

I very much want to tell you why, this morning. I cannot. Though I want to tell you what is gained as Abraham raises his hand, knife gripped tightly, an instant from plunging that blade into the pounding heart of his son. I do not know what is gained by God testing Abraham, though I certainly sense what is lost. Something went out of the heart of Isaac in that instant. His Father who had loved him and held him tightly, fed him, clothed him, told him how he loved him, His father on the command of God stood ready to kill him. Why did God do this? To test the scriptures say.

I enter the hospital room, alone in that room lies a man dying. He is not conscious, able to speak. ~~ixspeakixixprayixyaxak~~ Every few moments spasms of pain tense his face, jerk his body. For days it is like this until death comes. Though I have answers for the mind ^{that connect the words} ~~connecting and pain and death with the one word sin,~~ ^{As I have the room} my heart cries why, what is gained, what sense is there in this, what purpose, why?

Her son has died of cancer. The son she carried in her bosom, nursed at her breast, gave her love and care for. ^{Why?} ~~Punishment, test, fate, they are only words that will never dull the ache that she will carry to her grave.~~ ^{only fate, there is no answer.}

Take your son, Abraham, your only Son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one ~~tax~~ of the mountains of which I shall tell you. On the third day, after the journey, Abraham saw the place, far off. And his son, carrying the wood, and he carrying the fire and knifewent there. On the way the only words that were spoken were these: My father. Here am I my son. Behold the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? God will provide himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.

It was another time, this time the wood the son struggled to carry was a cross. He did not ask about the lamb for the sacrifice, for unlike Isaac he knew that it was he. The lamb God had provided.

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and bound Isaac his son, and lain him on the altar, upon the wood

And they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. There they crucified him.

Then Abraham put ~~forth~~ his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham and he said, "Here am I." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me."

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi Eloi lama sabachtani, which means, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me." And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

No voice came from heaven to spare Jesus. ^{Jesus' Father} ~~God~~ himself saw all the pain, the abandoned searching in the eyes of his only Son, whom he loved, ^{to his only Father} ~~God~~ himself, heard the cry, the plea for another lamb, a passing of the cup, but he was only silent.

Abraham's son was spared, God's son was not.

Death will come. To each and every one. ^{For both} ~~It matters not whether we~~ ~~believers~~ [&] ~~unbelievers~~ death will come. Death came for Abraham, for Isaac too one day. For Jesus, for me, for you.

Death will come, Abraham's son is not spared forever.

But because God did not ~~spare~~ his own son, but Gave him up for us all we trust God's word that death is not our end. Jesus Christ has gone beyond death to life, so will we. Because God did not spare his own son.

Yet my mind this day keeps going back to the son who was spared. Isaac. Walking down off that mountain, away from the place where his Father, Abraham had chosen God over Isaac's own life he knew something we all must learn. For until that day he had been the center, his fathers work, his mothers care, the food and clothing, all his needs provided for must have taught him that he was the center. The whole world was for him. In that each of us are Isaac, believing all is for me, But on the mountain the heart of his father was opened to his eyes, and at the very center of that heart where Isaac thought he was, stood God. Just where God belonged. Not Isaac, not Sarah, not even Abraham.

but the Lord was above all in Abraham's heart.

That is the greatest gift that any parent can give to a child. To let the child see into the heart and find God at the center. For then that child will know the truth.

God is the center of all things. Above my life, my happiness, my needs, above all God belongs in the center. When he sits upon the throne of my heart all is well. And when he does not, then truly nothing is well.

Maybe we only find out whether he is or isn't ^{in our heart} when we come to our mountain in the land of Moriah, and we find our hand must be raised to put to death the hopes and the dreams we have cherished most.

But whether God is at the center of your heart, or not, know this, you are at the center of God's heart. For he did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.