

Understand Christ's Sacrifice

The movie *Greater* tells the true story of walk-on football star Brandon Burlsworth. Brandon's amazing work ethic and solid faith made up for his lack of talent as he was named an All-American his senior year of college and then drafted by the Indianapolis Colts. At 22, his tragic death in a car accident stunned everyone. The firm faith of Brandon's mom Barb is contrasted with brother Marty's faltering faith in the movie.

The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross forever erases the argument that God doesn't know how we feel when we suffer. Jesus paid the debt for your sin and made eternal life possible.

Three Gifts Jesus Offers Us:

1. True _____(Grace)

- a. *"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did." Hebrews 11:4.* Cain was jealous when God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not his own, so he killed him. Why was Abel's sacrifice accepted? A blood sacrifice was needed for *"without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."* Hebrews 9:22. Adam and Eve were shown this in Genesis 3:21.
- b. The Bible repeatedly foreshadows the death of Jesus through blood sacrifices. Sin is a serious offense requiring a serious remedy. When Jesus died on a cross as the perfect, sinless Lamb of God, forgiveness was offered as a permanent solution. This was pure grace (unmerited favor)!
- c. When Charles Wesley experienced forgiveness thru Christ at age 30, he wrote a song about his conversion using these words, "Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me."
- d. Abel was willing to worship God according to the way God designed (thru a blood sacrifice). Cain didn't do that, preferring to worship God in his own way. But you cannot come to God on your own terms!

2. True _____(Acceptance)

- a. *"By faith he [Abel] was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings." Hebrews 11:4. "Each of us will give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:12.*
- b. Some will be told by Jesus, *"I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."* Matthew 7:23.
- c. Two destinies are possible. *"At the end of the age, the Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then, the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."* Matthew 13:40-43.

- d. Those making sacrifices for Christ are rewarded (Matthew 19:29), as well as those eagerly waiting for his return (Matthew 25:10). Those who served the Lord diligently are told, “*Well done, good and faithful servant!*” while the lazy servant hears, “*Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness.*” *Matthew 25:21,30.*
- e. At the end of the age the sheep will be separated from the goats. The sheep who obey their King are told, “*Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance.*” The goats who disobeyed their King are told, “*Depart from me, you who are cursed.*” *Matthew 25:34,41.*
- f. How do we get accepted by God? Hebrews 11 repeatedly teaches that works are important, but faith comes first. Obedience doesn’t bring faith, but true faith always brings obedience!

3. True _____ (Impact)

- a. “*And by faith, he [Abel] still speaks, even though he is dead.*” *Hebrews 11:4.* Abel’s blood continues to speak even after he dies (Genesis 4:10). Abel’s sacrifice pointed ahead to the cross. By faith, Abel believed in God and then obeyed his instructions. “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” *Trust and Obey*, by John Sammis.

The train illustration clarifies how God wants you to live. The engine called “Facts” stands for the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for you. “Faith” is the fuel car. When you trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross, it fuels a life of service and obedience to him. The caboose car is “Feelings”. It’s your Faith in the Facts that pull the train, not your Feelings! Is this true for you?