

There at the daily Burnt Offering, God will meet you

Read Exodus 29:30-46

Exodus 29:42, "There at the daily Burnt Offering, God will meet you."

There was real excitement in Israel for what God is says in Exodus 29. This was all new. God was telling them how they might live with him. First he gave 10 commandments, then all kinds of laws about stealing, murdering, swearing, marriage and clean vs unclean. Then God told them to build a tabernacle and gave details on its construction. Last of all, they were to ordain Aaron and his sons to serve as priests, offering all kinds of sacrifices.

Our passage comes at the end of all this: the burnt offering with every rising of the sun and its setting at night. These were to be offered every day so it was the most common sacrifice in Israel. It is a beautiful sacrifice and it is one that we should still be offering every day - each morning a whole Burnt Offering and again each evening. And the excitement that Israel felt to hear these instructions from God will be the same kind of excitement you'll feel to hear these instructions from God.

Let's think first about the AM whole Burnt Offering. The priests serving in the temple were early risers. They rose long before the sun and assembled in the temple court in total darkness with a year old lamb, waiting for the sun to appear on the horizon. As soon as the sun appeared, the lamb was slaughtered, butchered and burned on the altar. The entire animal was to be burned till it was ashes - it all went up in smoke. God called it: a pleasing aroma. That does not mean that God liked the smell of roasted meat, though it must have smelled very nice for a while.

So why does God say he like the smell of the Burnt Offering?

Because of what it represented.

What is it that you are thinking about when you get up in the morning? What were you thinking when you got up yesterday morning - between first opening your eyes and eating your breakfast? Surely, you were planning your day. You thought about what you had to accomplish, how you would do it and when you could move on to the next thing. Perhaps you anticipated something very pleasant, or you groaned inwardly about something very difficult. Or you sighed at the emptiness of it all.

The AM Burnt Offering represent those thoughts. In the morning, the people of Israel dedicated themselves to God. That is what the AM Burnt Offering represented. O God, as the priest burns this lamb till nothing remains, so I give my entire life to you. I yield everything to you, holding nothing back. I love you and I want you to use me for whatever you desire. It is my joy and honour to serve you. In addition to devotion, the AM Burnt Offering represented petition: O God I have much to do, things that I fear, joys to experience, and I'm anxious about this and that. But with my Burnt Offering I surrender my life to you and ask that you give me strength to do what I am called to do today.

Note also the place where the AM Burnt Offering was offered: on the altar at the entrance to the TOM. That is the meeting place: God comes out to us and we go out to him - at the altar where the blood of

the Burnt Offering animal is poured out and the butchered carcass burned. God comes out to us and will speak to us. He will utter his blessing to us: Yahweh bless you and keep you, Yahweh turn his face toward you and bless you. Yahweh turn his face toward you and give you peace.”(Nu 6:24)

When the blood part of the liturgy was done, God says, then I will dwell with you. God will walk with us and strengthen us in our busy lives. His providence will make everything turn out right for me. Nothing happens now except what benefits me. So we can just get on with life unafraid. We can live confidently, and determinedly.

But now, let us think about that other sacrifice, the PM Burnt Offering.

What are your thoughts at night before your life is released to sleep? Every night as the sun sets, the priests were to offer the PM Burnt Offering. It is man’s gift to God. All our accomplishments we set before God and give him praise. We will not take credit for what he did in us for that would be stolen honour. And all our failures, we set those before him too: Oh God, please forgive me. I meet you here at the altar where the blood has been shed so that I might find assurance that there is peace with God and he will say to his people again, “Yahweh turn his face toward you and give you peace”. Your sins are forgiven.

And as I drift into oblivion, I know that this God loves me. This God has not just delivered his people from Egypt by the hand of Moses but he has delivered me from hell by the hand of Jesus his son and he leads me to the promised land, to paradise.

So every day, I will offer this Burnt Offering in the am and the pm: a prayer to my God. O God help me, give me strength. I love you and want to serve you. And in the evening: O God I praise you for abiding with me. I offer as my tribute all that was good, and pray for sanctification of all that was not and beg for forgiveness of all that was sinful.

The bloody part of the sacrifice is no longer needed. Jesus offered his body as the perfect and final blood offering. Now, we just come to God in the name of Jesus. And he will speak to me as surely as I speak to him - he will assure me in my soul that all is well - in the morning before I get to work, and in the evening before I go to sleep.