

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
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Test of Faith

Genesis 22:1-2, 6-14

Key verse: “I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me” (Genesis 22:12).

The story of Abraham is an example of *faith*, from start to finish. That story started with God’s call for Abraham to leave his home and set out on a journey of faith. The climax of Abraham’s story is found in Genesis 22. It too is an example of the kind of faith and trust that God loves.

When Abraham and his wife Sarah were about 100 years old, Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son—the child of miracle and promise who they named Isaac. Can you imagine what that child must have meant to them?

Then imagine what Abraham must have felt when God spoke to him and said: “Take 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 that I shall show you” (v.2).

Dr. Ellsworth Kalas says of this verse: “Everything about this command was contrary to what Abraham would have expected. He no doubt knew of religions that sacrificed humans; the practice was probably fairly common then. But nothing Abraham had learned thus far about the Lord God prepared him to think that the God he now worshiped was of such a character. Quite the opposite. His was a God whose very call was tied to the promise of coming generations, whose blessing of the world would come through Abraham’s heirs. Abraham had waited years for the heir who would be the carrier of this promise. For God to take Isaac seemed nothing less than a denial of all that had gone before” (from *Adult Bible Studies, Winter 2011-2012 / Cokesbury*).

Whatever Abraham thought might ultimately happen at Moriah, the next few verses describe one of the most amazing testimonies of faith recorded in all of the Bible. They tell us that Abraham rose up early and saddled his donkey, and gathered the wood he would need to build the fire of sacrifice. Then he called Isaac and together they sat off in obedience to God.

This climactic event in Abraham’s life speaks to us about the *faith that is willing to surrender to God that which we love*.

It took Abraham and Isaac three days to get to Mount Moriah. When they got there, Abraham told the two servants who had come with him, "Wait here while Isaac and I go up on the mountain to worship."

Abraham asked Isaac to carry the wood. Abraham himself took a knife and some fire, and they set off together up the mountain.

After they had walked a ways, Isaac turned to Abraham and asked his father, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham, no doubt struggling to hide the emotion that threatened to choke his words, said simply, "God himself will provide."

When they reached the top of the mountain, Abraham took some stones and built an altar. Then he laid the wood on the altar. Now, the time had come. He took Isaac and bound him and put him upon the altar. Then Abraham took the knife in his hand. Suddenly a voice called out: "Abraham, Abraham!...Do not lay your hand on the boy 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."

Abraham looked and he saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He took the ram, and he offered it up as the sacrifice. And Abraham named that place *Jehovah-jireh*, which means "the Lord will provide."

Is it possible that the Lord is speaking to you about surrendering to Him something that you love? A career aspiration? A cherished dream? A long-held desire? Whatever step of faith God may ask you to take, the God who asks you to trust Him is worthy of your trust.

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