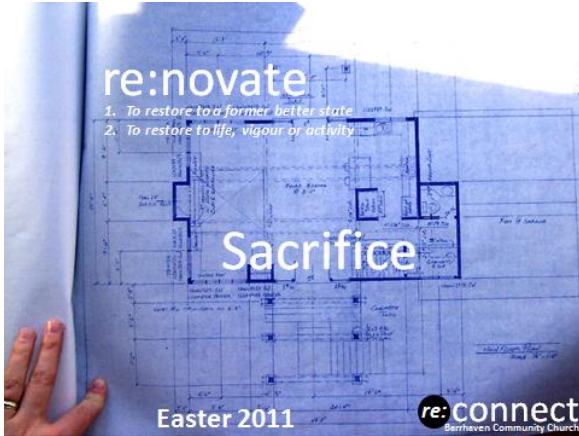


# re:novate VII: sacrifice

Reconnect – Easter 2011



**Text:** I Peter 2:21-25; Romans 5:6-11

**Key Thought:** If you want to grow in God, embrace the life Jesus offers through his sacrifice.

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. (I Peter 2:21-25, NLT)

**Pre-Intro: The Good Wife S02E15**

**Intro: “Are We Christians Now?”**



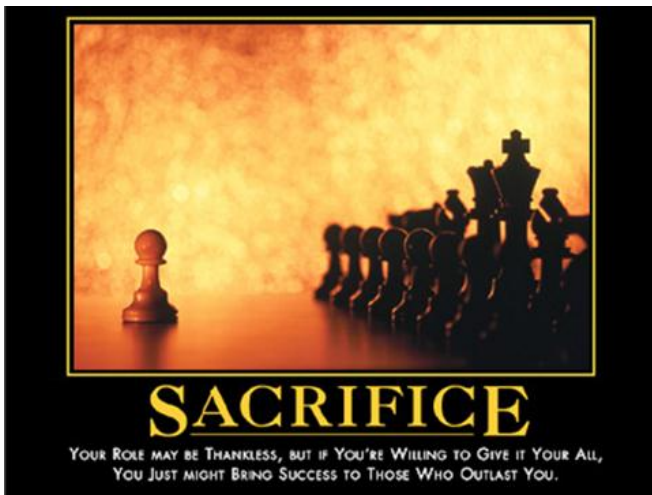
- When I was a kid Easter was the best weekend of the year, because it was a four-day weekend – plus LOTS of chocolate, which was pretty good too
- Downside was going to church in clothes I only wore once a year or so, that didn't fit me (chubby)
- Hopefully something has changed along the way... something...!

**Q: What does Easter mean for you? Why are you grateful for Easter this morning? What was your Lent journey like this year?**

- Outline series “re:novate” – spiritual housecleaning, rebuilding, spring cleaning in your heart and life, meant to culminate with the celebration of Easter
- So, in the words of Alicia from The Good Wife, “Are we Christians now?”

- It's been a recurring feature of the second season – the spiritual search, into sometimes very strange and potentially dangerous territory, of her daughter Grace
- It's confusion, in a confusing time, it's uncertainty, in an uncertain world – people trying to do their best to get by, do the right things – but sometimes something gums up the works – a desire for something that's deeper, even more real than the world around us that so captivates us
- Grace is looking for a cause – for something to give her life to – something to give herself FOR, to give her life meaning – something worth sacrificing for

## Sacrifice?



### Q: Think about that word sacrifice: what does it bring to mind?

- Sacrifice today is one of those ideas, one of those ideals, that everyone loves in theory but when it comes right down to it, is not always truly embraced
- I think a lot of the time we're like water – we find a way around it to try to get to the same place
- According to the internet, which is never wrong, sacrifice is defined as “a surrender of something of value as a means of gaining something more desirable or of preventing some evil” (World English Dict)
- In ancient times, a sacrifice was something of yours with value that you would offer to a god or a priest, to show the god that you were looking for their favour or to show that you were sorry that you hadn't done all you'd could to follow them
- But over time, that morphed into the idea of giving something up in general, for a better purpose
- And we've seen that through history, and even in our own times – I think about the Great Depression when our grandparents and great-grandparents sacrificed what they had for the sake of their children, I think about World War II, when our grandparents sacrificed to win a war that had to be won
- But somewhere along the way, while we've kept the notion of sacrifice as something really good, I think human nature and the desire for a shortcut has crept in
- Because the world we live in now tells us that we don't need sacrifice to achieve the ends we want
- Anyone seen the Scotiabank commercial that's getting some play right now, where the couple flips a coin to make a choice and it sits on its side? But the advisor says, “You can do both!” And they make it sound almost possible... but you can't choose two opposites at the same time – you can't spend and

save at the same time, you can't have everything you want for yourself and still put things aside for the future – unless of course, you make an obscene amount of money ;)

- Now, when we really see sacrifice, close up, it is inspiring – soldiers, first responders, aid workers, those who work with the less fortunate, the challenged – and that's why it's in so many movies, too – because of course, we want to feel a certain way without actually having to go through the experience
- Sacrifice, true sacrifice, has a way of cutting through the clutter and confusion of our world and making what matters very clear

### **Sacrifice: we know it when we see it**

**Q: Who has sacrificed in the past for you? What did they do for you / give up for you? What is your opinion of that person today?**

- We may or may not trust someone – we may not even like them – but if they actually make a sacrifice on our behalf, it will open the door to us getting to know them and building trust with them
- Why? We are all into “number one” – ourselves – so right off the back, if there's someone who demonstrates by their actions that they, also, think your number one is pretty great, then you're good
- When someone else gives something that they needed – or didn't have enough of – whether money, or time, or something else – well, that's pretty special – makes me feel all warm inside
- A sacrifice is something with a price tag

### **Easter: sacrifice**

- And then we come to Easter – when we dress up, and eat chocolate, and have time off from work, and we get to spend time with our families
- But the heart of Easter, past the bunnies and bonnets and candy, is... sacrifice
- The section of the Bible that was read earlier this morning makes it clear:

**For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. (1 Peter 2:21-25, NLT)**

- Jesus gives his life – his hopes, dreams, relationships, experiences, all that he had to offer the world – he gives all of that up for you and I
- Not only that, but he takes all of our worst – our choices, our misadventures, our worst moments, the things we'd rather forget – he takes all of that on himself, and “by his wounds we are healed”
- The original meaning of the word sacrifice is from the Latin – it means “to make something holy” – to offer it to God, to change it and make it better

- And that’s what Jesus does – but what does that mean for you and me?
- Is he an example to follow? Should we just try harder to live a good life? Or is there a change that has to come on the inside?
- This section says that he “left his case in God’s hands” – the original Greek talks about how he entrusted himself to God – he gave his destiny away to God
- And He calls us to do the same – because no matter how hard we try to follow a good example, we’re going to mess it up – that’s who we are – we don’t have the strength to get a paint by number exactly right
- The good news is that God knows that – and so what He’s looking for from us is to give him ourselves - instead of working harder or trying to be better in our own strength, He wants to give us himself – to reconnect with us so that we can gain His strength to follow in his steps
- It’s not just a lifestyle – it’s a life – when we will sacrifice our dreams, our goals, even our hopes and the best that we have, he will in return offer us so much more – and then we can live in such a way that imitates him, too

### Key Thought:

## TAKE IT HOME:

**If you want to grow in God, embrace the life Jesus offers through his sacrifice.**

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. **Romans 5:6-11, NLT**



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## Conclusion: Just like me (Carly's Voice)

[show video clip – "Carly's Voice"]

"I think people get a lot of their information from so-called experts, but if a horse is sick, you don't ask a fish what's wrong with the horse. You go right to the horse's mouth."

– Carly

- We live in a very confusing time
- We think that we see clearly, that we are doing pretty well, making our way – but what if we really weren't and had no idea?
- Because sometimes, everything feels really screwed up – like "this is not right, this is not the way it was meant to be"
- The clutter and noise of our lives, our flaws and failings, we want to be one way but wind up going a different direction
- What if there WAS a better way, a different way?
- Jesus came as one of us – to walk in our shoes - as Carly wisely says, "I think people get a lot of their information from so-called experts, but if a horse is sick, you don't ask a fish what's wrong with the horse. You go right to the horse's mouth." – and to show us a different kind of life – perfectly committed to God and people, living a life of good, authentic love, relationships and spirituality, the whole package
- And more than that – he claims that because he gave up that life in response to human evil and confusion, because of his sacrifice, that he can now offer that same life to each and every person who will choose to follow Him in it
- Today is Easter, when we celebrate a miracle – that God brought a man back from the dead and by doing so, somehow reversed death – so now people can come back to life the same way, through God's power
- So what does that mean for you this morning?
  1. No thanks, not me – you're not there today, and that's OK, I appreciate your honesty
  2. Already there – well, keep spreading the love and message of life, let it shine through every aspect of your life more and more clearly
  3. This is what I've been waiting for – tell that to God, let someone else know your choice this morning, too – start asking questions, start learning more, get a Bible like Grace and read it and find out firsthand for yourself
  4. I want to know more – I'm feeling something I've never felt before – start getting involved, learning more, meeting people who are trying to live this life

## Response: Once Again (band)