

The Wednesday Word, May 28, 2014: Love, Worship and Approaching God

Genesis 22:1-14

Have you ever heard of ‘The Law of First Mention’? It’s a rule of biblical interpretation which states that the first mention of something in the Scriptures is especially significant and sets the stage for how it is to be understood in the rest of the Word. It is of great interest, therefore, to notice that in this passage (Genesis 22:1-14), we get the first mention of the word “Love” in the Bible. It is found in verse 2 (“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest”) and appears in the context of Abraham’s blood sacrifice of Isaac. Love was not mentioned in the Garden of Eden where we would expect it to be, but rather, first mentioned in the story whose central truth is that of substitution. Thus, we are, once again, pointed towards Calvary. It is there, at the cross, that we see the greatest proof of God’s love for us. God so loved that He substituted His Son for us upon a gruesome and ghastly cross.

May every believer’s conscience embrace, with gladness, the love of the Lord revealed in this substitutionary work; "Christ died for our sins." "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "He gave himself for us." "He was delivered for our offences." "Christ died for the ungodly." "He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh." "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Praise God for our substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ! May every one of us come to know the assurance and embrace of His love, demonstrated so vividly in Christ Jesus.

But back to the Law of First Mention; in this Genesis passage we also find the first mention of ‘Worship’ (Genesis 22:5 “I and the lad will go yonder and worship”). This surely tells us that the only foundation of worship is the blood of Christ. Worship is more than singing; it is a lifestyle that incorporates all that we do (Romans 12:1-2).

However, our only approach to the Father is through the blood. If we believe that living a good life qualifies us as worshipers, the gospel has not yet grasped us. Access and right of approach to God comes only through the doing, dying and rising again of the Lord Jesus! Acceptable worship, therefore, comes only from worshipers who have been made acceptable through the blood! Only those who by faith know the unearned covenant blessings of Christ’s righteousness can be counted as true worshipers.

The truth is, none of us has any right to life and, had it not been for God’s plan and purpose in the cross, the whole of the universe would have imploded and fallen in upon the heads of rebel man when Adam sinned. I like the words of the old hymn;

“All the worth I have before Thee.
Is the value of the blood;
I present when I adore Thee,
Christ the first-fruit unto God”.

We can never bring our merit to the Throne of Grace. It is, after all, the Throne of Grace, not the Throne of Works! We can never approach God on the basis of how righteous we are in ourselves. To do so would be sheer folly since God has already brought His guilty verdict against man’s supposed goodness

saying, “There is none righteous, no not one” (See Romans 3:10 and following verses). Our only access and qualification for a life of worship and approach to the Father remains the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

“My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device or creed;
I trust the ever-living One,
His wounds for me shall plead;
I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.”

And that’s the Gospel Truth!