

Facing Life's Challenges

:: ABRAHAM *The Challenge of Waiting* ::

Sermon 4 – Trusting God Genesis 22

Introduction: Idols of the heart

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NASB95)

⁵ “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Matthew 22:37 (NASB95)

³⁷ And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

This is the most challenging journey of my life, to make sure that there is nothing that comes between God and me.

There are so many things in this world that attract my attention and begin to compete for my heart.

Faithfulness to my wife is a daily commitment. In the same way, faithfulness to my God is a daily, moment by moment commitment.

The reality of tests 22:1-2

❖ Why are tests necessary?

Tests/Trials

- reveal areas of needed growth
- strengthen our ability to trust God
- strengthen our endurance
- strengthen our hope

❖ Understanding Abraham's test

¹Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a

burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

After these things, is really after these things. Abraham is about 113 year old. You would think that the trials and challenges of life would be over. It's time to wait to die, but God still isn't finished with Abraham yet. This test is not for God to see what's in Abraham's heart – he already knew. This test is to finish the work that God had started years ago.

❖ Understanding tests in our lives

God's great desire for your life is to shape you to become more and more like Jesus Christ. He will never stop!!!

James 1:2-4 (NASB95)

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1 Peter 4:12 (NASB95)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

Abraham has lived with God for many years. After waiting 25 years, God finally fulfilled his promise to Abraham by giving him a son. Isaac is now about 13 and Abraham is about 112 years old.

Where do tests come from?

Sometimes they come from Satan – Matthew 4:1-11 but even when Jesus was tempted by Satan, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for the confrontation.

Sometimes tests come from the world – 1 John 2:15-17. The world doesn't want you on the road to follow Jesus so often it will lure you with promises or try to scare you away with threats. Sometimes, the test will come as an *opportunity*. You are offered a huge promotion. Should you take it? Of course you should take it, it's God's blessing! Or is it?

Sometimes test come from within – James 1.13-15

Sometimes tests come from circumstances – no one is for you or against you, circumstances just present

themselves as a test. Again, this can either be something good that happens or something bad.

Finally, tests come from God himself. Sometimes God will put you in situations specifically to help you see whether you are ready to move on to the next step in your journey with Jesus or whether you need to spend more time in development

Often, as in this case, the test will involve that which you love more than anything else in the world. it is a test to see who is god of your life.

When Jesus met the rich young ruler, he quickly identified that this young man loved money. So Jesus presented him with a test. Give all your money and possessions to the poor and come follow me. Wow!

The principle is simple – God is a jealous God and he is intolerant of rivals in our lives.

Abraham's unconditional obedience 3-10

³So 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 wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Abraham's obedience was without hesitation

⁴On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. ⁵ Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. ⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ 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."

Abraham's obedience was in faith – v 5 *we will return*

V 8 *God will provide for himself the lamb*

Abraham was wrong – Abraham said God will provide for himself a lamb, but God provided a ram – Actually Abraham was right, he was looking forward to Jesus, the lamb of God!

Abraham's obedience was complete

God's deliverance 22:11-14

Genesis 22:11-14 (NASB95)

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing 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 raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the

place of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**God’s blessing in light of Abraham’s obedience
22:15-19**

¹⁵ Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed 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.”

Lessons of faith in times of testing

Learning total trust in God

- What are the potential “idols” of your heart?
- How has God “tested” you? How did you respond?
- What can you do to prepare yourself for the tests that will come your way?
- What blessings do you believe God has in store for you as you learn to make Him absolute God of your life?

- How is God speaking to YOU today?

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