

“Love” – The Law of First Mention in the O.T. & N.T.

Genesis 22:1-18 & Matthew 3:16-17

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Introduction: This Tuesday, February 14th, we will “celebrate” another Valentine’s Day. It is most associated with “love” – particularly romantic love. Consider the history or origin of this day. But this morning we looked at love for God as the Great Commandment, previously seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Tonight I want us to consider the word “love” by the Law of First Mention (in both Old & New Testaments). The word love (“*lovest*”) is found first in the O.T. in Genesis 22:3. There we learn (among other things) of a father’s love for his son. In the N.T. we find the word love (“*Beloved*”) in Matthew 3:17. It is there that we learn of the Father’s love for His Son. What does this tell us about the meaning of love? Does it not suggest that the basis of all true love is to found in a relationship to our Creator? I have 2 questions to ask: “Are you willing to render your child (or children) as a sacrifice to the Lord?” & “Have you received God’s sacrifice for your sin?”

I. A father’s love for his son > Genesis 22:1-18 [*“whom thou lovest”*]

A. Note Abraham’s love for his son, Isaac (:1-3).

1. The **circumstances** of Isaac’s birth (Genesis 21:1-8).
2. The **challenge** of Isaac’s life (Genesis 21:12, “...*for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*”).
3. The **consideration** of Isaac’s death (Genesis 22:1-3).
 - a. Was there a danger that Abraham loved his son more than he loved God? (see 22:16).
 - b. Is there a danger for us to love the gift more than the Giver? (see James 1:16-17).Application: Compare Matthew 10:37-38 with Luke 14:26-27).

B. Note Abraham’s sacrifice of his son, Isaac (:4-10)

1. Consider Abraham’s unquestioning **obedience** – He “*arose early,*” as he obeyed immediately & unhesitantly (cf. Psalm 103:20 & Colossians 3:23).
2. Compare Abraham’s unwavering **faith**:
 - a. He believed God would raise Isaac from the dead if he were offered up – Hebrews 11:17-19 & note Genesis 22:5, we “*will come again to you,*”
 - b. And/or he believed God could provide a substitute for Isaac – Genesis 22:8.Application: Apart from Divine revelation, such an act would have been murder. Note his words, “...*and I & the lad will go yonder & worship & come again to you.*” Worship requires Divine revelation & involves submission, separation, & presentation.
Summary: “Abraham was willing to offer exactly what God instructed him to offer. He was committed to worshipping God on God’s terms” (Kurtz).

C. Note Abraham’s receiving (back) of his son, Isaac (:11-18).

1. God provides a “*ram*” as a substitute for Isaac (:13-14).
2. God has provided a “*Lamb*” as a substitute for us (John 1:29; I Peter 2:24 & 3:18.).
3. God is declared to be “*Jehovah-jireh*” – “the Lord will see to it (provide).”

Application: Consider Psalm 127:3, “*Lo, children are an heritage (special gift or blessing) of the LORD: & the fruit of the womb is His reward.*” Children are the gift of God: they belong to Him (God’s ownership); they are given to parents (our stewardship); & they are to be trained & dedicated & given back to God (their workmanship). Are you willing to give your child(ren) back to God? What if they feel led to full-time ministry & decide to “go away” to Bible College? How would you feel if they surrender to go to the mission field? Are you willing to “sacrifice” them to the Lord? Compare Romans 12:1-2 for yourself & for your children.

II. The Father's love for His Son > Matthew 3:16-17 [*"This is My beloved Son..."*]

A. The words spoken by the Father about His Son:

1. At His **baptism** - *"...in whom I am well pleased"* (Mat. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; & Lk. 3:22).
[Consider the presence of the Trinity at His baptism & in our salvation - Mat. 28:19.]
2. At His **transfiguration** - *"...hear Him"* (Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; & Lk. 9:35).
[Consider our need of obedience to the Lord's commands - Mat. 28:20.]

B. The words spoken about the sacrifice of God's Son:

1. John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*
2. Romans 5:8, *"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*
3. I John 4:9-10, & 14, *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, & sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins... And we have seen & do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."*

Application: Have you personally accepted the sacrifice of God's Son for you? If so, are you sharing your testimony with others?

Conclusion: Abraham's love for his son is naturally understood. But his sacrifice of his son seems to require supernatural understanding. Though we will never be asked to physically sacrifice one of our children, we are required to spiritually "sacrifice" them to the Lord, or perhaps better understood as giving them back to God for His service. Recall again, *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: & the fruit of the womb is His reward"* (Psalm 127:3). Since they ultimately belong to the Lord, we are simply stewards of them in order to raise them up *"in the nurture (discipline) & admonition (doctrine or instruction) of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). Are you willing to render your children as "sacrifices" to the Lord?

How do you see the first mention of love in the N.T., *"...This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17)? Consider again the Father's love for His Son as well as the Father's sacrifice of His Son. Are you willing to receive God's sacrifice for you personally? John 1:12 tells us, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* If you have already done that, can you declare: *"And we have seen & do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world"* (I John 4:14)? Is that your testimony this evening?