

SACRIFICE IN A CLOSED SEASON!

HEBREWS 13:15 - 16

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

RODMAN STREET CHURCH | 12.28.25

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Title: Sacrifice in a Closed Season: Offering God Your Person, Praise, and Purpose

Sermon Summary: As we stand at the threshold between what was and what will be, this powerful message challenges us to reconsider what God truly desires from us when doors close and seasons end. Drawing from Hebrews 13:15-16, we're reminded that closed doors don't mean closed access to God. The sermon beautifully weaves together the story of the little drummer boy—a child who had nothing material to offer the King but brought himself and his gift anyway. This simple narrative becomes a profound metaphor for our spiritual lives: God doesn't want our leftovers or our excuses; He wants us. Before He asks for our resources, He asks for our lives.

The message calls believers to offer three essential sacrifices: their person (surrendering themselves completely to God), their praise (worshiping even when circumstances are difficult), and their purpose (serving others and fulfilling their calling regardless of the season). When we feel inadequate, broken, or empty-handed, we're exactly where the little drummer boy was: facing the King with only ourselves we still have something invaluable to offer.

That's precisely what God honors most. Our willingness to show up, to worship through hardship, and to serve despite closed doors becomes the very foundation upon which hope is built. This isn't about performing

perfectly; it's about playing our best for Him, whatever that looks like in our current season.

This sermon addresses the spiritual challenge of worshiping and serving God during difficult seasons when doors seem closed, and opportunities limited. Pastor Canady emphasizes that God continues to desire our worship even in hardship. The sermon particularly emphasizes that God values our surrender and faithfulness over our resources, and that praise in closed seasons is an act of faith that keeps hope alive and maintains access to God's presence.

Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction: Worship in Closed Seasons

We are reminded that closed doors do not mean closed access to God, and that worship remains essential even when seasons end, and circumstances are difficult.

Chapter 2: The Sacrifice of Our Person

God desires us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices first, before our resources or accomplishments, because He wants our hearts and lives surrendered to Him.

Chapter 3: The Sacrifice of Praise

Praise becomes our sacrifice when we worship God continuously, not just when conditions are favorable, because praise keeps our access to God open and shifts our spiritual atmosphere.

Chapter 4: The Sacrifice of Purpose

We are called to move beyond showing up and praising to walking out our God-given assignments by doing good and sharing with others, which pleases God.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Playing Our Drum

We are encouraged to give God our best with what we have, trusting that our sacrifice matters and reaches heaven even when our season feels closed.

Key Points:

- Closed doors and difficult seasons do not cancel God's desire for our worship or our access to Him
- God wants us before He wants our resources; He asks for our lives first, not our possessions
- We are called to be "living sacrifices" who choose to offer ourselves to God, not dead sacrifices brought by others
- Sacrifice of praise is worship that costs us something and should be offered continuously, not just when circumstances are favorable
- Praise declares faith before favor arrives and shifts the atmosphere even when it doesn't change the season
- Purpose requires obedience in motion—using what we have, where we are, without waiting for better circumstances
- True giving is sacrificial; if it doesn't cost us something, it isn't really a sacrifice
- Young people and adults alike are called to give God their best, not to imitate others but to be faithful with who they are
- The Community of Hope is built by people who refuse to let closed seasons cancel their calling
- God is pleased when we do good and share with others, not just when we offer lip service

Scripture Reference:

- Hebrews 13:15-16 (primary text): "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."
- Romans 12:1: Offering our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God
- 2 Corinthians 8:5: Giving ourselves first to the Lord, then to others in keeping with God's will
- Romans 8:28: All things work together for good for those who love God
- John 3:16: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son
- Matthew 6:33: Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness
- Philippians 4:19: God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory
- Psalm 23: Walking through the valley of the shadow of death

Stories:

- The Little Drummer Boy: A Christmas story of a poor boy who had no expensive gifts like the wise men (gold, frankincense, myrrh) but offered what he had—his drum and his music—playing his best for the newborn King Jesus, who smiled at him in response
- Terminator movie illustration: How the enemy tried to kill John Connor before he was born and as a teenager because he knew the boy's future potential, paralleling how the devil tries to destroy young people before they fulfill their purpose

- Personal testimony about young boys in the LIFE Male STEAM Academy: Stories of boys without beds to sleep in, with holes in their shoes who received Air Jordans, illustrating practical ministry and helping others
- Mother Teresa's quote: "If you give what you don't need, it is not really giving"
- Martin Luther's reflection: "I have tried to keep things in my hands, and I lost them all. But what I have given into God's hand, I still possess"
- Personal testimony of Sister Johnson: A mother who lost her husband after 60+ years of marriage but continues to faithfully attend church and give God glory every Sunday

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned Scripture References:

1. Romans 8:28 - "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
2. Hebrews 13:15 - "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name."
3. Hebrews 13:16 - "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."
4. Romans 12:1 - "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

5. 2 Corinthians 8:5 - "And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us."
6. Psalm 23:4 - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
7. John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
8. John 1:14 - "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."
9. Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
10. Philippians 4:19 - "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."
11. Psalm 100:4 - "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise."

Alluded to or Paraphrased Scripture:

12. Psalm 139:14 - "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (referenced multiple times regarding being made in God's image)
13. Matthew 25:21 - "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things."
14. Hebrews 13:5 - "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

15. Lamentations 3:22-23 - "Great is Thy faithfulness" (referenced in the hymn mentioned)

Relevant Scripture for Major Themes Not Explicitly Cited:

16. 2 Corinthians 9:7 - Cheerful giving and sacrifice
17. 1 Chronicles 21:24 - "I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing" (theme of sacrificial giving)
18. Psalm 50:14 - "Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most Almighty"
19. 1 Peter 2:5 - Living stones offering spiritual sacrifices
20. Mark 12:41-44 - The widow's offering (theme of giving from what you have)

QUOTES:

Closed doors does not mean that you have closed access to God. Because God knows best. Closed season does not cancel God's pleasure, because God knows best.

Before God asks you for your resources, He asks you for you. Before He asks you for your service...before He asks for your sacrifice, He asks you for you. God wants you.

God is not looking for Superman. He is looking for Clark Kent. God is not looking for Superwoman. God is looking for the real you.

Praise in a closed season is faith speaking out loud. Praise will shift the atmosphere without changing your season. It may not change the season, but it can change your attitude toward what you are going through in the season.

God is not asking you to be somebody else. He is asking you to be faithful with who you are. Don't try to do it like somebody else does it. Do your very best.

If you give God your life, even at a young age, God will make a way out of no way. God wants our young people now and not later.

When you help somebody else, God is pleased. It's not about me, my, and mine. It's about us and our.

Doors may be closed behind me, but new mercy is ahead of me. Seasons may be ending, but new purpose is rising in me.

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5-Day Devotional: Sacrifice in Every Season

Day 1: Offering Yourself First

Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Before God asks for your resources, He asks for you. Paul urges us to present our bodies as "living sacrifices"—not dead offerings brought by others, but a conscious choice to place ourselves on God's altar. This year may have closed doors you prayed would stay open, but God still wants you. Your value doesn't decrease because your season is difficult. Today, God isn't waiting for you to have everything together; He's simply asking you to belong to Him. When He has you, He can work through whatever season you're in. The question isn't what you're giving,

but who you're giving. Surrender yourself first, and watch God redirect your path according to His perfect will.

Reflection: What part of your life are you still holding back from God? How can you offer yourself more fully today?

Day 2: Praise in the Pressure

Reading: Hebrews 13:15-16

Devotional: Sacrifice of praise means worshiping God when it costs you something—when doors are closed, seasons are hard, and circumstances haven't changed. The text says "continually offer" praise, not just when it's convenient. Praise in closed seasons is faith speaking out loud. It declares trust before you see the breakthrough. Like the psalmist who entered God's gates with thanksgiving, praise becomes your entry point to His presence. It may not change your season immediately, but it will change your spirit within the season. Praise shifts the atmosphere of your heart even when external conditions remain difficult. God doesn't wait for open doors to receive your worship; He invites you to praise Him in the hallway between what was and what will be.

Reflection: What situation requires you to offer a sacrifice of praise today, even though nothing has changed yet?

Day 3: Faithful With What You Have

Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Devotional: The Macedonian churches gave beyond their ability, but notice what they gave first: themselves to the Lord. They didn't wait for abundance to be generous; they gave sacrificially from their lack. Like the

little drummer boy who had no gold but offered his music, God honors what you bring, not what you don't have. Your gift may seem small compared to others, but obedience always matters to God. He's not comparing your drum to someone else's treasure; He's looking at your heart. Young or old, wealthy or struggling, God invites you to use what's already in your hands. Your talent, your time, your testimony—these are the instruments through which God works. Faithfulness with little qualifies you for much.

Reflection: What gift, talent, or resource has God already placed in your hands that you can offer Him today?

Day 4: God's Presence in Closed Seasons

Reading: Psalm 23

Devotional: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me." Closed seasons don't mean closed access to God. Valleys are real, but so is God's presence in them. This year may have taken you through deep valleys—loss, disappointment, unanswered prayers—but you're still here because God never left you. His rod and staff still comfort. His goodness and mercy still follow. Closed doors don't cancel God's faithfulness; they often redirect you toward His better plan. Romans 8:28 reminds us that God works all things together for good for those who love Him. You may not understand the closed season now, but trust that God knows best and walks with you through every transition.

Reflection: How have you experienced God's presence in a difficult season this year? Where do you need to trust Him more fully?

Day 5: Purpose Beyond the Season

Reading: Philippians 4:10-19

Devotional: Purpose doesn't wait for perfect conditions; it moves in obedience through closed seasons. Paul wrote about contentment and God's provision while imprisoned—a decidedly closed season. Yet he continued his ministry, encouraged churches, and declared that God would supply every need. Your assignment doesn't expire when your season gets hard. The Community of Hope isn't built on open doors but on faithful people who serve, give, mentor, and love anyway. When you help somebody else, when you share what you have, when you do good even in difficulty—these sacrifices please God. Don't let closed seasons cancel your calling. Your obedience today is building hope for tomorrow. Keep serving, keep giving, keep believing. New doors are ahead, and your faithfulness is preparing you to walk through them.

Reflection: What is one way you can live out your God-given purpose this week, regardless of your current circumstances?

Closing Prayer: Lord, as this year closes and a new one begins, I offer You my whole self—my person, my praise, and my purpose. Help me trust You in closed seasons, worship You through difficult times, and serve You faithfully with what I have. Thank You for Your constant presence and unfailing love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Small Group Guide: Sacrifice in a Closed Season

Scripture: Hebrews 13:15-16

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question:

What is one door that closed for you this year that was difficult to accept? Looking back now, can you see any purpose in that closed door?

Key Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

Read together: **Hebrews 13:15-16**

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Also reference: **Romans 8:28, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 8:5**

Main Themes & Discussion Questions (40-45 minutes)

Theme 1: The Sacrifice of Our Person

Key Takeaway: God wants YOU before He wants your resources. We are called to be "living sacrifices" - people who actively choose to offer themselves to God, not dead offerings that someone else places on the altar.

Discussion Questions:

1. **Romans 12:1** calls us to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices."
What's the difference between a dead sacrifice and a living one?
Why does that distinction matter?

2. The sermon mentioned that "God always claims the person before the provision." How does this challenge the way we typically think about serving God or giving to the church?
3. For young people: What does it look like to give God your life NOW rather than waiting until you're older or have "more to offer"?
4. For adults: In what areas of your life are you still holding back from fully surrendering to God? What closed doors might be inviting you to give yourself more completely to Him?

Theme 2: The Sacrifice of Praise

Key Takeaway: Praise in closed seasons is "faith speaking out loud." When we can't see the breakthrough, when doors remain shut, our praise declares that we trust God anyway. Praise doesn't always change the season, but it changes our spirit.

Discussion Questions:

5. The sermon stated: "Praise declares faith before favor." Share a time when you had to praise God before you saw any evidence of His answer. What was that experience like?
6. Why is praise so difficult when we're going through hard times? What makes it a true "sacrifice"?
7. The Little Drummer Boy had nothing to give but his song. What is your "drum" - the unique way you can worship God even when you feel you have nothing else to offer?
8. How can we create a culture in our church, families, and workplaces where praise isn't dependent on our circumstances?

Theme 3: The Sacrifice of Purpose

Key Takeaway: God doesn't just want us to show up and worship - He wants us to walk out with our assignment. Purpose doesn't wait for open seasons; it moves in faith through closed seasons. We give what we have, where we are, when it matters.

Discussion Questions:

9. **Hebrews 13:16** tells us not to forget "to do good and to share with others." How does practical service connect to spiritual worship?
10. The sermon said, "Purpose may feel small, but obedience always matters." What "small" act of obedience might God be calling you to that you've been overlooking?
11. Mother Teresa said, "If you give what you don't need, it is not really giving." How does this challenge our understanding of sacrificial giving - whether of time, money, or talents?
12. What is one practical way you can serve the "Community of Hope" (your church, neighborhood, or family) in this coming season, even if your personal season feels closed?

Personal Reflection (10 minutes)

Take a few moments of silence for individual reflection. Consider journaling responses to these questions:

- **Person:** In what area of my life am I still trying to maintain control rather than surrendering to God?
- **Praise:** What circumstance in my life right now requires me to offer a "sacrifice of praise"?

- **Purpose:** What is the "drum" God has given me to play? Am I using it for His glory?

Practical Applications (10 minutes)

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1 - Sacrifice of Person:

Write out a personal prayer of surrender. Specifically name the areas of your life (relationships, finances, career, health, dreams) that you are placing on the altar as a "living sacrifice."

Option 2 - Sacrifice of Praise:

Commit to starting each day this week with 5 minutes of praise - regardless of your circumstances. Play worship music, sing, speak Scripture, or simply thank God for His faithfulness. Journal how this practice affects your perspective.

Option 3 - Sacrifice of Purpose:

Identify one person in your life who is going through a "closed season" and do something practical to help them this week. It could be a meal, a phone call, financial assistance, or simply your presence.

Group Accountability

- Share with the group which option you're choosing
- Exchange contact information to check in mid-week
- Commit to praying for one another's specific closed seasons

Closing Discussion (5 minutes)

Final Question:

As we move into 2026, what is one thing you want to carry forward from this message about "sacrifice in a closed season"?

Closing Prayer

Pray together, incorporating these elements:

- Thank God for His faithfulness through the closed doors of this past year
- Ask for courage to offer ourselves as living sacrifices
- Commit to praising Him continually, regardless of circumstances
- Request clarity about our individual purposes and assignments
- Pray for the Community of Hope to remain strong through every season

Additional Resources

Songs for Reflection:

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"
- "The Little Drummer Boy"
- "If I Can Help Somebody"

Scripture Memory Verse for the Week:

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name." - Hebrews 13:15

Recommended Reading:

Reflect on the stories of biblical characters who praised God in closed seasons:

- Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:25-26)
- Job in his suffering (Job 1:20-21)
- David when pursued by enemies (Psalm 34)

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be in particularly difficult closed seasons
- Encourage authenticity - it's okay to admit when praise is hard
- Emphasize that God receives our honest worship, not perfect worship
- For groups with young people, make sure to directly address them and invite their participation
- If time allows, consider sharing the story of how your church has survived "closed seasons" through faithful people who kept serving

Remember: "Closed doors do not mean closed access to God. When the season is closed, worship keeps the door to God wide open!"

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways have you experienced God redefining your sacrifice during a closed season, and how did that change your perspective on worship?
2. The sermon emphasizes that God wants you before He wants your resources. How does this truth challenge the way you approach your relationship with God?
3. What does it mean to be a 'living sacrifice' rather than a dead one, and how does this concept transform your understanding of daily worship?
4. How can praise function as a sacrifice that keeps hope alive even when circumstances haven't changed?
5. The little drummer boy brought only himself and his drum to Jesus. What is your 'drum' that God is calling you to offer Him right now?
6. How does the idea that 'closed doors do not mean closed access to God' impact the way you respond to disappointments and unanswered prayers?
7. In what ways might you be waiting for your conditions to improve before giving God praise, and what would it look like to praise Him continuously instead?
8. The sermon states that 'purpose doesn't wait for open seasons.' What assignment or calling might God be asking you to pursue despite your current limitations?
9. How does comparing yourself to others prevent you from using the unique gifts and talents God has given you to serve His kingdom?
10. What practical steps can you take to shift from 'lip service' to 'life service' in your walk with God as you enter the new year?