

2011 Week Nineteen
Midlands Churches of Christ, Birmingham, UK
Women's Ministry
Offerings for Quiet Time Study

1. MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE III

ROMANS 12:1, COLOSSIANS 3:12

The NASB reads, "Therefore I urge you brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice..."

"Mercies" in Greek is the word OIKTERMOS, which appears five times in the KJV and the NASB. It's translated "mercy" or "compassion." It means compassion, pity, mercy; the bowels in which compassion resides, a heart of compassion; emotions, longings, manifestations of pity.¹

I had to go look up the definition of "compassion" again: "a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering...of others and a wish to help them."²

"Sacrifice" is, in Greek, THYSIA, which means "sacrifice" or "victim." It's the same word in the NASB as in Matthew 9:13 and 12:7, when Jesus says, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."³

Colossians 3:12 uses the same word for mercy as in Romans 12: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with OIKTERMOS, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

- Write out my own version of Romans 12:1, using the deeper understanding I get from knowing more about what the words mean.⁴
- Looking at Colossians 3:12, what do I understand from the idea that God expects me to "clothe myself" with an attitude (OIKTERMOS) that is supposed to describe a feeling of compassion, longing, pity, mercy, that comes from the deepest part of my heart, my very bowels? Under what conditions am I expected to be able to do this (reading the rest of the paragraph)?⁵

2. PROPHECY FOR OUR TIME

EXEKIEL 34

- Describe the attitude God wants us to have toward the weak among us. (Even toward myself when I'm weak!)
- Looking at vv. 25-31, write out a prayer of thanksgiving for the ways I see this prophecy proved true in my life with God today. Is there any part of this I feel is not true for me?⁶

¹Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *oiktirmos* (Strong's 3628)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2011. 27 Jun 2011. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G3628&t=NASB> >

²Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *thysia* (Strong's 2378)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2011. 27 Jun 2011. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G2378&t=NASB> >

³<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/compassion?q=compassion>

⁴ *God, you are urging me, because I should understand, accept, grasp that you have shown me your OIKTERMOS for me: in the deepest part of your heart, God, you long for me to walk in a right relationship with you and you feel the deepest pity for me, that I am so weak and need to completely rely on you for this. You are deeply sad and connected with me emotionally when I am suffering. You understand. You are not indifferent. You're not focused on everything I should've done differently to be stronger spiritually today. You strongly sympathise with me and are eager to help me. Since this is the truth, and it moves me to praise you and worship you, (!!!) the way you want me to express this is by offering my body as a living sacrifice. Rather than worrying about whether I'm pouring myself out in the*

right activities and with the right people today, I will focus on giving my heart 100% and doing it out of gratitude for your loving me and taking care of me so perfectly!

*⁵ Thank you God that I am one of your chosen people, holy, dearly loved! Thank you for this reassurance! With that confidence, I **can** clothe myself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. I love that you expect my heart to get there; and that in order to be able to clothe myself with the right attitudes and deep emotions I just have to understand your grace and love toward me (the very thing I want to do and need so desperately)! You expect me to be close enough to you and confident enough in your love and power that I can put aside my worries and fears and clothe myself with deep OIKTERMOS-type outward focus, vulnerable toward other people and willing to connect deeply with them and care about their lives and their relationship with you.*

⁶ Thank you, God, for the covenant of peace that you made with me, that I can trust it completely. I can know that I am at peace with you, reconciled to you! Thank you!

3. ENDURING LOVE

MATTHEW 10:22, 2 TIMOTHY 2:10, 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-12

He who "stands firm" to the end – in the NASB, this verse reads, "it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved." The Greek word for "stands firm" or "has endured" is HYPOMENŌ, which means to remain, to tarry behind; to abide, not recede or flee; to be faithful to Christ in misfortune and trials; to endure: to bear ill treatments bravely and calmly.⁷

- What is God promising to me if I remain faithful, no matter what?
- Think about what it really means to me to be faithful, to Jesus. Describe the kind of life, the kind of heart and attitude that I believe I am meant to have as a faithful disciple, under ideal circumstances (since 2 Corinth 13:11 says, "Aim for perfection")?⁸
- Under what circumstances am I most easily losing this ideal attitude? Pray to God for wisdom about how to better deal with them. Who can I talk to about this today to get some direction about how to remain more faithful under these circumstances?

⁷Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *hypomenō* (Strong's 5278)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2011. 16 Jul 2011. < [http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strongs=G5278&t=NASB](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G5278&t=NASB) >

⁸ Dear God, here is how I think you designed me to be, and how I want to live my life for you (and I thank you that I think I've seen this Spirit in many great examples of people of all ages and races and nationalities): I believe your Spirit, unhindered, fills true disciples with joy and a delight in life. Every day is a Big Adventure! When hard times come, (especially and including the little trials that fill every normal day, not just the Big Things like Death, Disease, Disability) I want to know you are close, involved, filled with compassion, and actively interceding on my behalf, working out everything for the good for me, as you have promised (Romans 8:28). I want to always trust you. I want to delight in you, to feel what you feel. I want to be fully engaged in life, not sinfully protecting myself out of fear of getting hurt, but trusting that you are always right there with me, sharing in every experience, and never allowing anything to be more than I can bear (1 Corinth 10:13). I want to love people and be sincerely interested in everything about them. I want to be courageous, like Jesus, and perceptive like Jesus, to be able to discern right from wrong and good from evil in real time (not having to go away from a situation and think about it before I know what you would think) and to have the courage to stand up for you decisively at every opportunity. I would be consistent and sincere in sharing my faith. I would have the right priorities: putting you first every day, praying deeply, drinking deeply of your Word; then turning attention to my husband and family; then the church and others. I want to be in touch with my feelings, open about my failures and honest and real about whatever I'm feeling and not afraid to share it appropriately. I would not be afraid of hard work. I would accept the limits you put in my life, if I am disabled, I would love to be inspired to pray as much as I am inspired by fruitful labour. I

want to trust in prayer like Jesus. I would have a lot of very different kinds of people in my life, and I would appreciate them and enjoy them thoroughly. I would not get frustrated or overwhelmed as much as I do now. I would react with faith and remain inspired when I feel challenged, and not lose the sense that you are in control and everything is ok, no matter what the circumstances.

I would welcome correction, input, feedback and insights, any opportunity to learn how to be more like Jesus, looking for it and asking for it. I want my heart to be teachable and soft. I would always be striving to grow to be more like Jesus, but not overly focused on myself and certainly not competitive or comparing myself to others, but striving with pure earnestness to please you and honour you.

⁹ I lost faith yesterday when it looked like I was going to have to be inconvenienced beyond what I had prepared myself for, in order to serve at a certain event in the church. I lose faith when I ask for help or support in some area, I assume it's going to come, and then it doesn't come from that person or persons, and I feel let down and like my needs are not taken into account, even though I feel like I expressed them. I need to talk to God about this, then talk about this to the people I feel offended by and then get some help from the sisters in my life to learn how to do better at enduring difficulties like these.