

Genesis 22

June 19, 2022



SCRIPTURE

22 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

² Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram^[a] caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”



¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring^[b] all nations on earth will be blessed,^[c] because you have obeyed me.”

¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

²⁰ Some time later Abraham was told, “Milkah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), ²² Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel.” ²³ Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milkah bore these eight sons to Abraham’s brother Nahor. ²⁴ His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maakah.

COMMENTARY

22:1-2. Abraham’s ultimate test of obedience to God is described in 22:1-19. God used this event to affirm the sterling character of Abraham’s faith by giving him the incredibly difficult task of sacrificing his son Isaac. Pagans in Canaan during the OT period regularly practiced child sacrifice by making them pass through the fire (2Ki 16:3) to give them as food to their gods (Ezek 23:37). With this command God was asking Abraham to demonstrate that he was as committed to the Lord God as pagans were to their gods.

22:3-4. Confirmation of Abraham’s amazing trust in God is found first in the fact that he was up before sunrise (early in the morning) the next day to begin the journey. His diligence in going to the place God had told him about contrasts sharply with Jonah’s actions (Jnh 1:3). Traveling from Beer-sheba, it was not until the third day that Abraham reached the Jerusalem area.

22:5-8. Evidence that Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17-18) is found in his comment, we’ll come back. Abraham carried the most dangerous elements of the sacrifice—the fire and the sacrificial knife—himself, perhaps as a sign of his protective love for Isaac. Ignorant of God’s command and surprised that his father would forget the most important element in an animal sacrifice, Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was. Abraham’s faith-filled response was that God Himself would provide the lamb (“sheep”).

22:9-14. Abraham followed the standard procedure for a burnt offering involving a living being. In describing his preparation, the Bible emphasizes only Abraham’s systematic acts of obedience, omitting any mention of Abraham’s or Isaac’s feelings. Just before



the knife was put to Isaac's neck, the Angel of the Lord spared him. The patriarch had passed the test, providing experiential evidence that he feared God more than he loved his only son. Exactly as Abraham had predicted (v. 8), God had miraculously provided a sheep—and the most prized variety, a ram. To memorialize the event Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide.

22:15-18. As the Angel of the Lord who had the Lord's authority, the divine emissary delivered a second message (v. 12), this one in the first person. Because Abraham had passed the "priorities test" by obeying God and not withholding his only son, the Lord would indeed bless him with offspring, victory, land, and goodwill.

MAIN POINT

When it comes to authority, the question isn't "What?" but "Who?"

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Helicopter parents hover over their children's responsibilities and activities, paying extremely close attention, especially at educational institutions. Lawnmower parents take it a step further, preparing the way for their children to succeed by proactively removing every obstacle along the way.

What negative effects have we seen in younger generations as a result of these two common styles of parenting?

Would you say you have grown closer to God from the ease of life or the difficulties of it? Why?

What would you say are the top 3 things you want/hope for your children in this life?

In Genesis 12, we see that God prepared Abram to be a great father by testing him and training him on the top rung of his ladder of priorities—home, comfort, future, family, and life. These are typically the same things we look to provide for our children. What we see in Genesis and in life is that these things don't come cheaply. If our priority is ease of life for our children, and we go ahead of them and over them to make sure we remove every difficult, we mistrust God and actually "protect" them from His purposes and blessings in their lives.



UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:1-2.

From verse 1, what was God up to here? For what purpose does God have in allowing, even placing, what seems like impossible demands on those of us who love Him?

What does this tell you about God's view of earthly circumstances and eternity?

As parents, do you think we are most concerned with our children's earthly circumstances or their eternity? Why?

What underlying fears or issues might cause a parent to emphasize circumstance over the bigger picture?

Notice God gave Abraham very little information here. Sometimes we don't see the steps God wants to take us through in advance; still, He calls us to trust Him unconditionally. As Pastor Paul explained, God is asking, "Do you trust Me here?"

What are some commands of God that people, believers even, commonly push aside in favor of the worldly success of their children?

Abraham knew this command was clearly from God. Still, it certainly seemed out of character for God to tell Abraham to do such a thing. But for Abraham, the question was never "What?" but "Who?" And it was God.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:3-8.

Why didn't Abraham demand to know why God was telling him to do such a difficult thing?

What does this tell you about Abraham's relationship with God?

From verse 8, we know that Abraham knew that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (see also Heb. 11:19). Pastor Paul said, "He was supremely confident that God would keep His promise."

Why is trusting God completely necessary for confidence in parenting?

What priority did Abraham impart to his son Isaac here?



What are some countercultural ways God wants us to impart the priority of obeying, trusting, and obeying Him to our children?

Note that Abraham was with Isaac through the whole thing, and as he was with him, he continued to show his love for him. Though we must allow our children to walk through difficulty in learning to trust and obey the Lord in all things, we do it with the character of God. God never calls us not to love our children or anyone else—only to love Him more.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:9-18.

In your own words, what happened? What was God’s point in all of this?

Scripture here centers on Abraham and the lesson he learned from God that day. But what lessons did Isaac have the opportunity to learn from his dad and from God’s intervention?

What blessings would Isaac know because of Abraham’s commitment to not asking, “What?” but responding instead to “Who”?

Pastor Paul Bickford said, “Good church kids don’t change the world. It takes a kid who somehow, through tests and trials, who watches his church, parents, and grandparents, begins to cement the faith and belief that following God no matter what the cost is preferable to anything else. The more confident we are in God, the more compelling our faith will be for our children. And our faith will be compelling not only to them, but to the rest of the world as well.”

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What situation or circumstance with your kids is God asking you, “Do you trust Me here?”

What are your attitude and actions saying about your answer to that question?

Is your lifestyle teaching others to ask “What?” about God’s authority, or does it teach that the “Who?” is the only thing that matters? How so?

What fears do many of us have, related to parenting, about following God in this “no matter what” sort of way? What are some steps we should take to alleviate those fears?



PRAYER

Thank God for His faithfulness and Abraham's example of certainty in it. Confess the fears we have as parents, that we must somehow control our children's circumstances. Invite God to be bigger in your family.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we conclude our study of selected Psalms:

June 26, 2022 --- Psalm 57

