

A LOVE STORY WRITTEN IN BLOOD

A woman woke up one morning, turned to her husband and said, "Honey, I just had a dream that you bought me a new gold necklace. What do you think it means?" He answered, "I don't know, but Valentine's Day is coming soon. Then you'll know." A few nights later, she again woke up after having a dream. She said, "This time, I dreamed you gave me a pearl necklace. What do you think it means?" "You'll know on Valentines' Day," he replied. The morning of Valentine's Day, she again woke up telling him about her dream: "This time I dreamed that you brought me a diamond necklace. What do you think it means?" "Honey, be patient," he said. "You'll know tonight." That evening, the husband came home with a package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it and found a book titled 'The Meaning of Dreams'.

John 3:16 says, ***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*** Wrapped up in that little word "gave" is a powerful truth. It means *"to furnish, to give forth from one's self,"* and in the Greek it is the past tense of a verb meaning *"it has no starting point or ending point."* The love of God was a giving love, a furnishing love, a love which does not contain any reference to duration or completion of the action. It is unconditional and forever. But the gift that God gave was also a sacrificial gift. Let us examine this gift of love, written in blood.

I. CHRIST'S BLOOD DEPICTS GOD'S LOVE

(a) Christ's death shows us love's duty. Jesus said in John 12:27, ***"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."*** Christ did not shrink from His appointment with the cross, but rather He invited it.

A writer once said, "When duty calls, that is when character counts." So many have failed in their hour of greatest testing, but not Christ. This is why scripture declares that love never fails! You might fail in the way you love, but the love that comes from God cannot fail. It is that kind of love which caused Christ to fulfil His purpose - His cause.

(b) Christ's death shows us love's determination. The book of Hebrews gives us insight into Christ's thinking as He prepared for the cross, ***"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"*** (Hebrews 12:2). The word "endured" means to "abide patiently." The phrase "set before him" is one word in the Greek and means "to be placed in the line of sight." Jesus saw clearly the 'joy,' the "occasion of gladness" (in the future) and it helped Him press on with determination.

(c) Christ's death shows us love's depths. How far will a person go for love? I heard about a man whose wife left him and their children and moved in with another man. The husband took the role of both mother and father, did the housework, paid all the bills, and waited for his wayward wife to return. After living with the man for over a year, she decided she wanted to go back home. He had been praying for her, and he gladly welcomed her back. Many of his friends and acquaintances told him he was crazy for taking her back. *"Jesus doesn't quit on me - no matter how I treat Him. I can at least try to treat my wife the same way,"* he said. Ephesians 3:17-19 says, ***"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."***

II. CHRIST'S BLOOD PROVES GOD'S LOVE

In the days of Moses, God instituted the system of sacrifice for His people. There were ordinances and commands to sacrifice lambs, bulls, goats, rams, turtledoves, etc. Hebrews 9:22 has this in mind when it says, **"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."** Old fashioned Christianity is out of vogue today. Fewer people want to worship a God who demands sacrifice. It is an offence to most them; they call it a "slaughterhouse religion." Yet, in the Garden of Eden, after the Adam's sin, an animal was killed to provide a covering for Adam and Eve. Who do you think provided the coats of skins? It was God Himself! You're not expected to shed your own blood, however, you are expected to recognise that blood was shed for you. Who could love you more than Christ - who wilfully shed His blood so that your sins could be covered.

III. CHRIST'S BLOOD PROMISES GOD'S LOVE (Covenant).

(a) Christ's sacrifice brings a deeper relationship. The First Epistle of John tells us, **"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"** (1 John 3:1-2). **"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). **"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us"** (Ephesian 2:4). Also, the love the Father has for Jesus dwells in us (John 17:22).

(b) Christ's sacrifice brings a fuller friendship. In the Old Testament, very few could be called God's friends. But Christ opened the door to a fuller friendship. John 15:13: **"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends."**

(c) Christ's sacrifice brings a profitable partnership. In life many partnerships end badly. But there is one partnership that will never disappoint. When we accept Christ, we become "one" with Him. 1 John 4:16: ***"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."*** Colossians 2:9-10 says, ***"For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power."*** John 15:5: ***"I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in Me, and I in Him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing."*** Remember this, it is not what we will be doing; it's who we'll be doing it with! That is where true prosperity lies!

We should never forget or make light of the fact that there is Loved One who has written a message of love to you in His own blood. If you will accept Him for who He is (as your own), you will never be the same again. You too, will be defined by that one sacrificial act, and be part of the greatest love story ever told.

"There are three things that remain - faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is love" - 1 Corinthians 13:13