It is funny what goes around and around in your mind. For me I have been reflecting recently on that line in the Eucharist that says:

*“Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which we offer through Christ our great high priest.”*

What I have been mulling over is – what exactly constitutes our sacrifice of praise.

I think that there are three aspects in particular that make up our sacrifice of praise in our present day context in secular New Zealand.

The first is this, our reputation. When we publically acknowledge that we are a Christian in our culture our reputation takes a hit. Letting people know that we are a Christian costs us something. We sacrifice something for Christ. In Hebrews 13:15, the author says *“…let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise- the fruit of lips that confess his name.”*

These daily sacrifices of praise occur when we let our co-workers know that we went to church in the weekend, when we offer to pray for someone and in numerous other ways we let it be known publically that we are aligned with Jesus. In a lot of ways children model this for us particularly well. The passage from Hebrews reinforces that that is that sort of sacrifice that God is looking for in praise. It is authentic sacrificial praise of God.

The second area of sacrifice comes in terms of our giving. The main idol in the west, which sets itself up in competition to God is money. What we do with our money speaks volumes as to what we see as important and valuable. When we give money to God and to his projects it is sacrificial but it is also authentic praise.

The third area is our time. Secular culture does not treat Sunday or any day as holy or as specially set aside. Consequently, we will constantly find that we are in a conflict situation where there are competing events regularly scheduled for Sunday. These conflicts force a choice. We can either choose to put God first prioritising meeting together to worship him or we can put that second.

I remember Jacob our son was faced with that choice as a boy. He had the opportunity to trial for the promos football team in Karori, which would involve practice every week over church time. He decided that he would say no to that so that he could go to church. That decision cost him. It was a sacrifice. It was what I think scripture calls a sacrifice of praise.

My prayer is that we become a people where sacrificial praise is deeply built into our DNA as a church.