

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical and Southern Studies

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SBSS

530

1. Come, happy souls, approach your God
With new melodious songs;
Come, render to almighty grace
The tribute of your tongues.
2. So strange, so boundless was the love
That pitied dying men,
The Father sent his equal Son
To give them life again.
3. Thy hands, dear Jesus, was not armed
With a revenging rod,
No hard commission to perform
The vengeance of a God;
4. But all was mercy, all was mild,
And wrath forsook the throne,
When Christ on the kind errand came,
And brought salvation down.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

The Majesty of God's Gift

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32

A man has just finished erecting an altar and has secured his living sacrifice upon it. As his knife flashes in the sunlight, he prepares to slit the throat of that sacrifice, there is movement nearby and it is a ram caught in a thicket. What makes this scene any different than other Old Testament sacrifices to the Lord? The difference is that the Lord had told the man to sacrifice his son who was now perhaps in his teenage years. Abraham sought to obey the Lord's requirement. He had gone to a special place, Mount Moriah, with all that was necessary to make such a sacrifice unto Jehovah. The son had asked his father the question, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering” (Gen. 22:7)? His father Abraham replied, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together” (v. 8). The point is that just as Abraham was about to take the life of his son Isaac in sacrifice the following occurred:

“Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (vv. 9-12). The ram was provided and offered as a substitute in the place of Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham named that place, “Jehovah-jireh” meaning “the Lord will provide.” Just how does this all fit into the sense of our text in Romans 8:32? Genesis 22:16-17 in the Septuagint translation of Genesis is translated, “I have sworn by myself, says the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and on my account hast not spared thy beloved son, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is by the shore of the sea, and thy seed shall inherit the cities of their enemies.” Abraham in God’s sight had “not spared” his son (Gen. 22:16), and in Romans 8:32 it is God the Father who had “not spared” His Son. Abraham had obeyed God, but his own son had then been spared through the Lord God’s substitution of the ram, but God the Father’s Son was not spared!

Thus, God the Holy Spirit’s use of Paul in writing about God’s eternal Son as the redeemer, He leads Paul to open a window for us in this text with reference to this Old Testament event wherein a historic human element is fastened to the mind to engender understanding. Here was a father who has to come to terms with actually sacrificing his son to be obedient to the Lord his God. God in His infinite wisdom had determined to use this event in the New Testament era to personalize His great Sacrifice.

It has been said that in verse 32 a person is in “The heavenly throne room.” God’s majesty is on display by His Son’s substitutionary atonement. Only God can make a vital difference in a world full of the spiritually dead. This world has been corrupted by sin! And God made His plan before the foundation of the world to show His mercy and grace (vv. 29, 30).

“What shall we then say unto these things? If God be on our side: who can be against us? which spared not his own son, but gave him for us all: how shall he not with him give us all things also” (vv. 31-32, William Tyndale’s translation). In other words, “If God gave us the greatest gift to save us, He would also give us the lesser gifts to keep us.” This is the argument from the greater to the lesser. So, God who has predetermined to love us, whose Son was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose Son in time also laid down His life for His sheep. Yes, His is an everlasting love. Now He who has all power will use that power to hang on to us.

There are two elements that are prominent in this verse: [1] God the Father’s greatest gift, and [2] God the Father’s gracious gifts. “This also assumes the fact as

granted, that Jesus is the Son of God in the literal sense; for in no other sense is the inference just” [Robert Haldane].

God the Father’s greatest gift was the gift of His Son. “He that spared not his own Son.” Yes, it was God the Father who did not spare His Son and gave Him to be an offering for sin. God’s very Son is His pledge of all His promises. God did not spare His Son “but delivered Him up for us all” as a substitutionary sacrifice in our behalf. To deny the believer’s perseverance is to misunderstand the purpose of God, the heart of God, the gift of Christ, the meaning of the cross, and the biblical definition of salvation. Romans 5:8-10 says, “God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

God the Father’s gracious gifts. “How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” “If God so loved us as to give his Son for us, he will certainly give the Holy Spirit to render that gift effectual” [Charles Hodge]. Thus, we have grounds for confidence in the actions of the Father and the atonement of the Son. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ have everlasting life (John 3:36). Those who believe are kept by the power of God unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:5). Our immutable God’s love is not changeable. This God promises to give us all things.

God blesses us by supplying our every need (Phil. 4:19). A person’s greatest need is salvation, which includes glorification. Even when we sin, God’s grace abounds toward us (Rom. 5:20-21; 2 Cor. 9:8).

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878) noted, “Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas for money, not Pilate for fear, not the Jews for envy, but the Father for love.”