

**A THANK OFFERING
OF DEDICATION**

Pastor Steve 11/26/17

We may not readily associate gifts of gratitude with making vows. Yet, it's not as rare in our culture as we might think.

I've often had the pleasure of officiating at weddings. It comes as no surprise when the couple exchange rings during the ceremony. After all, it's a long standing tradition to give our intended a symbol of the commitment we're making.

In pre-marital counsel, couples also often express how "thankful" they are for each other. They share how the attributes they "appreciate" in one another have a lot to do with their desire to pledge themselves in marriage.

Though the exchange of rings is expected, what happened at a recent wedding I performed came as a surprise to most. After their vows to one another, the groom* made a vow to his fiancé's daughter, presenting her a necklace along with the following inscription:

*"I cannot promise you I will be here for you all of your life –
but I promise to be here for you all of mine."*

There was hardly a dry eye in the house. Though I was privy to what he was going to do, I confess I shed a tear or two myself when he declared his devotion to her in the assembly. In effect, he told the world how "grateful" he was for his relationship with this little girl he would help raise as his own daughter.

So, with that in mind, consider the words of David when he says in **Psalm 116:17-18**...

**"I'll sacrifice a thank offering to You as I call on Your name, LORD.
I'll fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people..."**



Recognizing how "blessed" he was, David gave a gift to accompany his vows. And as my dear mom might have said, he did it "right in front of God and everybody."

In the preceding verses, David also said this...

¹² How can I repay the LORD for all His goodness to me? ¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. ¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all His people.

Once more, notice his emphasis on making a public commitment. As strange as it may seem, David is "promising" to "keep his "promises." Why would he do this?

My guess is it is because David knows only too well how many promises he has broken in the past. It's not that he planned to – he just "fell through on his follow through." Perhaps that's what he's recognizing in the next few verses...

**¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.
¹⁶ O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.**

I don't think He's speaking of physical death here, but the concept we find in the New Testament about "dying" to self. In fact, in order to fulfill our vows to God, our selfish cravings must be "crucified." (See **Mk. 8:34-35; Rom. 6:1-8; Gal. 3:20**)

Perhaps the Apostle Paul sums it up best in **Romans 12:1**:

"In view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – for this is your spiritual act of worship."

The very best "thank offering" we can ever give to God is our very self. After all, if it was our life that God redeemed, doesn't it stand to reason that our life is what we should give?

* Thanks to Andrew Keip for allowing me to share this illustration.