

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The death of a child is one of the most painful experiences a person can know.
 - 1. Consider the grief of David over his son Absalom in 2Samuel 18:33:
The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"
 - 2. A parent deeply grieves for the death of a child, even if that child was wicked like Absalom. A parent's love is unconditional, and it is always heartbreaking to suffer any child's death.
- B. To give a child and voluntarily suffer such pain is the greatest sacrifice one can make.
 - 1. Our "children are a gift of the Lord" (Ps. 127:3). The value of that gift is immeasurable.
 - 2. To offer that gift on behalf of another is a tremendous sacrifice.
 - a. Of course, God forbids the shedding of man's blood (Gen. 9:5-6), and the idolatrous practice of killing children as sacrifices is an abomination (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31; 2Ki. 16:3; 2Chron. 28:3; Ps. 106:37-38; Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 16:20-21).
 - b. Small children are to be protected by their parents, but parents should give their children to be living sacrifices for God (1Sam. 1:11, 28; Rom. 12:1-2). These children bear the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and should rightfully be rendered to Him (Matt. 22:19-21).
 - c. Causing a child to die as a sacrifice is unthinkable for a parent, but the willingness to accept an adult son's or daughter's choice to go in harm's way for others is honorable. Losing a child in such service is a great sacrifice, and our nation reserves its highest honors for those who die in its defense and for their parents.
- C. Our God readily gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for us. Can we appreciate the magnitude of His sacrifice?
 - 1. God could not have given a greater sacrifice for us. Nothing is of greater value than His only begotten Son, for "the Father loves the Son..." (John 3:35; 5:20).
 - 2. Presently, let us attempt to grasp to some degree of what it meant for God to give His Son.

II. THE PARABLE OF ISAAC

- A. In Hebrews 11:17-19, the Scripture describes Abraham's offering of Isaac as a parable.
 - 1. Notice this passage:
¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." ¹⁹He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.
 - 2. In verse 19, the word translated as "type" is the Greek word *parabolē* (παράβολή). This word means "a placing of one thing by the side of another." In the metaphorical sense, this is done for comparison.
 - 3. Jesus used parables to explain spiritual truth through comparisons to familiar, worldly situations. In this case, God has used the example of Abraham and Isaac to explain His sacrifice of Jesus.
 - 4. Thus, Isaac is a parable of Jesus, and we should study the sacrifice of Isaac in order to better understand the sacrifice of Jesus.
- B. Abraham proved his fear of God by his willingness to give his son.
 - 1. In Genesis 22:2, God said to Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."
 - 2. Abraham faithfully and promptly obeyed God, travelled for three days to Moriah, and prepared the altar for the offering (Gen. 22:3-9).
 - 3. Just as Abraham took up a knife to slay Isaac, the angel of the Lord prevented him (Gen. 22:10-11). In Genesis 22:12, He said to Abraham, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."
 - a. Abraham had proved that there was nothing he would withhold from God. He was even willing to give Isaac, who was the son of promise and the key to all for which Abraham hoped.

- b. Although Isaac was spared by God, Abraham's willingness to obey God was accounted as the greatest degree of sacrifice. The Scripture regards Abraham's sacrifice as a complete offering just if he had truly slain Isaac (Heb. 11:17; Jas. 2:21).
- c. Notice that Isaac was called Abraham's "only son" and his "only begotten son." Abraham had another son (Ishmael), but Isaac was the true son of promise. Indeed, Isaac was a parable of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God.

III. GOD GAVE HIS SON

- A. Abraham gave his son to prove his fear of God, but God gave His Son so that we could have eternal life.
 - 1. In John 3:16, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
 - a. When God gave His Son, He gave His Son's life. Jesus truly died on a cross, and His body went into the grave while His spirit went into Hades (Matt. 27:59-60; Acts 2:27).
 - b. By the will of the Father, Christ's life was given in exchange for ours, for the Son of God was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isa. 53:5).
 - c. We should have died, but the Son of God was given to die for us instead.
 - 2. The gift of God's Son tells us that God will not withhold eternal life from us. Just as Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"
- B. Who are we that God should give His Son for us?
 - 1. Consider Romans 5:6-10:

⁶For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 - 2. We were not strong, righteous, good, worthy, deserving recipients of God's grace and mercy through Jesus. Instead, we helpless, ungodly sinners and enemies of God who were worthy of His fierce wrath.
 - 3. Even so, God loved us so much that He gave His Son for us. What amazing love!
- C. Consider the grief the Father must have had for His Son.
 - 1. We often notice the grief of Jesus as He prayed in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46), but let us also consider how this prayer must have grieved the Father.
 - a. Three times Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup of suffering from Him. Jesus even recognized that all things were possible for the Father (Mark 14:36), but He submitted to the Father's will.
 - b. Even though Jesus was in agony and He prayed so fervently that His sweat became as drops of blood (Luke 22:44), the Father did not grant His request. How difficult it must have been to deny life to Him who was worthy and righteous in order to grant life to those who were unworthy and unrighteous.
 - 2. In Matthew 27:46, Jesus cried out from the cross with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"
 - a. How difficult it must have been for the Father to hear His Son cry out as He died in agony! Consider Psalm 22:1-18.
 - b. How hard must it have been to refrain from sending twelve legions of angels to rescue His only begotten Son (Matt. 26:53)? Only God knows!

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. God gave His Son for you because He loves you and He wants you to live forever. He seeks to forgive your sins, and He has made the greatest sacrifice to make forgiveness possible.
- B. Can you refuse such an effort of love? "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29).