

Memory Verse: Matthew 9:13

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'

Our goal this week is obey what Jesus asked us to do in Matthew 9:13 and to attempt to begin to learn what it means, "I desire mercy not sacrifice."

Make a sacrifice with the right attitude

Read: Matthew 9:10-13 (for context of focus verse 13)

1. What point do you think Jesus making in this message?

Jesus was confronting those who were demanding religious activity apart from love. He takes a stand that it is mercy that God desires more than sacrifice (religious activity). The danger in giving up something for Lent is that we become religiously righteous or legalist. But Jesus prefers we become passionate and loving as He was, full of mercy for people.

2. What message does that send to us as the body of Christ today? What does that teach you in regards to the attitude of making a sacrifice for God at Lent?

Make sure our religious activity is always for and only for the purpose of worship to God and love for people. Therefore, my sacrifice should be either to bring me closer to God (such as fasting) or to make a difference in the life of people (such as giving).

Make a sacrifice of the right thing

Read: Luke 16:13

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

3. What insight does this verse shed on the sacrifice of money for Lent?

We live in a culture where people love money and pursue it over all things. The love of money will distract us and lead us away from the love of God. A sacrifice of money is for the sake of returning to our first love, Jesus Christ.

Make a sacrifice that costs you much

Read 1 Chronicles 21:22-24 (focus on verse 23)

4. Why did you think David refused to take the easy route to making His sacrifice? What does that teach you about sacrifice to the LORD?

He wanted his sacrifice to be real. A free (non-costly) sacrifice is no sacrifice at all. It teaches me that to make a real sacrifice to the LORD, it must be costly otherwise it is not really a sacrifice at all.

Make a sacrifice that makes a difference in lives

Read: James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

5. What does this teach you about God's heart?

God has a special place in His heart for the poor and needy. If we are to have the heart and mind of Christ then we also should be led to make a difference for those who need the most help.

6. How does this verse connect the previous verses (Matthew 9:13 and Luke 16:13) together?

It teaches me that my sacrifice should be out of love and mercy for the hurting and much like the example Jesus gave with His ultimate sacrifice that cost Him His very life to touch and heal those in the most desperate place (sinner in need of grace) we also should look to give up what cost us much to help who needs it the most.

7. Based upon those verses what does this teach you about your opportunity for making a love offering for the hungry, thirsty people of Kenya?

God has presented us with a desperate situation right now. I feel like I should respond in a way that shows His love and mercy and is an act of worship, trust and obedience to the heart beat of Jesus.

- Share with your group what you have decided to sacrifice during this Lent season, in order to provide mercy through financial sacrificial giving to those suffering from drought and starvation in Kenya.