

“Consanguinity” Sermon for February 25, 2018
 Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16. Romans 4:13-25

[picture]

10 Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. 2 So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

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Consanguinity is the property of being from ***the same kinship as another person***. It means a descendent from the same ancestor as another.

Paul was clear. We, the church of Jesus Christ, along with people from many other nations, have become the true consanguinity of Abraham. It is not in accordance with the law. It is not in accordance with human blood, but with the life-giving kinship of the Holy Spirit which was in Jesus Christ.

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So, what does this mean for us? It means that just as the early Christians were called upon to see themselves as the children of Abraham, their spiritual father, so as disciples of Christ, we are the

spiritual descendants of Abraham. The same faith that he exercised is the basis of our new life, trusting God as our spiritual mother and father. We are now one family. Our consanguinity is spiritual rather than natural, ethnic, or tribal. We are the body of Christ.

²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.

[picture]

Nadab and Abihu were the oldest sons of Aaron.

God chose Aaron’s family to serve as the priests of the Hebrew community. But they got into trouble.

The priests were to offer sacrifices for their sins and for the sins of the people on the altar. Nowhere did God command them to create their own fire. The fire would come from God. When they saw God’s fire they decided to add something to it. Chapter 9:23:

²³ Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting.

When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. ²⁴ Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

[picture]

The burning of incense was not the central feature of the work of the Levites, but rather the offerings of fat and blood and portions of the bull and lamb and goats. Why do we always feel the need to add something to what God requires, and even gives to us freely? Why isn't God's fire, God's demonstration of power, enough? Why do we need more than what God has promised?

"GODS love fragrances." That was a common saying among ancient Egyptians. To them, the burning of incense was very much a part of their worship. In the belief that the gods were near, the Egyptians burned incense daily at their temples and household altars and even while engaging in business. Other nations had similar customs.

So, God did not object to the offering of incense.

God understood that this had been a practice they learned in Egypt. But Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire. They assumed that by being the physical sons of Aaron, that they were entitled to create their own ritual. They assumed that blood kinship gave them the authority to do things the way they wanted to do them. They paid for this clubhouse, family-bound thinking with their lives.

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The nature of our consanguinity, members of God's family in Christ, calls upon to act in faith, to forgive others, to accept those accepted by Christ, and to live in obedience to love. Family loyalty, privilege and unity, must take a back seat to Christ as Lord.

As we grow in Christ's spiritual consanguinity, there is neither Jew nor Greek, Asian nor African, Pacific Islander nor European, native nor immigrant, gay nor straight, but we are one in Christ. Our primary loyalty is no longer to our natural, earthly family. To be the consanguinity of Abraham is to be a child of God's life, God's offspring, but more importantly God's future. It is that future, and not our relationship to important people and events, that brings the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Amen.