



**Ambitious Faith-Part 3**  
**Trusting God Enough to Give Him Our Best**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well there's no doubt that we live in a culture that is obsessed with comfort and convenience. We want it easy, and efficient, with as little pain as possible. We love gadgets that save us time, we love gimmicks that make us money, we love methods that will allow us to live a little easier life and we certainly love experiences that make us feel good. So in a society like that, society that loves the minimum requirements, its no surprise that it's not real big on the concept of sacrifice. Culture is not really comfortable with that word, doesn't really strike a tome with our culture. Its culture that loves to work less and play more and so it's hard to make sense of people that are into this thing called sacrifice. We don't know what to do with the people who will go the extra mile, and stay the extra hour, spend the extra dollar, particularly when you don't have to and no one's forcing you too. That's a strange kind of person. Matter of fact, people like that are labeled in our culture, workaholics, or overachievers their pejoratively maligned as folks that there something must be wrong with them. They need some help; they need to chill out just a little bit. You know, if you do your overachieving for the cause of Christ, or for the glory of God, its even worse. Talk about the name calling at that point, society doesn't get it, they don't like it, we're not going to get any help from the world when it comes to the call to be sacrificial Christians. But yet I hope in the last two weeks, we already learned that what God is looking for in our lives, particularly two weeks ago, as we launched in chapter 11 of Hebrews is that mediocre Christianity and luke-warm faith won't cut it, it should be a non-option for us. God wants us to move on and to move forward, and to embrace the kind of lifestyle that will, if we have ambitious faith, embrace this kind of zealous sacrifice for the good and the cause of Christ. Its important for us to embrace that and understand that because even if the world wants to call us names, God is going to commend us for it. As a matter of fact in 2 Chronicles, as you might remember, God is described as looking through the Earth, scanning his eyes through the world. And you remember what he's looking for, people who's hearts are completely his. As D.L. Moody said, we could just have 10 people in a world that could do that, we would change this world for Christ, because he knows that if your heart is committed to Christ in a way that is whole and complete, that mean's we'll do whatever it takes. We'll go the extra mile; we'll go ten extra miles if that's what God calls us to do, and if that's the need of the moment. The first named example in Hebrews chapter 11 is a needed reminder of that kind of lifestyle. It is an inspiration, a motivation, a catalyst for us to say, now, where are we in terms of serving Christ and giving our best for our great God? And the first one named, if you have your Bibles, you'll see in verse number 4, is the Old Testament character named Able. Now we don't know much about Able; Able is kind of tucked in a bit of a mystery, he's only alive for seven verses in the Old Testament. And yet his effect is reverberated throughout the Bible. As a matter of fact, Jesus comes on the scene and he hails Able as this great and godly man. So certainly, from God's perspective, this is a great guy. And the writer of Hebrews, as the Holy Spirit inspires him to jot down a list of heroes of ambitious faith, the first one on the list that is named is this guy, Able. Here's a guy who has sold out for God, and his life reflects it. The expression of his life reflects his idea of an exalted God. Talk about a person with a high view of God, here he is. Verse number 4. The Bible says, by faith, and its going to take that to do what he did, he offered God a better sacrifice than Cane. Now you remember that was his

brother, and it didn't work out so well, talk about being maligned or having your world scoff at your zealous gifts to God, Cane certainly did that. And yet, God's perspective, middle of verse 4, he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings. And here's the good news, not only with Able, but for all these people in the book of Hebrews that are hailed as ambitious faithful Christians, it says by faith he still speaks, even though he's dead. Now let's fill in a little of this historically, and go back in our Bibles to where this all took place. Genesis chapter 4. Hebrews chapter 11 is just a reflection, a summation of the only thing we really know about Able and that was that he brought a great gift to God one day. But there are a few more facts to his life that might be helpful. It is unfortunate that we know more about his brother than we know about him. Certainly know more about his parents. In chapter 3 he didn't get off to a good start in terms of Adam and Eve's behavior. And so in chapter 4, we've got some more bad news. But before we get the bad news, we get some good news. Good news of a guy who was keeping his flocks. Genesis chapter 4, look at verse number 1, this is about Adam and Eve. They have a child, his name is Cane, Eve, as you can imagine, is quite impressed with this whole process. With the help of Yahweh, I brought forth a man. Later she gave birth to his brother, named Able, and by the way, I'll just answer this because I'll get it at the door, you know, usually from kids, but they want to know who did they marry, right? Um, that's a whole another sermon, and it is a bit icky, I realize, but if you know the rest of chapter 4, Adam and Eve had lots of kids. And the good news is they grew really old, I mean these are people that lived for hundreds of years, so I know it is icky to think about marrying your sister, but it could've been a sister that was two hundred years younger, and they'd never met. So, not quite as icky if you're removed by two or three hundred years. Sorry about that, that's another message but, that will save me a few e-mails. Two things we learn here about these two brothers, one is their occupation. Bottom of verse number 2, Able he's a Shepard, he keeps the flocks. And Cane, he's a farmer, he works the soil. Now without any prompting, or at least no explanation here, we don't have levitical priesthood, we don't have the mosaic law, we've just got 2 guys who are here in the course of time, coming to do something that probably they learned from their parents to express to God their gratitude, to express to God their thanksgiving. It says in the course of time, verse 3, Cane brought some of the fruit of the soil as an offering to Yahweh. Verse 4, but Able he brought fat portions from some of the first-born of his flock. Now the Lord says, look with favor on Able and his offering. And on Cane and his offering, he did not look with favor. And so that kind of bummed out Cane, he was very angry and his face went into permanent frown mode, his face was downcast. Now this has been the cause of a lot of speculation.. Why is it that God is going to embrace Able's sacrifice and discard Cane's sacrifice? And I think it's been the cause for way too much speculation because the answers are really here in this text. People have said, well maybe God is more into the animal sacrifice, and you know, none of that is true. Actually in the Mosaic Laws that all develops in the Old Testament, God is fine with you giving whatever the produce of your income is. And if you're a shepherd, bring the animals, if you're a farmer bring the produce. That's not the issue. Its not the nature of what they brought, it's the quality of what they brought. Look at that comparison, its right there for us, and we read over it and we miss it often times. Bottom of verse number 3, Cane brought, what kind of fruit? Well, just some of it, there's no real description of it, just some of the fruit of the soil as an offering to the Lord. Now here's a contrast, verse number 4, but Able brought, now here's the thing, unfortunately NIV translates this, fat portions, which we don't really, people think offering and sacrifice fat portions because in Leviticus we talk about the restitutionary sacrifices and

bringing fat portions, we don't have any of that yet. That's a bit anachronistic to think about fat portions and being some kind of fulfillment of a levitical sacrifice. Probably, as some translations translate this, we're talking about the fat or plump ones, okay, so that's like the best ones, that's the ones you want to keep if you're into that all right, animals and eating them, and I am, don't mean to say that I'm not, I'm all for that, go have a steak afterwards. Verse 4, Able brought the fat portions, the plump ones, from some of the, now here's a descriptive word, first-born of his flock. Now the comparison here at the beginning of the verse, but Able brought this kind. What's the difference? Well, it's the nondescript some of the produce, it's the best ones of the first. See, and that's different. The comparison that we see in the text. And I know that seems a bit out of order because, isn't God more concerned with the heart? Well we'll get to that in the passage here. But the thing that expresses their heart is that one brings a mediocre gift and one brings the best of the first. And the other is just bringing some. I mean that's what we gather from this, and the hints in the New Testament that comment on this passage give us that idea as well, no particularly Hebrews 11:4, but other verses I'll show you in a minute. So the point is, let's just jot this down, if we're going to follow in the pattern of Able, and I know it doesn't get to the root cause, let's just start at the surface expression than you and I need to do what Able did. And Able, here comes number 1, he was willing to risk giving God excellent gifts. It says he brought his best, he looked at his brother, and his brother didn't bring his best. His brother just brought some. And as we'll see in the New Testament, there were reasons for that in his heart. But, what we know is, here comes a guy bringing his best. And let me ask you this question... do you know any Christian that you really revere as someone who has ambitious faith and is on fire for God who doesn't give God his best? Do you? I don't. So this just makes sense. If we're talking about ambitious faith, I mean we're going to see that its going to involve necessarily you and I bringing to God the best of what we have. And if some of you are rolling your eyes right now thinking, ok here we go, I came to church, and they invited me, and now its all going to be about giving, we're going to have a big bucket at the end and we're going to have to give. This is not about building projects or church funds, or radio ministries, or anything like that, okay? Really though it intersects with the concept of giving what God gives us, I realize that, he gives us more than a paycheck, although that may be part of it, let me show you this before we get too locked into or your arms cross a little bit too tightly. Let's look at Hebrews chapter 13, keep your finger in Genesis 4, because we'll come back to that, but I just want to let you know, when we talk about bringing gifts, were not just talking about putting extra zero's on the check when you put it in the bag, okay? That's really not the point of this message, although it may include that, two or three extra zero's that's alright. But that's not the point. That's not why I'm preaching this message and that's not why its here in Hebrews chapter 11. When we talk about sacrifice and giving or offering to God, the Bible is much more holistic than money or you just bringing what is produced by your trade, or your occupation okay? And we all get paid in paychecks; I don't think anybody is still bartering for their livelihood here. IN those days though, if you were a farmer, what you got was produce, if you were a shepherd, you got more animals. Let me just show you the broader picture of all this. Look at verse number 15, Hebrews 13, verse 15. Through Jesus, it says, and this is a command, after all that's been said, he says, let us continually offer, there's the idea of giving, a sacrifice, there's an idea of excellence and deprivation if I'm going to give something here, sacrifice of praise, not cash. Right? In this particular verse, we're talking about praise. And if you think that's code for cash, he clarifies. It's the fruit of lips that confess his name. That is a sacrifice because if my mouth is

talking about praising God or confessing the greatness of God, then my mouth is not complaining about the weather, or its not talking about how I need to clean the garage, or its not criticizing my neighbor. I'm sacrificing whatever else I might think of, or talk about at that moment to think about God and to sacrifice my time and my effort to speak and confess God. It's the difference between going down the road and thinking about work on your way to work, or putting all those thoughts aside, thinking about God, confessing him, giving him the fruit of my lips and praising him on the way there. You are sacrificing something to do that. And it may be that if you sacrifice the best of your time, and the best of your thoughts, and the best of your words for the praise of God, that's also the kind of sacrifice the writer of Hebrews has in mind. Keep reading, next verse, there are other things involved in this. He says, and, verse 16, do not forget to do good. Not just about money. It's not just about words, it's not just about thoughts, its about service, its about action, its about doing good, its about being involved with my life and my energy and my skills. Keep reading... and to share with others. Its not just about putting something in a bag at church, it may be about bringing something to someone else in my neighborhood on my block, in my apartment complex, at my school. That is something that could be the gift I give to God is to share with others, and the Bible says with such sacrifices God is pleased. So does it involve whatever you get paid with? Yes, it definitely will involve that. If you give God your best, it will involve what you earn. It will also involve what you think. It will involve what you say. IT will involve how you serve. It will involve how you actually interact with other people. And the point is, if we're actually giving God our best, its going to affect all those things. And we're not going to give God the last few moments of our day to think about him, or to read his book, or to pray a few prayers and talk to him. We're not going to give the worst of our time to the church, and the service of maybe the next generation in our youth program, or in our Awana program, we're not going to give him the worst. We're going to move from giving him leftovers, or may I say, mediocrity, because that was Cane's problem, and we're going to bring him our best. Because we'll begin to see with our faith that God is great enough to really deserve the best from us. And I don't know anybody who I think is Godly or has any kind of faith, to speak of, that doesn't show by his behavior his giving, not just of his resources, but of his effort, his time, his strengths, whatever, who's not showing that, demonstrating that in a clear and tactile way. You see it, because that's what faith does, it expresses itself in words, in giving, in generosity. And if all of that is given to the glory of God and to the cause of Christ, then that's what we're talking about in this text. And Able apparently did that. Look at again, verse number 4, its printed on your worksheet, he gave a better sacrifice. The focus of the first sentence of verse 4 is that his sacrifice was a better one. And so I want to say, your sacrifice, and my sacrifice, if we're going to be faith filled people, it needs to be probably better than it is. We need to stop giving God our leftovers. We need to stop giving God the mediocre stuff and really say its going to be a priority for me. Why, why should I do that? Why, what kind of faith? What is that faith focused on? Let me give you a hint. Turn to Malachi chapter 1, look at verse number 6 of chapter one. Here's the thing about giving God things, it will be a measure of how I view him. It is always a measuring stick of my view of his greatness; I mean I've thrown that out a few times today, that as we understand by faith the greatness of God, we will demand the best from us. We'll go from mediocre offerings to excellent offerings. And that's all based on how highly I view him. One of our values here at Compass is to have a high view of God. And we know that will affect everything in our lives as we seek to serve him and give our best to him. Look at verse number 6, a son honors his father. Here's God, training the people

saying, listen you guys do that, you're calling me Father, I mean you're doing that a lot, you call me Lord. Well you know what? A servant, he honors his master. But he says this, bottom of verse 6, if I'm a father, where is the honor due me? And if I'm a master, where's the respect due me, says Yahweh almighty by the way, the prophet says. It is you, oh priest, who show contempt for my name, and that spun their heads around. What do you mean? We're professional, religious leaders. Why do you say we don't respect you or honor you? This is our full time job, of course we do. And so they protest, they throw a flag on the play, how have we shown contempt for your name? And here's his answer, verse number 7, he goes right to their gifts. He goes right to what they give. You place defiled food on my altar. Well how have we defiled you? By saying the Lord's table is contemptible. Well, we never said that. He defines it, verse 8. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals is that not wrong? Now underline the next 6 words, try offering them to your governor, would he accept you, would he be pleased with you? I don't think so, God says. Now there's the interesting dichotomy, you don't think that's alive and well today, you don't know the modern Church. We will do more for our next door neighbor coming over to our house for dinner. You will do more when you have somebody that you respect coming into your sphere of influence, and you'll do more to lay the red carpet out for mere fallen sinful human beings than most of us will do for God. If I said, you know, the President is coming over to Compass next week and we're going to have a chance to have, matter of fact I want him to come to your house for lunch. I bet you're going to work on that. It won't be paper plates and KFC, right? I mean depending upon your political leanings, maybe it will, right? But I'm assuming, he's the President, we're going to respect that, we're going to honor that. You're in a place of leadership, we will give you our best, we're going to bring out, we'll probably go shopping all week long to make sure we have the best. If I said, you know what he really wants? He wants a new set of duds, he wants some clothes. If I said I know the President wants some clothes, could you go shopping this week and get him, would you give him something when he comes to your home? Most of us would probably work hard at doing a good job with that. And yet I think back to when I was a kid, we had a barrel in the lobby of the church, did you grow up with one of those? The missionary barrel. Some churches called it the Dorcas barrel because of Dorcas in the book of Acts, which is a perfect name for it, because most of the stuff that got placed in it was dorky, right? We called it the dorky barrel. What's the deal? Here we put out something and say here, come and bring something for the service of God, giving it to the ministry of, come and bring your gift, bring your clothing, bring your stuff. And what to we bring? Stuff we can't hand me down anymore and stuff that wont sell at a garage sale, right? We're giving them our trash. I mean its one step up from the trash barrel. And I'm thinking to myself, Christians have been doing that for as long as I've been knowing Christians. We think, well God will understand, and that's exactly what these guys were doing, you know what, it may not be the best that I've got in my closet, but hey God will get it, we're loving him anyway, I put something in the barrel, that's better than most. And they're going..come on. And God's response is, you've lost your view of me. If you knew how majestic, how powerful, how great I was, you wouldn't be bringing me your second best, you wouldn't be bringing me your leftover stuff that you cant sell at the marketplace, you'd be bringing me your best. Its wrong, and your Governor wouldn't have it, and if you think your Governor wouldn't have it, then I'm not going to have it. Now implore God to be gracious to us, with such offerings, verse 9, from your hands will he accept you? Verse 10, now here's an amazing commentary from God at a service of worship. He says this, oh that one would



shut the temple doors, so that you might not light useless fires on my altar. Now think about that. I wish, this is what God was saying about the barrel in the lobby at my church when I was growing up. I wish someone would put a lid on it and seal it up. That's what God is saying. And you know what, he's saying the same thing about church, does this sound like the New Testament commentary on Laodicia? I mean, I just want I'm not even there, I'm outside, I'll be outside until I can become the preeminent thing in your life. And God, when we're sitting here and we're putting our little \$5 check in the basket, and someone says we really need some ministry here to our next generation, you say, you know what, if I got some extra time, and maybe if things at work don't work out, and if that client doesn't come through, and maybe yeah ok, maybe I'll throw in a few hours here and there. When we bring that, you know what God says? Shut the program down. Tired of the ministry, I'm not going to, I'm not showing up. I'm not going to do it. God does not want a church full of people that are giving God their leftovers. And yet we do it all the time. And you think God's going to tolerate that, because you picture him as some big fat grandpa sitting in a rocking chair, going I love those boys, beautiful little children. That's not God. And if you don't think that's true, look at the next thing he says. Verse number 11; he says emphatically and declaratively, my name will be great among the nations. From the rising of the sun to the setting, in every place, incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name. Now you've got to get into the Old Testament mindset. You're sitting there in Jerusalem, in the Old Testament and your looking out to the east, and your looking out to the west, and you're thinking beyond the Mediterranean back over the hills, here in Jerusalem to Jordan, and you're thinking, wow you, know what? Which was Babylon, you're thinking wow, you know what, I'm a whole lot more important than those guys, we are God's favorite chosen people, we're here to serve the living true God. And God says, look way over there where the sun comes up in the morning, out east, you know what? If you won't praise, me and if I wont be great in your mind, I'll find people way over there. Oh and look over there, over to the west, as the sun sets across the Mediterranean at the far reaches of the known world, you know what? I guess I'll find people over there then. And is this not the kid of implied threat we see throughout the scripture? If you wont praise God, if you wont give him the greatest, he'll find somebody else to do it. Even Jesus said it at the triumphful entry, when people are going, oh this is a little over the top, a little zealous for me, can you quiet everybody down, Jesus? What did he say? I'll find rocks if I have to. Because you know what? I'm going to be honored, I'm going to be respected, I'm going to be worshipped. Here's the thing, and just get over it, okay? God wants to be at the center of everything. And you know why? Because he's God. Read his business card, you know, God, CEO of the universe, center of everything. And you know what? When you and I sit here with our stupid manmade anthropologically centered theology and we say, it's all about us. God sits there and says, fine, I'll move on. You can have your little meetings; you can do your little skits and have your dramas and all that. It aint about me anymore. And when its about me, I'll come back to your church services. When its about me I'll be there. But you know, when its all about you, I'm not interested. God is not interested in that. He is looking for people who's hearts are fully his, who see God is great, great enough to bring him our best. And I'm looking at the modern church, and you know I know, and we're already growing, and we're starting to fill up the church, and I know its going to happen, and my fear is that we see a lot of people and we think the church is big, and I look out there and I go, I wonder how big our church really is? We multiply services, and we fill things up, we've got parking problems. Its all coming, it's already starting to happen. And I think to myself, where is that group though? Where



are those people who are really here for the glory of God? And they say if it takes an extra mile, we'll go there, if it takes an extra hour, we'll stay, if it takes an extra dollar, we'll give it because it's all about the greatness of God. Where is that? The Bible says would you start risking a little bit more of the excellence that should be given to an excellent God? Give him some excellent gifts. And do it because, Letter A, if you're taking some sub-notes, it affirms the greatness of God. Maybe that's one reason you need to do it, it just affirms the greatness of God. I can tell you how great you think God is, all I have to do is pull up your giving statement. All I've got to do is look at your volunteerism in the church, all I've got to do is see how many times you open your mouth about Christ during your work week. I can find out how great you think God is, so don't give me your words about, oh, I just think God is fabulous. Because actions speak louder than words, and when Able came, guess what he brought? The fat plump best of the first-born. And God said that's my guy. God's looking for people like that. Because they affirm the greatness of God. Number 2, and I won't make you turn there, but at least jot down, Deuteronomy chapter 8, this is Letter B. Ok, not number 2, but Letter B. When we give excellent gifts, you do recognize that it deepens our trust in God. Just think that one through. When we give him excellent gifts, it deepens our trust in God. Deuteronomy 8 verses 10 – 18, what a great section, go home and read that this afternoon. And here's what God in essence says, he says to these people before they move into the promised land, he says, listen, here's the thing, you guys need to remember, when everything's going well for you, and you get your bonuses and you get your raises, and you got your 2.5 kids and you're living in the white picket fence house, and you got your 3 car garage and everything's fine, and you got your 401k padded, and you're doing great, just remember this, I gave it all to you. You didn't give it to yourself. He said if I weren't there holding your brain cells together, Mr. Smarty Pants, your brain would scramble like scrambled eggs, and you couldn't do one thing at work this week. Okay, that's what the Bible says, and that's a Mike Fabarez paraphrase of Deuteronomy chapter 8, okay? Doesn't say smarty pants, but the idea's there. And he says, remember this, when you do all those things and you sit back and cross your arms in your nice recliner, and you say [inaudible]. He says here's the problem, prosperity brings lethargy, lethargy brings self sufficiency, self sufficiency brings a sense that God was not really a part of this, and you will lose the connection that you have with God. And you know what? You can look at this statistically, its true in just about every church in the country. Those that are the poorest in the church, those that are the neediest in the church, those that are often the sickest in the church, are the people that not only show they trust God the most, but they demonstrate the fact that they trust him, love him, and consider him to be the most excellent by the way they give him their lives, and their paychecks, and their time, and their effort. They show it, they prove it. And I could call up all the stats; I've done it from the platform before. The bottom line is, its those of us who recognize in those times of need that we need God, that we're proving that by our gifts. Now think about the problem with Able bringing the best of the first-born. He doesn't get to have it. That's the problem with giving God something, you don't get to keep it, see? You give it to God. When I give him those hours, I don't get them back, right? When I give away that stuff, that stuff I could've spent at Best Buy and now I've given it in the offering plate. That's the deal. It displaces our trust in what we have. And God loves that. He loves that because it shows that we're trusting him. And when we trust him, he loves to give even more. The problem is, our motives, we've got to make sure we're not giving to get, we've got to make sure our motives are right, more on that later. But the idea is, it is displacing our trust in the things that we bring. And when we, like Cane, just bring a little bit of the mediocre stuff, we're

not missing out that much, and we're realizing that our trust is really firmly planted on the things that we have, our resources. And I'm not just talking about money; I'm talking about everything else. Our time, our effort, our talents, and so forth. So give God a few excellent gifts this week, it will affirm God's greatness, it will deepen your trust in God. And thirdly, let me just say this, based on Luke chapter 7, that one's worth writing down, verses 36 – 47. Luke chapter 7, it's the story, you don't need to turn there, because you know it, number 3, or Letter C, a measure of our gratitude. And here's the thing, people that are brain dead theologically in the church are not excellent givers. And I'm not just talking about money, I'm talking about the holistic picture of your Christian life, because you are brain dead to what God has done for you. Are you tracking with this? Do you know what happened in Luke chapter 7? There was a gal that the Bible says, had a very sinful past. Do you remember this story? Jesus is there reclining at Simon, not Simon Peter, Simon the Pharisee's house. And in comes sinful woman's past, and she comes in with an alabaster jar of perfume. Do you remember this story now? And she walks in and the Pharisees wouldn't so much as wash Jesus' feet, because their paling around and sharing stories because they're all equal colleagues, right? I mean, washing feet in the ancient world is like taking someone's jacket and putting it in the back room, it was basic act of hospitality. And here comes this lady who's not going to take a basin of throw away water, she's going to bring perfume that the Bible says was very expensive, and she comes to Jesus, sees his unwashed feet, and she pours perfume over his feet, and doesn't grab a rag. How does she wipe Jesus' feet, do you remember? With her hair. Picture that. And you know what happened right then. Pharisees, hmmm, what a waste, what is this all about? Looks a little suspicious, does Jesus know this, look at this, unacceptable, crazy woman, zealot, what's she doing, hey that could've been sold for a lot of money, what is she doing? And Jesus says, oh you're right, you're a little over the top lady, get away from me. Is that what he says? Jesus says, hey guys, let me tell you a story. He said two guys owed their master a lot of money. One owed 50 denarii and one owed 5, and you know what? The master forgave them both. Hey Simon, the Pharisee, let me ask you a question, who would love the master more? Do you remember that story? Simon says, well I suppose the one that was forgiven the most. Jesus said, you've answered wisely, that's exactly right. And now, you're looking at this gal, and your watching her show me this deep, emotional, extravagant kind of offering, and you're rolling your eyes at that. Do you recognize that she understands what she's been forgiven? And you guys haven't even washed my feet. What's the point? If there was no gratitude, and no respect, and no honor, these Pharisees didn't even think they needed to be forgiven. And here was this gal, tuned into one basic truth, God has forgiven my sins through the Messiah. That's what she knew. And because of that she was grateful. And she brought in her best, this expensive perfume that people were going, oh what a waste, that could've been spent on something really good. And she's going, no. And Jesus says, everyone will testify of this woman in generations to come. In 2007, in Orange County, some preacher's on a stage today talking about a woman, we don't even know her name, who's pouring the most expensive perfume on Jesus' feet, and Jesus is saying, this is it, this is what it's all about. Have you given God any excellent gifts lately? Do you recognize that we have a great and excellent God? Do you see the mediocrity when it comes to our gifts are just not acceptable? God is expecting more from us. Why? Because he's in need of some more cash for ministry? It ain't about that. God made that clear in the Psalms. If I needed something, I certainly wouldn't come to you. This is not about the offering bag, he says. It's about you recognizing my greatness. And if you don't recognize it, I'll find someone else who will. From the rising of the sun,

to the setting. Lets give God some excellent gifts, it affirms God's greatness, it deepens our trust in God, and certainly is a measure of our gratitude, so lets wake up to the fact that God has done great things for us, and he deserves our best. Now, back to Hebrews chapter 11, look at the middle of verse number 4, it's the second sentence in the verse in our English text. It says, by faith, he, that is Able, was commended as a righteous man. Now that's an interesting thing. And it happened when God spoke well of his offering. Now there's a dichotomy here, now you kept your finger, its smashed by now I realize, over there in Genesis chapter 4, but flip that open now, or you put that little silk ribbon in it perhaps. Now look at Genesis chapter 4, is that what that's for? Yeah, that's a marker. Now Genesis chapter 4, look what happens, we have a statement from God, which does what the middle of verse 4 in Hebrews does, and that is, it separates a distinction between the person and the gift. But there inseparably tied, but they're distinct issues. Now look at our text again, it says in verse number 3, Cane brought some of the first fruits of the soil as an offering to God, verse 4, but Able brought fat portions of some of the first-born of his flock. And the Lord, now notice this carefully, looked with favor on Able and his offering. You see that? Looked with favor on Able, and his offering. Keep reading. But on Cane, and his offering, that's important, he didn't look with favor, so Cane was angry, his face was downcast. Yahweh says, to Cane, why are you angry, why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not, and I can add, your offering be accepted? See the difference is, there's something wrong in Cane's life. The difference in the gift was not the gift itself, but that the quality of the gift, reflected the heart of the person. And the heart of Able, apparently was right. And the heart of Cane was apparently wrong, because the Bible goes on to say, the middle of verse 7, if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door, its only going to get worse, it desires to completely have you. But you must master it, fight this temptation. I don't know what Cane's problem was, it certainly was in part, later, an angry, envious, self-absorbed, hostile heart. But apparently there were problems in his life, he was bringing this gift, but his heart wasn't right. Able brought a gift, and his gift reflected his heart, but his heart was right. He was commended as a person, and his offering was commended. Cane was not commended as a person, and his offering wasn't accepted either. And the point is, that the heart and the gift need to be in synch. When the heart and the gift aren't in synch, and you'll often see it, it's subtle, but you'll see it reflected in the gift. But when the gift is there, but the heart is not there, the problem is God sees that as a problem he can't get past. It is called, by the way, in the Bible, here's the Bible word for it, hypocrisy. And the problem is you cannot use giving as some kind of mask to do good with God, but have this problem in your life that Cane had. And his problem was interesting, it was on, it was buried on several levels, but he had an issue in his heart, but put up this giving thing, I'm going to give to God. That's hypocrisy. Number 2, when it comes to giving, and this is a real fear I have in preaching a message like this, because okay, I'll do something excellent for God. Be sure that when you do, that your heart is a good offering as well, okay? I put it this way, don't be a hypocrite. It's really simple, just don't be a hypocrite. What God is looking for is an excellent gift and he wants your life to be in tune with that gift. And that means that you're not using giving as some kind of tool. You're not going to volunteer for that hoping to make amends with God. God is not into doing penance. God is not into making things up. What he wants from you is an authentic heart. And the problem is, some people bring gifts, and it's nothing but a façade. Hypocrisy, I've used this before, and if this is redundant, I'm sorry, just bear with me, and take a little mental vacation. The concept of hypocrisy comes from a little compound word in Greek, hupo, which is the Greek preposition under, and krino, hupokrino, hypocrite. Krino is to

judge or surmise or to make an evaluation. Hypocrisy. The problem with hypocrisy is that I have something up that makes you look at me a certain way, but underneath, that's the hupo part, you judge me and perceive me differently. The reality underneath is different than what you perceive. Cane was bringing an offering, the problem was, underneath he was battling sin, and he wasn't ready to be obedient. He had a problem his life wasn't an offering, he was just bringing an offering. That is a great picture, that is the mask. He put on the mask of giving. And he's now trying to be right with God simply by doing something. What does God want from us? He wants our heart to be right. Here's a good passage to jot down. Romans chapter 12 verses 1 – 2. Remember that verse from Sunday school? That because of the mercies of God, that we should present ourselves as what kind of sacrifices? Living sacrifices. See? What does he want? Present yourselves and your bodies as living sacrifices. That's wholly and acceptable to God. What is? My gift? No, my gift, in that case is myself. He says, do that, without being conformed to the world. And if you do, and if that's holy and blameless, as an offering to God, then you'll know what is good and acceptable. And then you'll know what to do. And then you'll know what to give. Then you'll know how to serve. Then you'll know how to think, how to praise, how to offer these things to God. It comes down to you and I saying, I'm not going to give a gift unless I'm giving my heart to God first. I'm not going to try to make some kind of deal with God by what I offer him in service or in money, if in my life, my life isn't where it needs to be. That's hypocrisy. Cane was a hypocrite. He had a problem, let me prove it to you. Go to Jude. Jude's concern was that in the church there were false teachers and false prophets. They were going around saying things, and it wasn't true and they were just using their ministry and their religiosity as a cover for their own wicked and evil motives. And in the case of the false prophets, in verse number 11 of Jude, he's trying to show that one of their problems is greed. And he uses two people as an example for this; one is our friend, Cane. Look at verse 11: talking about the false teachers, woe to them, the false teachers, they have taken the way of Cane, now that doesn't tell us much, right? Because they're out there, they're preaching, they're doing their, they're in pulpits, they're pastors and all that. Here's the problem, they've rushed in for profit. They've rushed in for profit into Balaam's error. Now there's a connection between Balaam and Cane. If you know the story of Balaam, Balaam was kind of the rent-a-pastor. He was pastor for hire, right? You want me to say something, okay, lets put the money on the table, we'll talk about my sermon. And that was basically, he had his high moments and his internal conflicts, and I know Balaam was a conflicted character. But in the end he was willing to take money to go out there and say whatever the person that rented him wanted him to say. He was a sellout for money. And Cane here is put in the same kind of category. The problem with those false teachers in Jude's day is they were doing religious things for personal gain. Why does Cane come up in all of this? See, what's the big problem with giving? What's the big problem with offering ourselves, our time or our money? If I give it to God, I don't have it for myself. See, that's the problem. If I want it for myself more than I want to express the greatness of God, or demonstrate my faith in God, then I'm going to hang on to that selfishness, that greed, we call it materialism today. And the Bible is saying Cane's got that issue. He's got a money issue for him. He didn't want to give the best of the produce, why? Because he wanted the best of the produce. He was conflicted about that. So one problem I know he had was his wanting the stuff that he didn't want to give up for God. And really it comes down to who's going to be the God of your life? I mean that's what it always comes down to. Who's going to be the God of your life? Is it going to be you, or is it going to be God? And God's the only one who really has the credentials to

be the God of your life, and its really not about you. 2 Corinthians 5:15, I quote it all the time; that we are called to live for him not for ourselves. And you've got to get to the place where you recognize that everything you have, and everything you are is really all about God. And therefore, when its time to go the extra mile, stay the extra hour, spend the extra dollar, I'm going to do it. Because God is the God of my life, and its not about keeping those things for myself. That time is not my time, the money is not my money, my talents aren't my talents, this is God's stuff. And that's a whole different perspective. Don't be a hypocrite, don't try and give God some kind of token gift we've already seen he's not interested in that. David had some moments of sin you know that, right? Man after God's own heart, but he had his problems, big problems, adulterer, murderer, those are pretty big. But he came through those and God still called him a man after his own heart. And one reason was, when he was confronted with his sin, when he was convicted of his sin, he came to God with a total authentic openness. One example of that is Psalm 51. Turn to Psalm 51 with me really quick. Psalm 51, its an expression, much like Psalm 52, after his sin, when he describes the fact that God was getting a hold of him. Now he had a challenge, a lot like a lot of us do. When our heart is not right, just like Cane, we can make a decision and Cane's decision was let's just do a religious act, let's just give something to God. Maybe that'll make it right. David knew that wasn't going to work. And look at how he expresses this. He knows what God wants from him, verse 6. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts. Its not about the mask, its not about the outside, that's not your real concern; your concern is what's going on inside of me. You teach me wisdom in the innermost place, that's where I feel the conviction, I feel it, I need help there, God cleanse me; cleanse me with hyssop, the branch they would sprinkle on, and I'll be clean, wash me and I'll be white as snow. You see that? God wants the persons heart right, he wants his life right. Drop down to verse 10, there it is again, create in me a pure heart oh God, renew a steadfast spirit within me. Drop down to verse 15 and 16, this is an interesting comparison, oh Lord open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise, you do not delight in sacrifice, or I bring it. Now, what does that mean? God doesn't want offerings and sacrifices? Oh, he does, clearly he commands them. But in this case, he realizes my hearts messed up. What do you want from me, God? A Gift? No, its not a gift you want from the persons' got a messed up heart. No, here's what you want, verse 17, it says, the sacrifices of God, you want to bring something to God when your life is messed up? Is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. Oh God, you will not despise that, I know that. That's what you want. You get that first, and then what? Then the gifts follow. Look at the next verse, verse 18, in your good pleasure, make Zion prosper, build up the walls of Jerusalem, verse 19, then there will be, underline these two words, what? Righteous sacrifices. Whole burnt offerings to delight you. Now, I thought you weren't delighting in offerings? Well you do when the hearts right. When the heart isn't right, does he delight in the offerings? No. Are you catching what I'm saying here? Do not try to give to God, if you're not right with God. And some people are going, great, I get to keep my money, I don't have to give to God. But you know what? God wants your heart right. And when your heart is right, then you can bring what the Bible says are righteous sacrifices. Well, ok, I'm going to get around to that, my wife and I love this little phrase, we say it often: It only takes a second to get right with God. So it aint a process, it could happen right now for you. You don't have to, you've got sin in your life, unconfessed sin, your little idol that your hiding, I was talking to someone last night, they've been hiding a horrendous idol under the vest of their coat for years. And its all about saying, get it out right now, get it out. And it was clear, and it was there, and it was like, get it right, get right with God. You know how long

that will take? A second. It takes a contrite heart, it takes a broken spirit, it takes coming to God, and that's confession, just authentic, God, make me right. Because God doesn't want your money in the offering plate, he doesn't want you serving in some kind of ministry here, he doesn't want you to do some good deed for your neighbor, or do something in the name of, he doesn't want you out witnessing this week, unless your heart is right with him. And that aint gonna take years, that'll take one second, right now if you're ready to do this with God. God, make my heart right with you. The sacrifices of God, verse 17, a broken spirit, a contrite, a broken and contrite heart. Oh God, you're not going to despise that. If that gets right, then, verse 19, then there's going to be some righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings, and they will delight you, bowls will be offered on you altar. Cant buy God's favor with gifts or service. He's looking for clean hands and a pure heart, and that only takes a second to acquire that, through real confession, real repentance, and then you're ready to give. And then when you do give, by the way, don't say, oh yeah, I gotta give, that's right, heard that sermon, gotta get right with God, then I've got to give. 2 Corinthians 9 says, you'd better be giving with a good attitude. And part of a good heart is having a good attitude. Do not feel compulsion to give, okay? Now there is a level of that, if you've heard me teach on this, all of us are required who receive teaching, you're required to give, you've got to put something in the offering to support that good teaching, that's what the Bible says in Galatians 6, that's another sermon, I'm not here to talk about money. But most of our giving, the majority of our giving, needs to flow from a heart of freedom, voluntary giving. It's the kind of giving in the Old Testament that was the freewill offering. That's primarily what God is looking for from us. And it happens when we see the greatness of God, we displace our trust in things, we show him how grateful we are, and that needs to happen when your heart is right with him. And we need to say, I'm going to do that with a good attitude, not a bad attitude. Here's what it says. 2 Corinthians 9:7, you should give as you've decided in your heart not reluctantly and not under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. See? So there's attitude here. There's a holy life, and that only takes a second to acquire that through confession and the work on the cross that is applied to your life. So give with a clean heart, and give with a good attitude. If you don't, then you're like Cane, kind of bringing your gift, hoping that will make things right. And he's going, no; let's talk about that little battle of sin in your life right now. Let's deal with that. If you don't master that, then you know what? Then this is a lost cause, I'm not interested in your gifts. Bottom of verse 4, Hebrews chapter 11, one more phrase. There are three sentences here in verse number 4, we dealt with the first one, by faith, Able offered God a better sacrifice than Cane, we saw that, it was the best; he gave him an excellent gift. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. He came with authenticity, with no hypocrisy, with a clean heart. As opposed to Cane, who didn't. One more sentence, bottom of verse 4; and by faith he still speaks, even though he's dead. Who speaks? Well, some people say, Able speaks. As a matter of fact, turn with me to Genesis 4, one last time. There's an interesting double entendre here. There's a little double reference to this particular phrase. By faith he still speaks even though he's dead. Well, how is he speaking even though he's dead? Back to Genesis chapter 4, interesting as the story goes on, because of jealousy, and because of envy, and because of his own battles in his own heart, Cane takes him out in the field and kills him. Right? You know the story. Verse number 9; lets go to the field, and then he kills him. Verse number 9, the Lord says to Cane, hey where is your brother, little socratic confrontation.. I don't know. Okay, liar. Right, he just killed him. He says, am I my brother's keeper? Right? Classic line there. Well you know, you may not be your brothers keeper, but you

shouldn't be your brothers killer, that's the real problem here with Cane. Never a good question, all of our kids ask it at some point, but yeah, never a good question, don't get a good response to that. God says, verse number 10; what have you done? Now, underline this phrase, listen, he speaks metaphorically, your brothers blood cries out to me from the ground. Now is Able alive or dead at this point? Dead. He's dead but God says, listen, you can still hear him cant you? And in this case, is it a good thing or a bad thing what Able is saying after he's dead? It's a bad thing. His blood is crying out for justice, vindication, for some kind of resolve for his unjust death, and he's crying out to God, even from the grave, if you will, his blood, the injustice of his murder is crying out to God. So he's dead and he still speaks. We have such a short story about Able, one of the components of the story is that after he dies, God says, hey Cane, can't you hear it? And you know what? I'll bet Cane, in his heart was like, yeah I can hear it. I mean I'm sure he was plagued. The first murderer on the planet, think about it. You don't think he was plagued with guilt? You don't think he felt that pressure everyday? Listen Cane, just listen for a second, your brothers' blood, I saw the whole thing. Listen, can't you hear it? I've got to deal with this. You think I'm going to let this go? And he sends him out, he says, no longer are you going to be able to produce anything from the ground, verse number 12, you're going to be a restless wanderer on the earth, and sends him off. So there had to be recompense, there had to be some kind of dealing with Cane over this. Now, in verse number 4, look at your worksheet again, in Hebrews 11, the Bible says he still speaks even though he's dead. And that would be a weird place for us to see this negative statement from, you know, Able. So this is a little double reference, a little play on words, if you will. Clearly he spoke after he was dead about the injustice of his own death. But now, the writer of Hebrews picks up on that speaking after death, and he says, he still speaks, even though he's dead, in what way? By faith, it's all about the faith. It's through this faith that he had to bring God his best. And even though he's dead and gone to this generation, and certainly to ours, he's still got something to say. And I guess like God said to Cane, for us, though it's a positive, you know what? You ought to listen up to what he's saying. What is he saying? The only thing I really know about Able is that he's a shepherd and he brings the best of what he has to God. And I can assume because of the rest of the Bible, why he does that. And so we should listen to that. And the point is, that you and I should, let's put this down, Number 3, pick some sacrificial role models. Because the only thing I really know about Able is that he's a really sacrificial person. He's got a tremendous trust in God to affirm his greatness through some real sacrificial gifts. And so the Bible is saying to us, listen up, man, listen to this guy. Now I'm thinking, there's not much to listen to. He's seven or eight verses in the Old Testament. And that's, by the way, why the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews doesn't end here, it keeps on going. And the writer of Hebrews lists sixteen more people, or groups by name in this section. And so he's saying, okay, well how about this one, how about this one, how about Moses, how about Abraham, how about all these guys? And he starts giving us more examples. So let's follow that lead for just a minute, let's think through three distinct categories. Let's, like the writer of Hebrews is trying to promote us to do, let us pick some good and sacrificial role models from the Bible. That would be Letter A, I didn't jot it down on the overhead, but at least in your mind, or on your paper, jot that down. You and I need some biblical heroes, who are sacrificial. That's not the worship of man, that's not unbiblical, that's exactly what Hebrews 11 is trying to get us to do. Look at these people and follow their example. And in the Bible, I look at people all the time and I say, there's an example. I think of King David as an example, a guy with a feet of clay, with sin in his life, and yet he comes back, even after numbering

the troops. i you were in men's Bible study last week, we talked about that, right? He numbers the troops. And even at the end of that when he's convicted of guilt and sin, what does he do? He wants to go out there, after confessing his sin, and give God a gift. So he goes to Araunah, and he wants to buy that threshing floor, which is now the temple mountain, right? And he goes there, and he says Araunah, please, I want to buy this, I want to offer to God a sacrifice here. And Araunah says, when the King comes to you and says, hey that's a really nice piece of property, I'd like it. He does what a lot of people would do. Take it then, have it. And you know what King David says, no, I'm going to pay you the full price. And then he gives his rationale, do you remember why? Talk about ambitious faith that is a model to us. What does he say? He says, because I'm not going to give God something that costs me nothing. Now think that one through for a minute. You want to talk about a challenging example and template of ambitious faith that's sacrificial? I'm not going to give God something that cost's me nothing. Now think that through. That is an amazing statement of tremendous faith; faith that I don't have. A kind of generosity in giving I don't have. Because here's the thing, if I knew the church needed a bus, which it doesn't, please don't go out and buy us a bus. But let's just say, we needed a bus really bad. Oh, we need a bus. And you knew that, but we couldn't afford a bus. So you won the bus lottery at your job, okay, they have some strange bus lottery. And so you win a great, brand new 2007 Greyhound bus. What a lottery that would be. Now can you imagine going to Greyhound, or whoever it was that represented it there who's going to give you this brand new bus, get this huge bus for you, and you're going, I know exactly what I'm going to do with this. God's ministry needs this, I'm going to give it to the Lord. Would you say to the Greyhound representative, hey just one thing, can I write you a check for this? Because I don't want to give it to God if it doesn't cost me anything. I'm thinking, what kind of planet would you be from to say that kind of thing? You think that's strange, I think that's a little odd. I think that's over the top, and I'm trying to cultivate ambitious faith. You think there's some examples in the Bible that we can learn from? Do you think you and I can look thought the pages of scripture and watch a Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego look in the eyes of the ultimate despotic leader of the kingdom and say, throw us in the fire if you want to, we don't give a rip. Oh, and if God doesn't save us, we don't care, burn the flesh off our bones, but we're not putting our kneecaps on the ground for you. So kill us if you want. What do you say? Whew...great nuts. Right? Just bow down, its no big deal, God will understand. That's ambitious faith. Sacrificial, I'm willing to give my life for this. Daniel in a lion's den, I'm going to pray. Hey, open the windows and pray. Oh I know I'm not supposed to but God says I should so I'm going to do it. Throw me in the lion's den if you want. I don't care. You think there's some people in the Bible that we should hold up as examples? Bible says, by the way, we'll learn this in chapter 12, that they're leaning over the rails of heaven and watching. And I think, unfortunately for a lot of fat, lazy, prosperous Orange County evangelicals, they've got to be rolling their eyes quite a bit. When we're complaining about the sacrifice, another night out at the church, I don't know if I can do that. And they're going yeah, wow, real godly ambitious Christians there. We've got a lot to learn from the pages of scripture. Going to have seventeen examples in Hebrews 11. But let's jump ahead, and do a little homework maybe, and trying to identify, in your season of life, in your stage of life, let's identify some heroes in scripture. You need some sacrificial role models, find them within the Bible. Secondly, can you find them in church history? That would be a good place to go, that's the second area. Why don't you go to church history? I know a lot of us are, as C.S. Lewis said, chronological snobs, right? We think this is the only time to live. Its really not. There's

been some great periods where Christians have stood the test of endurance. They've stood up and sacrificially said, we're going to serve God with zeal and faith. There's been a lot of people in the last nineteen hundred years that have done that. Would you agree there's been some pretty impressive people? Now let's think that one through for a second. Amazing people. I think about this when I think about teenagers, in the first service, we had teenagers sit right up here in the first two rows. I love that. And I think to myself, and I used this in the last service, I think of Jonathan Edwards, he was probably an early teenager, 13 or 14 years old, Jonathan Edwards. And he used to, because of his commitment and wanting to love and serve God, his commitment was to pray on his knees, devoted to God, five times a day. So that meant that part of his prayer time was during school time. So he was at school and he said, I'm not stopping. And following examples of scripture, he said, I am going to pray. And I just think, okay, high schoolers, jr high schoolers, you just do that between classes, kneel down in the corner by your locker and pray for a while. See if you don't get kicked in the head a few times, right? And yet, that's exactly what Jonathan Edwards did. And by the way, because of that example, people in his school as a young teenager, began to pray with him. They began to have multiple prayer services everyday in the school. Examples of ambitious faith, people who are willing to sacrifice his reputation for the good of God. That's impressive. How about Adoniram Judson? Adoniram Judson used to wake up at midnight to spend time with God. And you know why? Because he wanted no distractions. And during the day, people can walk in, and there's stuff to do, and meals to cook, and money to earn, and all that. But he said, from midnight to two, he was going to get up in the middle of the night and spend quiet time with God. Now if there's one thing I don't want to sacrifice, its midnight to two, right? I've got an appointment with the pillow, and that's precious time. That would be an extravagant gift. And here was Adoniram Judson, spending time from twelve to two, to spend time with his Lord, and to give him undistracted and clear thinking, no distraction with the rest of the world. He would only do that because he loved God. How about George Mueller? Do you know George Mueller? If you don't know the story of George Mueller, maybe go to the bookstore, look up in one of our books, or one of the biographies that I listed on the back, look him up. Here's a guy that was willing, every time there was a need to put his entire wallet on the table, and say if it costs something, here it is, I don't care. I don't care if it leaves me with not a penny. You want to talk about a guy that was parting with his cash regularly for the good of ministry, and he kept on giving, and God kept using him. So much so that he became famous for leading ministry, but his money was always on the table. That guy lived off a small percentage of what he made every year, and gave the rest of it to the good of the cause of Christ. Talk about people giving up things, how about Dietrich Bonhoeffer? I was just reading about him early this morning. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was willing to look in the eyes of a culture that was sliding into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich, and say here's the thing, I think this is all a bunch of bologna. And I don't care if you want to jail me for sermons that are no longer legal, but I'm going to stand up to this, and stand on truth. You may not agree with all of his theology, but Dietrich Bonhoeffer paid the ultimate price, did he not? His freedom. The pastor got thrown into prison. We know a lot about Bonhoeffer, because he was writing from prison. He was talking about the concepts before he even went to prison, about radical Christianity, saying that's normative, the very thing we're teaching here. And you know what it ended up costing him? His life. He hung lifeless from the gallows, just weeks before the Germans surrendered. And there he hung, and one of the Dr's in the camp wrote about how he so courageously went to his death. They said, if you don't recant, if you don't change, if you don't

change what you are teaching, we're going to hang you. And he walked up there with resolve, after being on his knees in prayer, and this is a modern example now, 1945, right? Hanging lifeless from the gallows. Do you think there's any examples from church history that we can learn from? People that are willing to sacrificially give of themselves because they have a zeal and faith in God that maybe you and I don't have? That we're just a bunch of little tiny Christians, and we can grow from those giants? I think its time for us to learn from them. I said three categories; you need to pick some biblical sacrificial heroes. It would be good for you to do a little reading in church history and pick some historical, church history examples of sacrificial heroes, but here's the third one, the one that we don't like. Let's pick some heroes that aren't dead yet. Can you do that? Letter C; pick some heroes that aren't dead yet. And I know that's very threatening to your precious self esteem, right? Because we all think we're the great Christian hero. But you know what? Hmm, maybe there's some more people that have a little more ambitious faith, and demonstrate a sacrificial life toward God a little bit more than you do. They demonstrate an excellence and a passion and determination for the good of God's kingdom, and maybe you can learn from that. Well that's man worship. No, its not. It is so biblical. Do you know how biblical this is? Paul looked at people and said, if you need an example, use me if you have to. Follow me as I follow Christ. It was about saying everyone needs examples. We need them from the scripture, we need them from church history, and you need one right now. You know what modern examples of Christianity have that all the examples of church history and the biblical examples don't have? They live in your world, and that's different, see? They live in your world, they're not living during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich, they're not living back there during the monarchy of King George, their living now, with all that's going on in our world. And you need to identify some. I've got mine. I look at mine, I've got about four guys in my life that I look at consistently and I say, I learn from that, I learn from that, everytime. They are my heroes, as it relates to the Christian faith. And they don't have to be fifty miles away. Some of them, you see them all of the time around this church. And I say, you have something in your zeal, and your faith in God that I don't have, and I want to replicate that. We all need modern Christian heroes who are sacrificial. And the Bible is calling us, listen up. Because there's faith like that in the scripture that still speaks. Are you listening? There is faith like that, that speaks from the pages of historians in the church. Are you listening? There are people in your life right now that have a faith and a zeal for God that you don't have. They make your faith look puney. Are you listening? Because by faith, they speak. And some of them are speaking right now. You could ask them questions about their walk with God. Our culture is obsessed with comfort and convenience. And against that backdrop, the real question for you is, what kind of Christian are you going to be? What kind are you going to be? Are you going to be the minimum requirement Christian man? The minimum requirement Christian woman? Or, are you like the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58, going to be a person who completely gives himself over to the cause of Christ? In a world that's all about self preservation and protecting your leisure time, and making sure everything about your brain and your life is all careful, don't get near burnout, because that would be horrible. Are you going to be totally living in that cultural lie? Or are you perhaps, like 2 Corinthians, going to adopt the passion that the Apostle Paul said, where he said, I'm willing to spend and be expended for their soul. What is it going to take? For the cause of Christ, I'll do whatever it takes. Stay the extra hour? Absolutely. Extra mile? Fine, I'll do ten if I need to. Extra dollar? What do you need, here's my checkbook. In a world that wants you just to blend in, sit down and shut up. Are you willing to



stand up and step out? To be someone where you reflect the greatness of God, your trust in God, your gratitude toward God, and you give him your best. We need Christians like that. And here's the good news, God's got his eyes scanning the planet, looking for people like that. And I left out one phrase when I quoted that 2 Chronicles 16 passage. Here's the thing, God is wanting to strongly support that kind of person. And there's people maybe in this auditorium right now that are ready to say, I'm ready, I'm going to do it. And God says, great, I'm looking for people just like you, I'm ready to strongly support you. D.L. Moody said it best, if we could just find ten people like that, we could turn this world upside down. Just ten people.