

“REND YOUR HEARTS”

Sometimes the outward signs of sorrow mean nothing to God. In the ancient world, tearing your clothing was the universal symbol of intense grief, deep mourning, or profound religious repentance (Gen. 37.34; 2 Sam. 1.11). Yet through the prophet Joel, God issued a command to an entire nation facing destruction. He said, “*Rend your heart, and not your garments*” (Joel 2.13). This is a passage that exposes the difference between a spiritual performance and having genuine contrition.

First, God rejects religious theater. In the context of Joel 2, a devastating locust plague had stripped the land bare, foreshadowing the impending judgment of God (Joel 2.1-11). The people knew how to cry out, and they knew how to rip their outer robes to show their distress. But God saw their hearts. The word translated as “rend” is a Hebrew word that means to tear violently or rip into pieces. God was telling them that tearing fabric is meaningless when life remains unchanged. God has always despised empty ritual (Amos 5.21-24; Isa. 1.11-15).

Second, God demands genuine contrition. David understood this reality after his sin with Bathsheba. He wrote, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise*” (Ps. 51.17). The word “contrite” translates a word that means crushed to powder. When we sin against God, do we treat it as a minor mistake? Do we simply go through the motions of an apology, or do we allow ourselves to feel the weight of our rebellion? God does not want a superficial performance. He wants a heart torn to pieces (2 Cor. 7.10). Real repentance begins on the inside.

Third, God welcomes those who truly return. Immediately after commanding them to rend their hearts, he tells them to “*return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness*” (Joel 2.13). When we are willing to abandon our pretenses and bring God a broken heart, we are never met with harsh rejection. Consider the example of the prodigal son who returned home with nothing left to offer except his confession (Luke 15.18-21). His father did not rebuke him. He ran to meet him, fell on his neck, and kissed him (Luke 15.20). God is eager to forgive those who start confronting their spiritual condition (Ex. 34.6; Mic. 7.18).

What kind of sorrow do we bring before God today? It is easy to look the part while our hearts remain unbroken. God desires our honesty, not our outward show. CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

September 6, 2026

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

A Living Sacrifice

In the ancient world, an offering brought to the altar always ended in death. Yet when the apostle Paul instructs Christians on how to worship, he flips our expectations upside down. In Romans 12, he writes, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*” (Rom. 12.1). How can a sacrifice remain alive?

First, our sacrifice requires a surrendered body. Under the Law of Moses, an animal was slain, drained of blood, and consumed on the altar (Lev. 1.5-9). In contrast, Christ does not demand our physical death. He demands our daily life. The word translated as “reasonable” is the Greek word *logikos*, which carries the idea of rational or logical. Giving our physical life over to the service of God is simply the logical response to His mercy (Rom. 6.13; 1 Cor. 6.19-20).

Second, our sacrifice requires a renewed mind. Paul adds, “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom. 12.2). The world constantly pressures us to blend into its moral mold. When you fill your thoughts with scripture rather than worldly culture, your actions naturally follow (Ps. 119.11; Phil. 4.8). True devotion begins on the inside.

Giving our lives daily to God is not an extreme demand. It is our reasonable service. May we place ourselves on His altar every single morning as a living sacrifice. CLP

THE ATTITUDES THAT COST JESUS HIS LIFE

MATTHEW 27:18

INTRODUCTION:

1. On the Day of Judgment, your attitude will matter just as much as your belief system. (Prov. 23.7; Matt. 12.34)
2. In Matthew 27, we read about the attitudes that cost Jesus His life. Are these attitudes your attitudes?

I. EXPLANATION

A. Question

1. **Matthew 27.11:** *“The governor asked Him saying, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’”* (Matt. 27.1,2; John 19.21)
2. **Matthew 27.12:** *“And while He was being accused...”* What were the accusations? (Luke 23.1,2,5; John 18.30)
3. **Matthew 27.12-14:** *“He answered nothing”* (Isa. 53.7)

B. Decision

1. **Matthew 27.15-19:** *“Whom do you want me to release to you?”* (cf. Mark 15.7; John 18.40)
2. **Matthew 27.20,21:** *“They said, ‘Barabbas!’”*
3. **Matthew 27.22,23:** What about Jesus Christ? *“They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’”*

C. Resignation

1. **Matthew 27.24:** *“When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all”* (cf. Matt. 26.3-5)
2. **Matthew 27.24-26:** *“I am innocent of this just person”* But was he innocent? (John 19.10).

D. Derision. (Matt. 27.27-31)

II. APPLICATION

A. Envy.

1. **Matthew 27.18:** *“For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.”* Lit., “jealousy.”
2. Are you envious? (Gal. 5.16,17,21)

B. Peer Pressure.

1. **Matthew 27.24:** *“When Pilate saw that he could not prevail.”* (Matt. 27.19)
2. Are you trying to please the crowds? (1 Pet. 4.1-4)

C. Denying Guilt. (Matt. 27.24; 1 John 1.8,9; Ps. 32.5)

CONCLUSION: With Jesus, we can be righteous. 2 Cor. 15.21)

Does God Give You More Than You Can Handle?

“God will not give you more than you can handle.” Have you ever heard these words while you were at the hospital? Has anyone ever offered you comfort with these words at a graveside? These words are true, but not in the way you may think. The sentiment is taken from 1 Corinthians 10.13, but it has nothing to do with the hardships of life. Contextually, he is writing about temptation.

If you back up to the beginning of the chapter, you read about Israel. God was with them every step of the way (1 Cor. 10.1-4). In spite of His involvement in their lives, *“But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness”* (1 Cor. 10.5). What made God angry with them, so that they died in the wilderness? The text gives us four specific sins that Israel committed (1 Cor. 10.7-10). The sins of Israel were documented as a cautionary tale for us (v. 11). When you skip down to verse 14, reference is again made to idolatry. This is a chapter warning us about temptation.

When you dig down into 1 Corinthians 10.13, there are some key words that need our attention. First there is the word “overtaken.” It translates a word that means to grab hold of you and keep on holding you. The temptation that has grabbed hold of you and won’t let go is nothing new. Second, there is the word “faithful.” It carries the sense of being reliable. God is reliable. In what way? *“who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able”* (1 Cor. 10.13). The word translated as “able” is a word that refers to power. With every temptation you face, you have the power to resist it. How? God *“will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it”* (1 Cor. 10.13).

When it comes to temptation, God promises that we will have the ability to escape it. But this is not referring to the challenges of life. What does the Bible actually say about life? In 2 Corinthians 1.8, Paul wrote, *“we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”* The same writer who wrote 1 Corinthians 10.13 also wrote that his burdens were beyond measure, above strength and caused despair. In other words, the difficulties were more than he could handle. But you keep reading, and Paul explains why God allowed him to suffer so severely. *“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead”* (2 Cor. 1.9). God sometimes allows us to suffer more than we can handle to teach us to depend on Him.

So when someone is crushed, don’t tell them that God never gives them more than they can handle. Tell them to trust in God and let Him handle it.

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