**God Wants Our Best**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Genesis 22:13-14**

**Sunday Morning**

**January 2, 2022**

**Genesis 22:13-14**

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

**Truth About God**

“God will test people of faith”

**1. Abraham’s Faith Was Tested**

**Genuine Faith Is Demonstrated by Obedience**

Isaac was a gift from God. Without God, there would be no Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were well into their retirement years and well past their childbearing and child-rearing years. But every day Abraham woke up to see his son Isaac farming the fields was a good day.

It was a visible reminder that God keeps His word. God spoke to Abraham again. It had been a while since God had spoken, but whenever God spoke, it was usually good news.

**What would God promise today?**

Abraham tuned his ears to hear God’s voice, and God said,

**Genesis 22:2**

And He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

This news was not good news. God has just called Abraham to

sacrifice his son for whom he had waited twenty-five years.

**How would he respond?**

**How would you respond?**

**Genesis 22:3**

“So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him”

Saints, Abraham obeyed God because Abraham understood genuine faith is demonstrated by obedience. When we have faith in God, we will obey what He commands.

**Abraham Did Not Understand God’s Command, But He Still Trusted**

Abraham did not understand God’s plan, but he did trust God. It did not make sense to kill the promised son who should branch a family tree into the thousands, even the millions. But God did not call Abraham to understand Him; God called Abraham to trust Him.

This passage is a part of the nature of God we rarely understand.

Saints, we struggle to understand when our God allows us to walk through tragedy, when the God who could do something about it seems to do nothing about it.

Could God have stopped the accident, kept the company afloat, healed the disease, restored the family, or paid the bank? He could do all that by sunset. He could wave His hand and empty every hospital and turn every funeral home into a trampoline park.

But just because He can does not always mean He will. We do not understand all of God’s ways, but His ways are not for us to understand; we are to trust. He is still God. He is still good. And He is still in control.

**Psalm 56:1-4**

1 Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. 2 My enemies would hound me all day, For there are many who fight against me, O Most High. 3 Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. 4 In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

**Isaac Was Obedient to Abraham**

**It was one thing for Abraham to trust God, but what about Isaac?**

**Genesis 22:9-18**

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—

17 blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

**Can We Trust God When Our Faith Is Tested?**

Saints, if it took great faith for Abraham to offer up Isaac, think of how much faith it took for Isaac. This was Abraham’s and Isaac’s greatest test of faith, and they passed the test. We do not like to have our faith tested. No one prays for sickness or car accidents or layoffs or divorce.

No parents pray for their children to rebel and move out. In those times we have very little control over the outcome. We do not know if we will be healed, recover, find a new job, or reconcile with our family. We do not know how the story will end, but God does. Those are the times when we must trust God is in control, especially when we are not.

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Saints, Abraham did not have the benefit of the Bible to read his story as it was being written. He believed he was marching up that

mountain to offer up his son to God, but he equally believed he was marching down that mountain with his son with him.

Although God had not raised anyone from the dead at that point, Abraham trusted God would. The writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote that Abraham concluded

**Hebrews 11:19**

“God was able to raise [Isaac] up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense”

Abraham trusted God when his faith was tested, and God proved Himself to be faithful.

**2. God Intervened and Provided a Sacrifice**

**God Does Not Require Us to Do Anything That Would Destroy His Promise**

Isaac lay on the altar, bound with ropes, as his dad stood over him. Abraham lifted his eyes toward the heavens, and he lifted the knife above his head. This was no charade. Abraham was about to offer up his promised son to God because God had asked him to.

Abraham’s faith was unflappable. Just before he brought the knife down, the angel of the Lord called to Abraham, and Abraham replied, “Here I am.” The angel of the Lord gave good news to Abraham and great news to Isaac: “And he said,

**Genesis 22:12**

And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

**We May Not Understand Why God Asks a Certain Thing of Us, But We Can Trust Him Anyway**

**Psalm 31:9-16**

9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! 10 For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away.

11 I am a reproach among all my enemies, But especially among my neighbors, And am repulsive to my acquaintances; Those who see me outside flee from me. 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. 13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life.

14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." 15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me. 16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant; Save me for Your mercies' sake.

Saints, faith is not believing God will always do what we want, but faith is believing God will always do what is right. God does not have to explain Himself to us. We would like Him to, but He is God, and we are not.

This story shines a blinding light on a truth that God is trustworthy. We who sit on the “The End” side of this story rejoice when we read about the miracle, but Abraham’s story was still being written when he courageously believed God, and his faith pleased God. So will ours.

**God Revealed Himself to Abraham as Jehovah Jireh**

**The Lord Provided for Abraham and will Provide for Us Too!**

Abraham and Isaac were about to watch a miracle in the making. Abraham’s blood pressure lowered as he lowered the knife and Isaac was still in one piece.

Suddenly Abraham saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. They had traveled several days from home and trekked up the mountain. Abraham had built an altar and had brought everything he needed to offer a sacrifice to God in worship.

Abraham was not leaving without offering something to God. He went over, took the ram, and offered it to the Lord as a burnt offering.

As the fire from that sacrifice went up, Abraham saw God in a new, beautiful light. Abraham already knew God as El-Shaddai, the almighty God; now Abraham knew God as Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who provides.

**Can We All Trust God When He Asks for our All, Knowing It Will Draw Us Closer to Him?**

**In Closing:**

Saints, in those times when God puts our faith in the crucible and presses, we see God in a beautiful, new way. If a car speeding toward you went left of center and you cried out the name of Jesus and God spared your life, you see Jesus as the Lord who protects.

If there was nothing in the refrigerator but a couple of ketchup packets and a bottle of lemon juice but someone rang the doorbell and left groceries on your doorstep, you see Jesus as the Lord who provides. If you have a terminal diagnosis in your medical record but the doctor has cleared you from all terminal illness, you see Jesus as the Lord who heals.

If you bury someone you love but have peace that God is still there with you as you grieve, you see Jesus as the Lord who gives peace.

Saints, none of us wants to go through those times, but when we do, we see God in a beautiful, new way. If you were addicted to drugs and alcohol and could not find a way but Jesus set you free, you see Him as the Lord who delivers.

When we were lost and without hope but Jesus saved us from our sins, we see Him as the Lord who saves. The more we give to God, the closer we get to God and the more we see Him as He is. He is great, He is good. Aside from Jesus our friend, He is our God.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**