

Unacceptable Gifts for God

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Amos 5:21-24

These words from God in our text might sound shocking to many people today. Why would God not accept worship that was being offered to Him? In this case, it was because of their sin. Yet there are other passages that describe other kinds of unacceptable gifts to God. In this lesson, we're going to consider some unacceptable gifts we may offer to God. We do not want to offer something that He would "hate" or "reject."

Gifts Offered without Cost

- When David sinned in taking the census, God sent a pestilence as punishment (2 Samuel 24:1-2, 15) – David was instructed to build an altar (2 Samuel 24:18); the field where the altar was to be built was offered to him, but David insisted that he pay for it (2 Samuel 24:21-25)
- God has called us to make sacrifices to Him (1 Peter 2:5) – do this willingly, not only when convenient/easy; in our giving (1 Corinthians 16:2); in our everyday life (Romans 12:1)

Gifts Offered Dishonestly

- Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property and brought a portion to the church (Acts 5:1-6) – they were killed by the Lord; not for keeping back part of the money, but for lying about it
- Any gift we give to God is of our own free will – we "willingly" sacrifice (Psalm 54:6), not forced; we may deceive others about our gifts, but we will not fool God (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Gifts Offered Grudgingly

- In speaking of giving, Paul said we must not give grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) – instead, we are to give cheerfully and as we have purposed
- Again, any gift we give is offered of our own free will – but we must want to give; consider the example of the Israelites offering gifts for the temple (2 Chronicles 29:6-9); we must serve God wholeheartedly (cf. Psalm 119:2), not only because we have to

Gifts Offered That He Never Asked For

- David thought it would be good to build a house for God – Nathan encouraged him initially (2 Samuel 7:1-3); yet the Lord told Nathan to tell David not to do it (2 Samuel 7:4-7); He never asked for it
- It is good to ask what we can do to serve God – but we should not answer that with assumptions (Matthew 7:22-23); instead, we are to search the Scriptures because they equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Gifts Offered Inconsistently with His Requirements

- Nadab and Abihu offered “strange fire” and were punished by God (Leviticus 10:1-3) – it was different from what God commanded
- When we offer worship to God, we must do so in spirit and truth (John 4:24) – this means we do so by His authority (Colossians 3:17)

Conclusion

- The desire to offer gifts to God is good – time, money, effort, allegiance, etc.
- But we need to be careful that the gifts we offer are acceptable to Him – otherwise, they are worthless