

The Sacrifice of Worship – Genesis 22:1-14

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Word From The Lord

1. During our Prophecy Conference in September, Pastor Jon Courson didn't just talk *about* prophecy – He *prophesied*; he gave to Calvary Chapel of Oxnard a Word from the Lord.
2. He said that in the time of trouble and turmoil, our church would be a refuge, a safe place where the distressed and harassed would find help and healing.
3. He shared Psalm 91:1 with us -
1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
4. Jon explained that “*dwelling in the secret place of the Most High*” refers to the *act of worship*.
 - a. though he had only been with us for a few minutes, he discerned that we were a group who genuinely loved God -
 - b. and that we expressed that love in sincere and intimate worship.
 - c. He said that because we *do dwell* in the secret place of the Most High –
 - d. we provide a place for the needy to gather under the protective shadow of the Almighty.
5. The elders have accepted and embraced that Word from Jon.
 - a. we welcome it as an *affirmation* from the Lord that we're being true to our vision and the ministry He's called us to.
 - b. our motto truly defines us – we are “Learning & **LIVING** God's Word.”
 - c. we're taking what we find in scripture as we study it from week to week and *applying* to it our lives.
 - d. and the *first place* we're doing that is in our response to the Lord in worship.

B. Worship A Response

1. You see, as Jesus says in John 4, real worship is only done in Spirit and in Truth.
2. It's based in God's revelation of *Himself*; it's a response to God

making Himself known to us in His Word and in our personal experience.

3. Because true worship is based in God's revelation – I thought it would be good for us this morning to come back to the heart of worship.
4. Let's take a look at the very first time we find the word "worship" in the Scriptures.
5. Genesis 22 –

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

¹Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

1. The "*these things*" this verse refers to were the many decades Abraham and his wife Sarah had waited for the birth of a son, which finally came in ch. 21 when he was 100 and she was 90!
 - a. Abraham and Sarah had agonized over their barrenness.
 - b. in fact some years before, they'd hit upon the scheme of helping God out and resorted to the use of a *surrogate* in the person of Sarah's Egyptian servant Hagar.
 - c. but God had made it clear that the son of promise would *come through Sarah*.
 - d. finally, *miraculously* she conceived and bore Isaac in her old age.
2. Some more years pass and Isaac has now grown into a young man.
3. Then God comes to Abraham with a test –
 - a. not a test to prove anything to God for God knows all things, including our future; He knows the end from the beginning.
 - b. this test was not for *God's sake*, but for Abraham's.
 - c. God *knew* that Abraham's faith was true – Abraham needed to know it as well.
4. This passage has several excellent spiritual lessons.
 - a. there are so many different things we could look at here this morning but I need to stay focused on our theme of worship for today
 - b. we'll dig deeper into this passage when we get to it later in our

Study of Genesis.

B. Vs. 2

²Then He said, “Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

1. What? This is *outrageous*!
2. It offends all our sensibilities and is contrary to everything we know about God!
3. Human sacrifice is an *abomination* to God.
4. So how could He be asking for it here?
5. The answer to that is found in how the story unfolds.

C. Vs. 3-5

³So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad [lit. – young man] and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

1. This is the first time the word “worship” is used in the Bible.
2. There is a rule of Bible interpretation called “*First Use*.”
 - a. the *Rule of First Use* says that the first occurrence of a word or idea sets the tone & pace for that thing throughout the rest of Scripture.
 - b. it may grow over time and as we track it through the Word, but it never leaves that foundation.
3. So notice carefully the *context* of the word “*worship*” here.
 - a. in Abraham’s mind, he and Isaac are going to ascend Mt. Moriah and he’s going to make a *sacrifice*. But Abraham calls it “worship.”
 - b. he sees *obedience* to the direction of God to take Isaac on that

- mount to offer him up as *worship*.
- c. *sacrifice* and *worship* become *synonymous*.
- 4. But the word “*worship*” isn’t the only thing we find *for the first time* in this passage.
- 5. This is also the first time we find the word “*love*.” V. 2 again -

2Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

- 6. The first use of the word *love* doesn’t refer to *romantic love* – or even our love for God or His love for us – it’s a father’s love for his son!
 - a. take careful note of that – and see how God seems to *emphasize* it here.
 - b. in fact, it seems almost cruel in light of what He tells Abraham to do with Isaac.

“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,

- c. wait a minute – Isaac wasn’t his only son; what about Ishmael the son of Hagar?
- d. it wasn’t that God had *forgotten* about Ishmael or denied him as Abraham’s son.
- e. in ch. 21, God had promised to *bless* Ishmael and make a great nation of his descendants.
- f. rather, God is speaking words that are meant to move Abraham and us who read them to realize there’s *more going on here* than meets the eye.
- g. why would God call Isaac the *only* Son and then identify Abraham’s intense love for him, if the next words were a command to slay him?
- h. let’s read on . . .

D. Vs. 6-14

6So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And

he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?”

8And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

9Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10**And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.”

12And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

13Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. **14**And Abraham called the name of the place, [Jehovah Jireh] **The-LORD-Will-Provide**; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

1. This place that Abraham called *Jehovah Jireh* was *Mount Moriah*; the very place that God had directed him to in vs. 2 & 3.
2. It’s name was later changed to *Calvary* and became the site of our Lord’s crucifixion.
3. You see, that is what this whole story in Genesis 22 is about.
4. It’s a foreshadowing of the *greater sacrifice* God the Father would make of His dearly beloved only Son on the cross.
 - a. just as Isaac bore the wood up the mount to the place of sacrifice,
 - b. Jesus bore the cross to the very same hill.

5. Abraham spoke *prophetically* when he said to Isaac - “***My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.***”
 - a. that lamb was the *Lamb of God* –
 - b. *Jesus Christ* Who came to take away the sins of the world.
6. These two events took place at the very same spot.
7. And even though Abraham was told to offer his son just as The Heavenly Father offered His Son, it ended very differently for Isaac –
8. And in that difference lies the great lesson for us.
9. Once Abraham’s *faith* was demonstrated by his *obedience* – God stayed the sacrificial knife, and provided a *substitute* for Isaac.
10. You see, that ram Abraham offered *in his place* represents the *Final Substitute* for all people that God would later bring to that same place in the Person of Jesus who died FOR US – as our substitute!

E. Worship Is Sacrifice

1. We need to see the intimate connection this passage reveals between *worship & sacrifice*.
2. In v. 5, Abraham said he was going up Moriah to worship, yet the *form* of his worship was to *offer his son*.
3. As we read this story carefully and see it through the lens of the Work of Christ we realize that God the Father was using Father Abraham to paint a picture of a work He would do 2000 years later in the very same place.
4. Worship & Sacrifice – the two go hand in hand.
5. Abraham knew that the worship of God had to be accompanied by a sacrifice –
 - a. for it’s the blood of the offering that removes the barrier of our sins and makes a way into the presence of a holy God.
 - b. what Abraham *learned* that day is that God will provide the *perfect substitute* so that our worship can be complete.
6. Our worship today is no different than Abraham’s.
 - a. just as it was for him, our worship has to be *accompanied by a sacrifice*.
 - b. the difference is that while he looked *forward in faith* for a substitute, we look *back*.
 - c. what came 2000 years *later* for Abraham occurred 2000 years

- ago* for us –
- d. when Jesus bore the wood of the cross and died on Calvary as our substitute.
7. How happy do you suppose Abraham was when the Lord stayed his hand and pointed to that ram caught in the thicket?
 - a. how *relieved* do you imagine he was when he saw his light and life restored to him through the saving of Isaac?
 - b. the *ground* of his worship that day was God's substitute.
 - c. his joy was complete in that his son was restored to life.
 8. The ground of our worship is God's provision of The Lamb.
 9. Our joy is made real in the knowledge that the Lamb who was slain for our sins has risen from the dead to give us new life.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Heart of Worship*

1. You see friends – our worship centers on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.
 - a. it's a meditation and celebration of Who He is and What He's done.
 - b. if it's not that, then it's nothing at all!
 - c. worship isn't some means of seeking a *spiritual high*
 - d. it isn't a *pep-rally* we engage in to get hyped-up for another week of battle with the world.
 - e. it's not about goose-bumps or out-doing the last worship event.
2. Worship is simply responding to God's revelation of Himself and He's revealed Himself most fully in Christ.
3. What will move us to worship like nothing else is the awareness of the greatness of God's love for us – which is demonstrated *no where more fully than in the Cross*.
4. I am going to say something that may prove to be a challenge to several here this morning:
 - a. it may be that you're one of those who doesn't really *like* to worship.
 - b. maybe you aren't a very *demonstrable* person or *music* isn't your thing.
 - c. maybe you think your voice is of too poor a quality to sing out;
 - 1) some people are tone deaf and highly self-conscious of their inability to carry a tune.

- 2) so they stay mum
- d. many people are hindered from a fuller and richer dimension of worship simply because of *fear*.
 - 1) they're afraid of what others are going to think if they raise their hands or sing out; if they were to kneel or stand.
 - 2) they're terrified of being thought of as a bona-fide, card-carrying Jesus Freak.
- 5. This morning I call all of us, *whatever* the level of our worship experience, to come to the Cross of Jesus Christ and behold the demonstration of God's love and forgiveness.
 - a. if you can stand there, gazing at that blood stained wood and not have a heart that overflows in thanks and praise,
 - b. then I'm sorry, but there has to be something wrong in your perception of God.

B. A Worshiping Church

1. There's been a renewal of interest in worship & praise in the life of the church over the last decade.
2. The modern worship movement that's broken out especially among the young has produced some really great worship music.
3. But there's a danger inherent in the modern worship movement;
 - a. it's the danger of confusing the worship *of God* with the worship *of worship*.
 - b. it's the threat of turning gifted worship leaders into rock stars.
 - c. and as has already been abundantly evident, there's the danger of the greedy seeing a new avenue for lining their pockets with cash.
4. To be blunt, worship's become big business.
5. How do we resist all this?
 - a. how do we make sure our worship stays pure and true to God?
 - b. what can we do to make sure we don't compromise with the seductive influences of the world that would pollute our worship and turn it into little more than a flashy concert that sounds really good but carries not an ounce of the Spirit or Truth.
6. Here's how – by keeping the Person and the Work of Jesus as the center of our worship.
7. If our worship doesn't exalt Him, if it isn't a passionate response

to His sacrifice then it is nothing at all!