greetings to our Maranatha family from Gordon, Joy and the leadership team. Meditation #36 is written by Gordon Dirks and speaks about the importance of living our lives as a sacrifice to God. May we all be motivated to live in accordance with God's will for our lives.

AN OFFERING...

Modern life does not place the notion of "sacrifice" particularly high on its marquee of virtues. Instead, we are told to "pursue our dreams," "express our autonomy," "suck life dry," and "live to the max!"

The notion of making a "sacrificial offering" in pursuit of a noble cause, let alone doing so in response to God's call on our lives, wouldn't attract many "likes" in today's Facebook and Tik-Tok social media world.

Consequently, true stories like the following account stand out in stark relief to the self-centered individualism rampant in our culture.

During his reign, King Frederick William III of Prussia found himself in trouble. Wars had been costly, and in trying to build the nation, he was seriously short of finances. He couldn't disappoint his people, and to capitulate to the enemy was unthinkable. After careful reflection, he decided to ask the women of Prussia to bring their jewelry of gold and silver to be melted down for their country.

For each ornament received, he determined to exchange a decoration of bronze or iron as a symbol of his gratitude. Each decoration would be inscribed, "I gave gold for iron, 1813." The response was overwhelming. Even more important, these women prized their gifts from the king more highly than their former jewelry. The reason, of course, is clear. The decorations were proof that they had sacrificed for their king. Indeed, it became unfashionable to wear jewelry, and thus was established the Order of the Iron Cross. Members wore no ornaments except a cross of iron for all to see.

When you read through the Bible, you can't help but notice that sacrificial offerings are a high priority with God.

King David talks about sacrificing a "thank offering to you," (Psalm 166:17) and his declaration in 2 Samuel 24:24 stands out as a powerful reminder that true sacrifice always costs.

"I will not offer to the Lord sacrifices that have cost me nothing."

Peter, having recovered from his denials of Christ, later wrote to the universal Church of Christ and talks about us offering "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God." (2 Peter 2:5)

Paul described the sacrificial gifts given by the church in Philippi as "a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God." (Philippians 4:18)

Christian faith is not some esoteric, "other-worldly" belief system. Quite the contrary. It flourishes in the soil of every-day, concrete sacrifice of time, of money, of reputation, of that which costs us something dear. As Jesus so clearly reminds us ...

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a widow put in two very small coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)

Recently I came across the deeply personal account of my father-in-law, now in heaven, a pastor who had toiled decades in the ministry trenches. Over the years he had prepared countless sermons. They were his treasure, the manifestation of a life wholeheartedly devoted to Christ. He had built a little cabin the in woods on ancestral land, and then, he made an offering.

He writes:

One evening when I was there alone and planning to stay for the night, I made a bonfire to worship God and offer a sacrifice. The sacrifice would be several boxes of my sermons and studies that I had used for many years in the past. As the fire burned in the evening moonlight and the sky was full of stars above, and the smoke of my offering went towards heaven, I worshiped God. I thanked Him that my childhood call to preach had never lifted from my life. I thanked Him for my wife and family who had been at my side for so many years. She was now failing in health a little, but her mind was as keen as ever. I thanked God for friends who were so kind to us through the years, and for the few who were not so kind. They all intentionally or not had made a better person out of me." (Rev Robert Reid's Personal Diary)

As we live out the rest of the days God has given us, let's remember the example of Christ himself, "...and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:2)

**"Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you." Randy Rothwell**

Blessings,
Gordon Dirks

HYMNS OF THE FAITH:

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS:

Joseph Scriven, a young Irishman, completed his college education in 1844. He returned home to marry his sweetheart. He came home to find his bride-to-be tragically lying dead after falling off her horse. Later on, Scriven moved to Canada and fell in love again. Unfortunately, for the second time, his bride-to-be hit a horrible fate. She became ill and died weeks before their marriage.

Scriven wrote a poem to his mother in Ireland to describe the tragedy he had faced. He spoke of how his deep friendship with Jesus, which he had cultivated through prayer, helped him get through the loss of his two loved ones. Instead of believing God was punishing him, Scriven thought God was his rock. The poem was published anonymously under the title "Pray Without Ceasing". Later in 1868, attorney Charles Converse set the text to music and changed the name to what we know it as today.x

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS:

What a friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,

Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged—

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful,

Who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness;

Take it to the Lord in prayer

Are we weak and heavy-laden,

Cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior, still our refuge—

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In His arms He'll take and shield thee,

Thou wilt find a solace there

What a friend we have in Jesus

take it to Lord in prayer

CLEAN JOKES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS: THE FAMOUS MAN

One day a famous man went to a nursing home to see all of his friends again and see how they were doing. When he got there EVERYBODY greeted him [because, of course, everybody knows him]. One man he noticed didn't come up to him or say anything to him, so later he walked up to the man and asked him "Do you know who I am?" and the old man replied "No, but you can go to the front desk and they'll tell you."

A FINAL NOTE TO OUR MARANATHA FRIENDS.....

As we take up residence in our White Rock condo, we want to say a big thank you to everyone who linked arms with us in our Maranatha ministry these past five years.

Our hearts have been deeply moved by the many encouraging emails and notes sent our way in recent months.

We will miss our Maranatha friends, but know that one day, we will all meet again in God's good timing.

"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." Amen

Gordon & Joy Dirks

CENTRAL CAMPUS WEEKEND SERVICES:

ONLINE SERVICE TIMES: Saturday, 6:30p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m.; 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.

REGULAR IN PERSON SERVICE TIMES: Saturday, 4:30 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.
(registration is required for in person services). *Due to Alberta Health Service regulations, in person services may change or be cancelled. Please check with Centre Street Church at **403-293-3900**.

VISITATION:

If you would like to have a visit from the Maranatha Visitation Team, please contact Pastor Jared Harrison at jared.harrison@cchurch.ca or phone **403-520-2680/403-293-3900**. During this time of pandemic, all visits will be made by personal phone call.

We want to stay in touch with you! This Maranatha Digest is being sent to everyone in our Maranatha Adults data base. We hope you enjoy it and know that you are not alone during these pandemic times. Please contact us below and let us know how you are doing! You can also send prayer requests to the contacts below, either by phone or by email.

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." Lam. 2-22-23.

Until we meet again, blessings in Christ!

Gordon & Joy Dirks, Maranatha Ministry Coordinators

Gordon: gordondirks@gmail.com; Joy: evangelinejoydirks@gmail.com

Jodi Woelke, Admin. Assistant: jodi.woelke@cchurch.ca | **403-520-2683**

Centre Street Church main number: **403-293-3900**

