

The Last Milestone in the Pilgrimage of Abraham

by Ian Paisley

The sermon explores Abraham's ultimate test of faith in God's command to sacrifice Isaac, highlighting themes of obedience and divine provision.

Duration: 37:03

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-18, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Faith Tested", "Obedience To God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, which tells the story of Abraham's faith being tested. The sermon highlights eight key points about this chapter and its significance. Firstly, faith is put to the test of timing, as Abraham is called to sacrifice his son Isaac. Secondly, faith is put to the trial, as Abraham is torn between his love for his son and his obedience to God. Thirdly, faith is put to the tearing, as Abraham is deeply troubled by the thought of saying goodbye to Isaac. Fourthly, the timing of the sacrifice is significant, as it aligns with the instructions given in Exodus regarding the Passover lamb. The sermon emphasizes the immense faith and obedience displayed by Abraham in this challenging situation.

Transcript

You'll find an authorized version of Holy Scriptures before you in the pew. Pick up your Bible from the pew there and turn to the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, at the chapter twenty-two. We're going to read together some verses from this chapter, and we are reading from verse one to verse eighteen of Genesis chapter twenty-two.

We'll all read it together, taking your time from me. And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and cleaved the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and

worship, and come again to you.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand, and the knife, and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father.

And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told them of. And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lamb, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thy fear is God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked. And behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-Jireh. As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in my seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.

So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up, and went together to Beersheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. Ending our reading at verse 19, and God shall stamp with his seal of approval this reading from his very own infallible book. Open your Bible with me to the twenty-second chapter of the book of Genesis.

We're bringing to a conclusion these special messages upon the milestones in the pilgrimage of Abraham, the father of the faithful. They're all on tape, and you can get the whole series on tape if you go to the recording studio at the back of the pulpit on the first floor after the service today. And you can order this message.

I'm going to bring these services to conclusion on. This is the maturest trial, but the mightiest trial recorded in this twenty-second chapter of Genesis. Please note eight things about this chapter and its great truths.

We find first of all, faith is put to the timing. There is a time for faith, and a time for the working of faith. And if you look with me at verse one, it says, And it came to pass after these things.

Something happened, and at the conclusion of these things, this great chapter and the experiences of this chapter came about. I said to myself, what? And then I discovered that God tested Abraham nine times. Nine times a special, severe trial, trouble, decision had to be taken by Abraham.

I'm not going to list the nine times, but you'll find nine of them. If you find a tenth one, please tell me. I'd like to know about it.

But the commentators and myself agree that there were nine great trials in the life of Abraham. And after these trials, this great twenty-second chapter was recorded. In those trials, God demanded four great sacrifices.

He demanded first of all that Abraham should give up his family, his land, his home, and all his kindred. He should put his father, his family, his kindred of the altar for God. You'll find that in Genesis chapter twelve.

Everything as far as his family and the past was concerned had to be given up, surrendered to God. Secondly, he had to give up Lot, who was his fatherless nephew, the younger son of the family of which Abraham was a member. Before that young person, the youngest of the family, died, he left a son.

There is no mention about his mother in the Bible, but he left a son. And God, Abraham, took the son Lot, he adopted him, he looked after him, he made him rich, he took him with him everywhere he went, and he made him one of the richest men along with himself in the whole of the East. But a day came when he had to give up Lot, because Lot made a choice to go down to Sodom, and they separated.

Abraham had to give up his beloved nephew. Thirdly, he had to give up his son Ishmael. Abraham stepped out of the will of God.

He was encouraged by Sarah, his wife's soul, to do. And through Hagar, Sarah's maid, Abraham had a son who was called Ishmael. And Abraham loved Ishmael.

He spent much time praying for Ishmael. But the day came when he had to give up Ishmael. His father's house, first.

His fatherless nephew, Lot, second. His own son, Ishmael, had to go on to. And then God gave him his own seat, the promised seat.

Ishmael, or Isaac, and at a hundred years of age, Abraham became the father of the chosen. He had waited a very long time. It seemed at times that that seat would never be borne.

But what God promises, He always fulfills. And when God says He's going to do something, not a power of hell or circumstance of earth, can stop the sovereign God in doing what He's promised to do. And then, chapter 22, God says, take Isaac.

You've given me your family, Abraham. You've given me your nephew. You've given up Ishmael.

And now I want Isaac. I wonder how Abraham felt that day when God said, take now. Not tomorrow, not years, but right now, I want Isaac.

How did he feel? This was the highest and hardest test of faith. He was now an old man. He was actually at this time at least 116 years old.

I want Isaac. What did Abraham do? Did he consult with Sarah? No. For Sarah would never have given him.

He told nobody. He rose early in the morning. Look at verse 3. He didn't even get one of his many servants.

And he had something like four to five hundred servants in his house. He didn't get one of them to serve. He didn't get them to cleave the wood for the burnt offering.

He did it himself. And he took Isaac. And he made his journey to obey God.

Every step of that journey brought fear, terror to his soul. And dismay to his faith was put. Please notice something.

That it was on the fourth day. On the third day he saw the place afar off. He left the man behind.

On the fourth day he went with his son. Why was that? Because God was going to say in Exodus, When you take the Passover lamb, you have to keep it for four days separate. And then you have to offer it.

So Isaac was offered the Passover lamb four days after his separation. Separated for three days on the journey with the two servants of Abraham. And then another day alone with his father.

Take now was the command. There was no delay, no escape, no way out. Abraham was locked in the imprisonment of God's command.

But the second point I want you to see here is not to be put to the timing only. But be put to the trial. Every word that God spoke was a death knell.

Thy son, the son of the promise. Thine only son. Because Isaac was really his only.

Take a long journey away from all and some day. Go to a mountain that I shall show you and offer your son Isaac as a burned offering. The test could not be clearer.

It could not be any more heart rending than that. This son you prayed for. And believed that I would give you.

This son you lived for. This son that you left your father's house for. And separated it from Lot for.

And separated it from Ishmael for. Abraham's heart must have been heavy. Every bit of wood he cleaved with the axe.

Was like a sharp knife tearing in. And all the way the three days of the fourth day. As he traveled to the place.

Every step he took of it to his heartache. And to the pain of his inmost soul. But Theoph was put thirdly to the tearing.

Because Abraham was torn to the depths. Every step he took. Was a step nearer to the torment of saying goodbye.

How will I say goodbye? How will I tell him what I am going to do to him? How will I explain to my son what I am going to do to him? And pierce him. And when his blood flows out on the mountain. John Newton wrote these verses.

Though troubles assail and dangers affright. Though friends should all fail and foes all unite. Yet one thing secures us whatever be time.

The scripture assures us the Lord will. His call we obey like Abraham of old. Not knowing our way but faith makes us bold.

For though we are strangers we have a good guide. And trust in all dangers the Lord will provide. When Satan appears to stop up our path.

And fills us with fears we triumph by faith. He cannot take from us though he has oft tried. This heart tearing promise the Lord will provide.

He tells us where we are hopeless and vain. The good that we seek we never shall obtain. But when such suggestions are spread subplied.

This answers all questions. The Lord. No strength of our own or goodness we claim.

Yet since we have known the Savior's great name. In this our strong tower for safety we hide. The Lord is our power.

The Lord will provide. When life sinks of peace and death is in view. The word of His grace shall comfort us through.

No fearing or doubting with Christ on our side. We hope to die shouting. The Lord will provide.

Would you look at the chapter. And what does it say in that chapter. As we go down the chapter we listen to Abraham speaking.

And Abraham calls on the name of the Lord. And look at verse 14. And Abraham called the name of that place.

Jehovah-Jireh. As it is said to this day in the mount of the Lord. It shall be seen.

The Lord. But we not only have faith here. Put to the trial and put to the tearing and put to the timing.

It's also put to the tact. Do you notice the two of them going together. Look at verse 7 and 8 of that chapter.

And then Isaac stops. And he says to Abraham. My father.

And Abraham says here am I my son. And he said behold the fire. And the wood that's on my back.

He was carrying his own crop. But where is the land. I can see Abraham shivering from head to toe.

What will I say. But he was a tactful man was Abraham. The secret was locked in his heart.

He said I cannot tell him now. I can only tell him when I get to the top of the mountain. I have to reach the summit.

Before I can tell him. Isaac was at this time 17 to 18 years of age. He could have run away.

He could have said I'm not lying down on that over. You're not going to kill me. I'm going back to my mother.

But he didn't. Abraham identified the mountain. And what did he call it.

I've just read what he said it was. It is the mount of the Lord. He was going up to the top of the mount of the Lord.

When you get to the top of God's mountain. You'll be able to do all things. Through Christ.

That strengthens you. This was Mount Calvary. The only other place that we have in the scriptures.

About the mount of God refers to Calvary. And here it refers to Calvary. The mount of the Lord.

It shall be seen. Calvary was part of the mountain range of the Mount Moriah. It was here that Abraham's faith was put to the tact.

And he just looks at his son and he says. The Lord will provide us a lamb. He never said anything of the sort.

He said the Lord will provide himself. The lamb was not provided for Abraham. The lamb was provided by God for God.

For this is a perfect picture of Christ's blessings. God's blessings on the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Calvary.

And the father says. And the son says. Here is the cross.

Where is the lamb? And the father says. My son thou art the lamb. Behold the lamb of God.

Which taketh away the sins of the world. But notice fifthly. Theoph was finally put to the test.

Abraham built the altar. Isaac did not build the altar. Abraham built it himself.

He laid the wood on the altar himself. He took his son and he bound him. He tied the cords around him.

He laid him down on the altar. And he tied the cords to the altar. And there was Isaac a prisoner.

And here was his father with a broken heart. Standing at the altar. Abraham is a type of God the father.

Isaac is a type of God the son. How God the father felt. When his precious son was kneeled to the cruel tree of the Calvary.

Oh the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh the grace that brought it down to man. Oh the mighty God that called it.

Mercy there was great. And grace was free. Pardon there was multiplied to me.

There my burdened soul found liberty. Love so amazing. So divine shall have my life.

My soul. My all. Is that what you are saying believer this morning? Take it all.

That's what Abraham said. This faith of Abraham was not only put to the test. But it was put to the tears.

Abraham kneels down and kisses his son. And he says Isaac. What's your last message for Sarah? What will I tell her? As your last words my son.

And the father's tears mingled with the tears of his son Isaac. Just before the poor tormented Abraham lifted the knife to slay. Amidst his scalding tears.

He lifted the knife to kill his son. But faith was put to the final test here. By faith we read in Hebrews 11, 17 and 19.

Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac. And he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

According. Listen to this. That God was able to raise him up.

Even from the dead. From whence also he received him. Go you back to that 22nd chapter.

And look what Abraham said to the two young men in verse 5. He said this. Abide ye here with the ass. And I am the lad will go yonder and worship.

And come again to you. But Abraham aren't you going to kill him? Yes. But I believe God can raise him from the dead.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said Abraham, Abraham. And he said here am I. He said lay not thine hand upon the lad.

I know that thou fearest God. Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son. Finally faith was crowned with triumph.

Notice Abraham stopping. God said lay not thine hand upon the lad. How sweet must those words have been to old father.

Those words wiped away his tears forever. Healed all the pain and agony of sacrifice. Abraham stopping.

Abraham seeing. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold. A ram caught in a thicket by his thorns.

That word thicket is a thorny thicket. This was a thorn crowned sacrifice. A perfect type of the one who took the thorns for us.

He sees thorns as a mark of the fall. Jesus was crowned with thorns. He took the curse of the fall for you and for me.

And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for the burnt offering in the stead of his son. Abraham substituted it. He took the ram.

He cut the cords and loosed the bondage of Isaac. And he put the lamb where Isaac lay. And where the blood of the son.

God did that at Calvary with his son for you. And Abraham shouted. He shouted Jehovah Jireh.

The Lord will provide. And he did provide. And the Lord shall be seen.

And when you turn over to the gospels what did Christ say of Abraham? Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it. Oh how glad he was.

How glad you were dear sinner friend when you came to Christ. You couldn't describe to anyone that's not seen themselves the wonder of being glad. Abraham saw the lamb and he was glad.

And then we have Abraham's sealing. God said you're going to do something Abraham. You're going to possess the gate of your enemies.

I'm going to make you the mighty victor of the whole world Abraham. And then he says to Abraham I'm going to do more than that. He said I'm going to make your seed the sovereign seed of all the world.

In my seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And then he said it's going to be the enduring seed. Two men came down the mountain.

There was no mention of the fire. There was no mention of the night. There was no mention of the wood.

When they were all left they passed. And Abraham and his son down the field. Down the mountainside.

The sinner reconciled to the father through the blood. This is God's gospel. This is the only way to heaven.

This is the only way to paradise. This is the only way for forgiveness of sins. By the blood of the everlasting covenant.

May every one of us be able to say hiding in thee. Hiding in thee. A great rock of ages.

I'm hiding in thee. Let's bow our heads. Father we thank thee today for thy blessed word.

And we pray that thou would write it upon our hearts. And our minds and our inmost souls. For Jesus' sake.

And everybody's sake. Amen.

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