

Life Group Notes

Genesis 22:1-14

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

²Then 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."

³Early 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. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He 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."

⁶Abraham 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, ⁷Isaac 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?"

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

⁹When 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. ¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But 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."

¹³Abraham 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. ¹⁴So 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."

Notes

Abraham was old when he had Isaac, as was Sarah. We have previously been told she was barren, she even laughed at the thought of having a child so late in life, so for Abraham and Sarah to conceive was a real miracle. Isaac was truly a gift from God. Can you imagine how Abraham felt, hearing from God, telling him to give this son, this long-awaited child, to God, not just to give to the service of God, but as a sacrifice! This can only be described as complete and utter unfailing trust in God. Abraham had been told that the nations would come from him.

Yet with his faith and complete trust in God, he was still willing to sacrifice his heir, his and Sarah's heir. What absolute faith he had, that he would give up something so precious for God.

Abraham makes the necessary preparations and deliberately sets out to go where God has commanded him to go. His obedience is impeccable. He had followed all the instructions given to him to the letter. God had called to Abraham and told him to go to Moriah. This was a long journey as we know. It took 3 days, quite a journey for anyone, let alone someone of his age! He loaded his own donkey, and cut his own wood, and then after the three days, he left his servant when he could see the place in the distance where God had told him to go. Then it was just him and Isaac.

We also can see how trusting Isaac is with his father. He carry's the wood, does as he is told, no questions asked. The alter was made, but they had not brought a lamb, they had not brought the sacrifice. Isaac must have wondered what on earth his Dad was doing, but his trust in him was complete, as was Abraham's trust in God. As we know, God had told Abraham that he would be the father to many nations, yet his trust and faith in God was so strong, so sure, so unfaltering that he still prepared his son for sacrifice.

He then took his son, whom he loved, bound him and placed him on the alter, just as God had requested. Then the Lord's angel called out to him, and Abraham replied " Here I am". He was told, because it was now known he feared God, that he was willing to give his son, his heir, his own flesh and blood, to God through sacrifice, because his trust in God was so complete, he would do everything God told him. God provided him with a ram to sacrifice instead.

We can't look at this passage without thinking of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. God did sacrifice His son so that we may live, so that we will be forgiven and live eternally with Him. The most gracious thing done for the human race, and one which forms our truth and our passion for God and our faith. But thinking about sacrifice and what I must give up, also makes you think about others and their sacrifices for their faith.

Abraham had listened to God, trusted His word, even though it would cause him pain. He trusted that God knew what was right for him, he listened, he trusted, he really trusted. Abraham's faith was so strong that he put his life, and that of his son, completely into Gods hands. Complete faith.

We have seen that Abraham was willing to give up his son, but do we ever have to give something up to prioritise God in our lives? What is getting in the way of our relationship with God. It might be something physical, like not prioritising time you could spend with God. Like all relationships, it needs to be a two-way thing. God wants us to be in relationship with Him.

Questions

Is God being unreasonable to Abraham to tell him to sacrifice Isaac? How would you respond to this challenge?

Why does God think it's a good idea to put Him first in our lives?

What things have you been challenged with to give up 'sacrifice' to put God first in your life?

There are so many things fighting for attention, how would we counsel young Christians who is struggling with priorities ?