

Sacrifice and Provision

Sacrifice

The “Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat” speech, 1940

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat... You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be. – Churchill

“All great leaders ask their people to sacrifice for the sake of greater joy” – Colin Smith, pastor at the Orchard Church

Consider the danger of a leader who doesn’t ask for their people to sacrifice.

Provision

As uncomfortable as it is thinking about sacrificing, this story is great news for those who are worried about how God will provide for you when it’s not entirely obvious.

God Will Provide

God provides for Elijah (vss. 1-7)

Vs. 1 – Elijah prophesies a drought over the land and makes an enemy of King Ahab

Vss. 2-6 – God provides a brook location where God provides him meat, bread, water, and safety.

Vs. 7 – The brook dries up.

God tells Elijah to move on (vss. 8-9)

Vss. 8-9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a woman to feed you.”

Three lessons (as wonderfully stated by Colin Smith)

1. God has more than one way of supplying your need.
2. We trust the God who provides, not the means of his supply.
3. If you cling too tightly to the way God has blessed you in the past, you may miss how He will bless you in the future.

We Will Sacrifice

A poor woman, an astonishing request

Vs. 10 – She is so poor she is reduced to gathering sticks at the dump outside the city gate.

Vss. 11-12 – The drama builds. She is extremely poor, to the point of death, in a time of famine. Even more, she is an unbeliever.

Vs. 13 – Elijah says something astonishing! “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.”

Vs. 14 – She receives the promise in response to her sacrifice, faith, and obedience: “For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’”

Sacrificing to God

The words of Jesus Mark 8:34-35

Sacrifice: If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For Greater Joy: For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.

David bringing in the ark 2 Samuel 6:13-14

Sacrifice: And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal.

For Greater Joy: And David danced before the LORD with all his might.

Thoughts for us

1. Your job as a parent is to teach your children the value of sacrifice.
2. Your job as a believer is to respond with sacrifice to the calling of God.
3. Your job as a theologian is to see Christ in this passage.

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. How is this passage a comfort to you? A challenge?
2. Where is it in your life that you have sacrificed for God?
3. Is God calling you to make a sacrifice for him?
4. How are you asking the people you lead to sacrifice for greater joy?