

Behold The Lamb Of God

By Glenn Kaiser

Old Orchard Church

July 22, 2012—10:15 to 11:50 a.m.



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

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Cover Art: "Abraham's Sacrifice." With drypoint. Rembrandt (c.1655).

Some time later God tested Abraham.

He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

Then God said,

"Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah.

Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

— Genesis 22:1-2 —

Celebrating Jesus Christ Fulfiller of God's Covenant with Abraham: Isaac as a Type of the Eternal Son

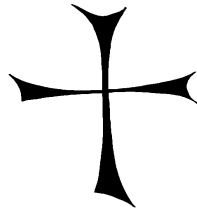
Thanks be to the Lord that Abraham,
Schooled to be father of God's people,
Passed the test and was willing to sacrifice
The life of his beloved son.

What faith! What loyalty! What love!

What an infinitely rich drama
— in shadow form —
Of the Greater Sacrifice to come,
When the Father of the universe, for the love of us,
would *not* rescue his Son
In the closing seconds of his young life.

**He who did not spare his own Son,
but gave him up for us all—how will he not also,
with him, freely give us all things?**

What wondrous love is this?



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 22:1-14

New Testament Lesson: James 2:21-23

Sermon

“The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed”
Ephesians 3:1-13

Mark Robertson, Director of Ministry to Youth & Families

Isaac as Christ

A professor at Yale wrote a book some years ago chronicling his pain over the death of his boy in a mountain climbing accident. The book is called, *Lament for a Son*. It's eloquent—and heart-wrenching—as the author lets the reader into his father-heart and the almost unimaginable grief there.

In our liturgy today we celebrate what we can see in an Old Testament story of the depth of the Father's love in sending his Son into the world to die in our place: the story of God's command to Abraham to slay, in ritual sacrifice, his son Isaac, the very child promised by God and born miraculously to Sarah. Think for a moment, about Abraham's love and grief.

Abraham loves Isaac; as his father, he loves him as himself. In light of that, just try to imagine Abraham's grief when he learns not merely that Isaac will be ripped from him, but that he himself is to destroy the son of his love. It will mean snuffing out all his fatherly hopes for Isaac—and for the offspring God had promised to give Abraham and Sarah—with one violent slash of the knife to his son's neck or heart. You fathers and mothers, could you bear to do that? How could any parent bear it? Look at the tray Abraham has set in front of him—underneath Isaac's neck—in the Rembrandt drawing on the front of the bulletin this morning; look—and shudder.

But Abraham did bear it, grief-stricken though he must have been, because he loved God more than he loved anything or anyone else. And the test of how much we love God is always our obedience to him (John 14:15).

But as a type, a shadow, a dim outline of the thing itself—of the greater sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Abraham's willingness to kill his son is not simply an example to us that we ought to love no created thing more than we love God. Abraham's passionate love for God is actually a dramatic enactment of God's passionate love for us.

What constrained God to offer up in sacrifice his Son, his eternal joy and delight, was his attachment to us, his desire to see us rescued from the terror of his holiness and from the powers of Death. Was it nothing to God to send his Son into the world to die on the altar of the cross? It was everything: he is a Father and Christ was the Son of his love. How could the pain of Abraham in offering his son, Isaac, to death be less than the pain of the eternal Father in offering up his pure and infinitely good Son to the same thing? We might protest, “Well, because he's God—which means everything is easy for him.” And he *is* God, but he's not without true emotions; and he's, unmistakably, a Father. Which means he feels as a father feels. What grief he must have known as his Son hung gasping and bleeding. How tender and deep must be the love for me that made the Father willing to bear such pain!

God's wrath that one day will come upon the world will be fierce, not simply because people have broken his commands but because behind these broken commands there lies an even greater disobedience: they have spurned their Creator's great, kind, grief-stricken, unmatchable and unfathomable Father-love in giving up his Son to death.

—Ron Lutjens