

Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship

Lesson Th224-4 Created for Relationship

Gutzon Borglum and his son, Lincoln, were given the opportunity to create one of the largest stone sculptures in the world. It would take them 14 years to carve the faces of four American presidents out of a granite mountainside, called Mount Rushmore. Over 400 million kilograms of stone were removed to create the four 20-meter-tall faces. Gutzon and his son Lincoln took great care to make sure that the faces were created in the likenesses of the four presidents. This mountainside carving was the crowning achievement of their lifetimes. Now, almost 80 years later, millions of people visit Mount Rushmore each year to view these amazing granite sculptures.

The Bible teaches us that God created everything. He began with the universe itself. We can look into the sky and marvel at the vastness and majesty of his creation. Surely this was God's crowning achievement. But no, the universe was created as a place for his most marvelous creation to live. The creation of mankind was God's ultimate and crowning achievement. Everything else created in the universe was for one purpose, to prepare for the arrival of his children.

In the last lesson, you were taught that God is love and that love requires relationship to be fulfilled. And so, God created mankind in his own image and likeness for the purpose of relationship. God's "image and likeness" (Gen 1:27) includes even the relationship people have with one another as being similar to the relationship enjoyed between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the godhead. In every instance, it is understood that both men and women reflect God's image.

So much of mankind reflects the triune God. God is the Creator—mankind has the ability to create. God is holy and his holiness defines his behavior. Mankind has a conscience. His conscience can help define his behavior. But the single greatest attribute of God that was created in his children was the ability to love. And with the ability to love, God created in mankind the ability to have relationships. The most basic relationship is between a husband and a wife. Many people view this from a sexual perspective. But for those who have been married for many years the relationship is much deeper and more profound. The marriage relationship is based upon love, friendship, partnership in life, and sometimes partnership in family business. As the married couple has children, a new dimension of love and relationship is achieved. For now, they not only live for each other, but for their children.

Jesus teaches us about another type of relationship. He talks about friendship based upon love. Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples. He said, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). This is a powerful statement. We know that Jesus spent the last three years of his life teaching his disciples. But the Twelve were more than just students to him. They were his closest friends. Jesus said, "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). For many people the word 'love' is used without understanding its implications. After telling his disciples to love one

another, Jesus explained what that meant. He said, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

One of the greatest friendships recorded in the Bible was between David and Jonathan. These two young men should have been competitors. Jonathan was King Saul’s son and the likely future king of Israel. But David had been anointed to become king in Saul’s place. In spite of that, these two young men became best of friends. Saul though, was jealous and afraid of David.

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”

Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”

Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death.” So, Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before (1Sam 19:1-7).

But a short time later, King Saul again attempted to kill David. David fled for his life. Later Jonathan would meet with David. It broke their hearts that David would have to leave the land and hide from Saul. They each wept bitterly. Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

What a wonderful thing God created in human beings—the ability to love and to have deep relationships! The first and foremost relationship was meant to be a relationship between our God and us. In our next lesson we will learn about what can happen when relationship with God is broken.

The lesson is **important** because it explains that God created man in his own image and likeness. And created within man was the ability to love. Because man can love, he can thus have relationships based upon love.

The **main truth** of this lesson that mankind was created to have relationships.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1 Who was Saul’s son, who warned David to flee for his life? [Pause 5 seconds.]

A. If you said that it was Jonathan, you are right.

2. According to Jesus, what is the greatest love that one person can have for another? [Pause 5 seconds.]

A. If you answered, “Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,” then you answered correctly.

3. Why is it important that man was created with the ability to love? [Pause 5 seconds.]

A. If you said that love gives us the ability to have loving relationships, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to have a discussion with someone concerning love and relationships making sure that you clearly teach them about being created in God’s image with the ability to have relationships based upon love.