

Day Four Meditation: Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies

4th Principle and Foundation

It was a quiet, peaceful evening in Lakewood, CO. I was spending the week with one of my good friends, Jim. His house is perched on the side of a ravine, with his porch overlooking it. We were eating fruit, nuts, and cheese while drinking some great beer. I am not sure of what we were speaking. In the course of our laughter and our serious meanderings, Jim said something that lodged in my soul, pregnant with the light of life -

“Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies.”

I latched onto that phrase without effort, knowing that it contained the marrow of life. It is so important to me that whenever I write it, I must capitalize each letter, making it a motto of meaning for my life.

Since June 2019, when my wife chose to separate, I have purposed my heart to hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, that I might handle our separation well for her sake and our children. Since my teenage years, I have heard my Father’s voice in the quiet of my heart and on the lips of those who love me. It was His voice that spoke to me that night on Jim’s porch. I needed wisdom to live righteously, and my brother was there to bless me with it.

“Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies.”

I have pondered this phrase over and over, but more importantly, I have seen its grace as I have lived it.

One of the great compliments that my good wife would give me was, *“You love me with all five love languages every day.”* What she said brought me great joy because that is what I sought to do. Now, she is no longer there for me to love in such a way. Now, the only way I can love her is by giving my finances whenever she has a need. For me, one of the sadnesses of being separated is that there is only one way I can love her, until Jim told me the truth,

“Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies.”

With those words, the opportunity opened for me to learn how to love at a distance through my sacrifices, acts of self-denial, which I ask Jesus to turn into my love for her, comingled with his love for her, and then him pouring that love upon her

In the past, penance was rare in my spiritual life. For me to fast on Good Friday was a feat rarely accomplished. Since learning this truth that Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies, I look for opportunities to deny myself for my wife’s sake. I went from eating three meals a day and snacking to eating once a day, turning the denial of my appetite into love for her. Sweet sugary coffee became black. My comfortable mattress gave way to sleeping on a thin mat on the floor.

The wonderful thing about seeking ways to sacrifice out of love is the joy of serving her, giving her gifts, spending quality time together every night, capped with a date every week, as well as

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words of affirmation and physical touch. All these things required me to take my eyes off myself and fix them intently on her. Intentional sacrifice does the same, yet in a form that transcends the Five Love Languages.

Why choose suffering? Is it because those things that bring me comfort are not good? Exactly the opposite. It is because they are good, and because they are good, that when they are given up for my girl, they become sacrificial love.

What an amazing God we have! All the religions of the world come from men imagining what god would be and then creating beliefs and rituals, explaining life in light of what they believe about the divinity they have created. Our God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has revealed himself to us. He is not of our imagining; he took on our reality in becoming man, matter, touchable. Our God, Yahweh, came to share in our life that man might come to share in the life of God. Jesus gave us his greatest gift: the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, our Teacher, has revealed to us the inner life of God, which is the life of love, for our God is love. Everything in Christianity is to be seen in the light of the truth that God is love.

The God-Man, Jesus Christ, love enfleshed, demonstrated for us the life of love, defining love itself by who he is. That love, the life of Divine Life, was fully displayed, leaving us with no room to guess as to what love looks like. On the Cross, we saw love in all its goodness, truth, and beauty; on the Cross, we saw the glory of love, and it is a crucified love, sacrificial to the point of costing Jesus all. This is how we are called to love the one he has called and given to us through Matrimony. Because of marriage, our life is to display his love for our spouse in a tangible, touchable, enfleshed way, and that way is the way of sacrificial love.

Matrimony calls us to the Way of Incarnational Love, loving as he loved us, laying down our life in sacrifice for our beloved as he laid down his life for all. This is loving beyond love's possibility to love. Yes, holding down a job is a way that we sacrifice. Yes, doing the work of grocery shopping, keeping a house, and raising children is part of the sacrifice. Keep it up! But these ways of sacrificial love are lived even by those who believe there is no God. They need no assistance to do so. It is a life of natural sacrifice that is written on all souls, whether they believe in our Risen Lord or not.

My call and yours is to love as he loved. That love beckons us to love in a way that is beyond our ability to love. We were all made to experience this type of love, and we were all made to live at this level of love. Immediately, we are confronted with the humbling truth that we cannot love at this depth and breadth. This is why the Lord, in his generosity, gave us the Sacraments, for they are the manner by which he pours his love into us that we might live from that love for the sake of others. By the Sacramental Covenant of Matrimony, he has placed within both husband and wife the grace (read, the Divine Energies), to love our spouse as he loves them.

Few souls embrace the Cross of Sacrificial Love because they have chosen to embrace it. Most people's cross is taken up because life forces it upon them. The Way of Jesus is to choose the Cross, turning it into the sacrifice of love. Maybe your spouse being distant has not been of your

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choosing and now requires your enduring. Maybe the separation and divorce yanked you off your feet and onto your cross' height, not allowing you to escape its agony.

However you got to this place in your relationship, it is time to choose intentional sacrifices for the one you once so passionately loved, mixing your love with the sacrificial love Jesus has for your spouse.

This is our course, the principles by which we will go forward, a foundation that will last beyond the storm you now find yourself within. There are four principles to which we will return over and over. Memorize them, and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you how he is calling you to -

1. Be reduced to love.
2. Think about what you are thinking about.
3. Respond with gratitude.
4. Live from the truth that Only Sacrificial Love Satisfies.