

A Loving Sacrifice

“²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.” - Luke 15:23-24.

The father chose the best calf – ‘the fattened calf’- and killed it. This was to celebrate the return of his son from a life of sin. According to the father, “he was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” The son, by his own doing, had lived a life of sin and regret and now the penitent sinner had returned to his father. This was cause for much celebration. As was the custom in those days, the father offered his best calf as a sacrifice for the goodness and mercy of God, and in celebration of his son’s safe return.

1. Love of the Father

The above account can also be used to highlight the great love that God has for sinners. Romans 5:8 says:

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The heavenly father lovingly sent His Son, Jesus, as a sacrificial offering and atonement for our sins. John 3:16 reminds us:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

2. Grace: Undeserving Favour

The story also highlights that the young penitent sinner, did not do anything to deserve the favour of his father, and his various gifts. This is called grace.

It is also because of the grace of God that we have received the gift of salvation. *“Grace may be defined as the unmerited or undeserving favour of God to those who are under condemnation.” – Enns¹.*

The gift of salvation was not offered as a result of anything that we would have done to deserve it. Ephesians 2:8-9 say:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

3. Grace: A Lesson in Humility

So the young man could not have boasted of anything that he would have done to receive the grace of his father. Likewise, we ought not to boast about any good works that we may have done to earn the

gift of salvation. This allows pride to take a back-seat, and for each one of us to always remain in that place of humility. James 4:6 makes it clear:

“But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

4. No Condemnation

Although he may have had good reasons to do so, the father did not condemn the son as result of his sinful and prodigal life. Jesus did not come into this world to condemn the sinner. John 3:17 declares:

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

May we always see Jesus as a loving sacrifice, as depicted in the parable by the sacrificial offering of the best calf. Be blessed.

Heavenly Father,

“Father, I thank You for sending Your Son Jesus as a Living Sacrifice for my sins. He came not to condemn the world but that the world, through Him might be save. I value the priceless gift of salvation which is as a result of Your grace, goodness and mercy towards me. Lord, I can’t boast of any good works that I may have done to earn your grace. Help me to remain humble in Your sight. Let me always be mindful that You oppose the proud and show favour to the humble. I thank You for Your unconditional love towards me. In Jesus’ mighty name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen.”

Memory Verse:

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”- Romans 5:8.

Notes:

¹ Enns, Paul. *Moody Handbook of Theology*.