TITLE: What Does God Require?

TEXT: Gen. 2:15-17; Ex. 33:18-23; 1 Thess. 4:16-17;

Ro.12:1-2

INTRODUCTION: One of the oldest questions of Christianity, a question that each and every sincere Believer that has ever lived has had to ask themselves at one time or another is: What is it that God requires?

 What is it that God requires of me if I am to be a child of God? What is it that God requires of me as a Christian?

 I believe that Scripture actually speaks of two things that God requires of each and every one of us as a Believer....

 To find the answer to the first thing God requires of us we need to go back to the beginning.....Right after God had created man....

**Gene 2:15 (NIV) The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.**

**16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;**

**17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."**

In these verses of Scripture we see the first and only requirement at that time that God put upon man.

 What is the requirement? Something that we talked about a couple weeks ago when we talked about the life of Abraham... And that is Obedience.

 God told the man....

**"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;**

**17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."**

 In the beginning God only had one requirement that He placed upon man if man were to stay in positional rightness with Him....

God said...

 Adam, as my child, I give all that I have created to you and yours.

 Take care of it! Enjoy it! Eat all the fruit that you want from it!

 Except the fruit from the tree that I have placed in the middle of the garden, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil....

 Adam, obey my command, fulfill this one requirement and everything is going to be just fine. You will be my Child and enjoy personal fellowship with Me forever.....

 However, if you don't fulfill this one requirement, if you don't obey Me, then the day that you disobey me you will surely die…

 We all know the rest of the story. Mankind disobeyed God and ate from the tree that God had commanded him not to eat from.....

 Man didn't fulfill the one requirement that God had placed upon him..

 What happened? Mankind suffered.

 Through disobedience sin entered the world. Mankind sinned and the seed of sin then passed on to every man, woman and child that has ever been born.

 Scripture says that the wages of sin, the result of sin is death! All have sinned so all will die.

 Adam eventually died in the flesh. Every man, woman and child born into this world has or will eventually die in the flesh.

 It has become a universal law of nature..

 Someone once said that the only things that we can be sure of in this life are what?

 Death and taxes!

 We may possibly find a place today somewhere in this world where there are no taxes to pay, but there is no place in this world where there is no death.

 But God said that in the day or when man sinned he would die.

 That in fact happened. The second that Adam and Eve disobeyed God they did suffer a death. There was an instant death that took place within their spirit.

 Before Adam & Eve sinned they lived in the very presence of God! God would come and walk with them and talk with them in the garden. Man enjoyed the fullness of spiritual life and spiritual vitality.

 But then, through disobedience, they became sinners.

 Sin in any form or fashion cannot survive the literal presence of God! Gods’ holiness would utterly destroy sin, and sense man had become a sinner, man would have been utterly destroyed by Gods literal presence....

 So as an act of His mercy and great love for man God removed Himself from man’s presence....

 Was God that angry? No, God was that compassionate and that merciful!

 God departed so that man wouldn't die in his sin.

 If God hadn't departed after man sinned then man would have died both spiritually and physically and would have been forever lost and separated from God.

 He would have passed from life directly and instantly into eternal death--Eternal damnation, eternal separation from God.

 This is illustrated to us in Ex. 33 when Moses goes up upon the mountain for the second time to receive the ten commandments of God...

**Exod 33:18 (NIV) Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."**

**19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.**

**20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."**

**21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.**

**22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.**

**23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."**

Moses had spoken to the Lord often but had never seen His face. Moses wanted to see God in His fullness, wanted to literally enter His presence.

 When Moses said to God; Show me your glory, what he was saying was; God I want to see your face! I want to literally enter your presence!

 Notice how God responds to Moses?

Moses...

**"you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."**

Moses, no man can enter My literal presence and survive.

Why? Because God is holy and His holiness would literally consume sin in any form! Moses, like us, was a sinner! He, like all of us, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

 God originally only had one requirement for His children... The requirement was and is obedience....

 Because man failed in that one requirement and became disobedient to God, sinned against God, there has been another requirement that has been added out of necessity because the first one wasn't keep.

 After man sinned back in the Garden of Eden another requirement was put into place by God...

 The requirement of sacrifice…

 Scripture says that after Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that their eyes where open and they realized that they were naked and they felt ashamed.

 What happened was that Adam and Eve already had the knowledge of Good. They were created with the knowledge of God. They were created in Gods image.

 What did they do by disobeying God and eating from the tree God had commanded them not to?

 What they did was reached out for the knowledge of evil. They already possessed the knowledge of good!

 Satan's temptation was in when he said to Eve....**for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened you will know good and evil and you will be like God!**

 So after man disobeys God and falls into sin, all of a sudden, for the first time in his life he realizes that he is naked and feels ashamed.

 What does God do? God Himself goes out and kills an animal so its skin can be used as a covering for Adam and Eve’s shameful nakedness..

 This is the start of the animal sacrificial system and God Himself performs the first sacrifice as a covering for man. But even garments of skin eventually wear out and need replaced…

 From this time on the people of God would have to offer up the sacrifice of innocent animals as a temporary atonement, a temporary covering for their sin.

EXAMPLE: animal sacrifice was to just keep you mindful of sin and its cost...

 God had put in place an annual sacrifice that was for sins of omission... each person had to offer sacrifice for sins that they may not have thought about and had never sought atonement for during the year.

 (Just in case I may have missed one this year).

 When they brought their sacrifice to the priests they had to place their hand on the head of the animal that was being sacrificed for them, that was dying for their sin. It was a point of contact between the sinner and the sacrifice as a way of identifying with the sacrifice.

 Realizing that this innocent animal was dying because of my sin!

 Animal Sacrifice couldn't' remove sin, but was just an annual reminder to the people about the seriousness of their sin and the sacrifice that it cost.... Animal sacrifice was to prepare the people for THEE sin sacrifice when God provided it... Jesus, The Lamb of God that would come, not to just temporarily atone for sin, but who could literally remove our sin from us..

 All who would lay their hand on this sacrifice, all who would lay their hand on Jesus by accepting Him as the Lord and savior of their life, would have their sin, not just temporally atoned for, but will have their sin completely removed.

 And once we have our sinned removed from us what is it that happens?

 God can once again come and indwell us! He can birth new life into a part of us that had been dead!

 The Spirit of God can once again come into our hearts and fill the place that He had to vacate when man sinned.

 We, once again, have not just the hope, but the promise of one day entering into His very presence! Seeing His very face!

 When Christ comes for us and we are raised in the newness of resurrected life and receive a new resurrection body, we will be able to literally stand before God and look upon His glorious face.

 Paul talks about this time when all born again believers will see God in all His fullness for the first time.

**1The 4:16 (NIV) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**

**17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.**

 There is a requirement that we all must fulfill now in order to see our Lord then....

 There is a sacrifice that we must embrace and then a sacrifice that we must make.

 The sacrifice that we all need to embrace is the sacrifice of Jesus.

 To come to that place where we come to God repentant, sorry for our sin, sorry for sinning against an all holy, all righteous, all loving God, and then personally accept the sacrifice that He made for us, the sacrifice of Himself on a cross, by simply falling to our knees before Him and seeking His forgiveness and asking Him, allowing Him, to come into our hearts to redeem and save us.

 And then there is a sacrifice that we are called to make.

 After we have accepted Jesus as the Lord and savior of our life, after we have become a child of God, restored in relationship to Him, there is a sacrifice that we are then called to make.....

 The sacrifice of surrender of our life to Him.

**Roma 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.**

**2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

Paul says....

 Because of whom God is, because of what God has done, because of His great salvation offered to us in Jesus Christ....**I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.**

What is it that God requires of us once we accept the sacrifice of Christ in our life?

 To then offer our bodies as living sacrifices to Him.

 This appears to be a contradiction in terms, to offer one’s body a living sacrifice.

 It certainly was to the hearers of this message in the day of the Apostle Paul...

 To offer one’s body as a living sacrifice…

 Sacrifice was synonymous with what?

 Death! If an animal was sacrificed it was killed.

 When Jesus offered Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross He was killed.

 Here God calls us to offer our bodies as "living" sacrifices.

 To understand this we need to understand three words that Scripture uses here..

Body, living and sacrifice..

 The word that Paul uses for living here is:

**2198 zao {dzah'-o}**

**1) to live, breathe, be among the living (not lifeless, not dead)**

The word for sacrifice is:

**2378 thusia {thoo-see'-ah}**

**a sacrifice, victim**

**Root, {thoo'-o}=to kill or destroy!**

The word for body is:

**4983 soma {so'-mah}**

**1) the body both of men or animals**

**1b) the living body (The whole Body)**

1. **that which casts a shadow as distinguished from the shadow itself**

We are to offer our whole bodies to God as a sacrifice! We are to sacrifice the entirety of our bodies, our being to Him, not in death but in and through our life.

How do we do that?

 Paul tells us in the next verse....

**2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

 We offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God when we stop conforming to the pattern of this world, and instead, allow ourselves to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

 What does it mean to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world?

 What is the pattern of this world?

 The pattern of this world is sin and self.

 Or sin to please self! Satisfying our fleshly desires, even when they transgress the law of God.

 Live to serve self even when it may be at the expense of others! Looking out for number one! Doing things my way.

 (Someone once said the theme song of Hell may very well be the old Frank Sinatra song "I did it my way".)

 As a child of God we are not to conform to the pattern of this world any longer! We are not to live to please our sinful nature, Live just to please ourselves.

 But we are to be transformed by the renewing our minds.

 What does it mean to be transformed by the renewing of our minds?

 Transformed=

**3339 metamorphoo {met-am-or-fo'-o}**

1. **to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure!**

It is from where we get the word metamorphous…

 The process in which a Wiley worn is changed into a beautiful butterfly.

 For us It is the process of sanctification whereby we allow the Holy Spirit of God, that He has placed within us the day that we received Christ into our heart as lord and Savior of our life, to guide and direct our life! To submit ourselves to Him and give Him control.

 To desire to become an imitator of Jesus, to become Holy just as He is Holy!

 To be transformed by the renewing of our mind is to be obedient to Gods will and Gods Word.

 It is coming to that place of total and complete surrender and commitment to God whereby we simply say, here I am Lord, use me! Change me! Transform me into who You want me to be.

God, not my will but your will be done in my life.

 Our minds are changed, transformed and renewed as we simply say yes to God and allow Him to do His work within us.

 Have you fulfilled; are you fulfilling the requirements of God in your life this morning?

 In view of God's mercy, have we offered, are we offering our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to Him?

Scripture says that this is our spiritual act of worship.

 And that those who worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in truth….

 Are we committed to not conforming to the pattern of this world any longer, but are we being transformed by the renewing of our minds? Are we allowing Jesus to do all that He wants to do in us? Are we allowing Him to mold us and fashion us to be like Him, so when we go out into our world in which we live, others will see Him in us and it will draw them to Him?

What is it that God requires?

I think the old Hymn maybe says it best... Jesus paid it all-All to Him I owe!

 Have we given Him our all this morning?