

Journey's of Faith
The Journey to Mt. Moriah
Genesis 22:1-19
January 17, 2010

Introduction

1. Every day, we express faith in many different ways-whether by taking a prescription from the doctor, flying in an airplane, or ordering at a fast food restaurant! We express faith in the people who render their services to us on a daily basis. Most of the time, we give it no thought at all.
2. As Christians, it is easy for us to follow God's commands when things are going our way. Yet, as soon as an instruction comes that is contrary to our nature, or that seems utterly impossible, our faith tends to waver drastically. The Bible says that Abraham was a great man of faith:
3. *HEBREWS 11:8-10 - By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*
4. The word "called" in verse 8 in the Greek means "to call" or "to invite." God invited Abraham on a journey of faith.
5. Abraham was called by God to leave the land of his father, the Ur of the Chaldees (modern day Iraq). Abraham responded to God out of a heart of belief in this single instance of faith. He obeyed without delay or question.
6. God was testing Abraham's confidence in Him, and He was taking Abraham on a journey to strengthen His faith.
7. The word "obeyed" in the Greek means "to listen, to hearken to a command, to submit to."
8. Trusting God to provide a son was another step in Abraham's personal journey of faith. To all human reasoning, the birth of Isaac appeared impossible, but the strength of Abraham's faith was demonstrated by simple confidence in God.
9. Our journey of faith will often lead us, as well, to the doorstep of the impossible. Nevertheless, our confidence should not be shaken. God's ability to answer prayer does not depend on our limited human reasoning.
10. Abraham had waited many years for God to fulfill the promise of a son, and it seemed as though all possibility of bearing a child was gone. Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and there was still no son of promise. Yet, God came to Abraham and reminded him of the promises He had given:
11. *GENESIS 17:16-17 - And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*
12. Finally, Isaac, God's promised child, had come! God was faithful to remember Abraham and Sarah. Undoubtedly this fulfilled promise brought great joy to their lives. In this lesson, however, we will learn from the supreme test of Abraham's faith. God required from Abraham absolute trust and a complete willingness to sacrifice his hopes and dreams of a great nation.
13. His journey to Mount Moriah would be the ultimate test of his faith.

I. The Request from the Lord

1. *Genesis 12:1-2*
2. Though the request to sacrifice Isaac was perhaps the greatest test of Abraham's faith, it was not the first.
3. Genesis records three major trials he faced, his response to the trials, and God's subsequent blessing and continued faithfulness.
4. The record of Abraham's testing in the Bible allows us to follow one man's journey of faith. His response to God illustrates a journey filled with right decisions and God's provision. Through the trial of his faith, Abraham had proven himself true to God.
5. **A. A call to testing (v. 1)**
6. God told Abraham to go to Moriah, which was about a three-day journey. When God called Abraham to offer his son Isaac on the altar, it was an evaluation of his soul's commitment to God. How he responded to this test would reveal his true heart condition.
7. The Bible says God tempted Abraham (Genesis 22:1). In our day, the word *tempted* often implies an enticement to do evil. However, in Genesis 22, the meaning is "to try" or "to prove."
8. *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15).*
9. God works to bring us closer to Him. You see, true faith goes into operation when there are no answers to be found, and God uses trying circumstances to stretch our faith and draw us closer to Him.
10. 1 PETER 1:7 - *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*
11. **B. A call to sacrifice (v. 2)**
12. In this verse, we see that Abraham was asked to sacrifice that which was dear to him. Isaac was the promised seed mentioned in Genesis 15:5-6.
13. *GENESIS 15:5-6 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*
14. When Isaac finally arrived, he was a daily joy and reminder of God's faithfulness and blessing. Abraham and Sarah were not surrounded with many children. Isaac was their only child, and the one whom God had promised would have numerous descendants. Abraham had only one son through which this divine promise could be fulfilled.
15. Isaac was not only the promised seed, he was also the promised son. God had miraculously provided a son for Abraham. (Notice God asks for his "only son" in verse two. Ishmael was not the son God had promised to Abraham and had already been sent away.) Abraham and Sarah thought they were too old to have a son, but God kept His promise.
16. **Illustration** Someone once said, "You know you're getting older when in the morning you hear snap, crackle, pop, and it isn't your breakfast cereal!" I'm sure Sarah had a few aches and pains herself as she grew older, and she was definitely past the age of giving birth! Yet, God remained faithful to fulfill His promise.
17. *HEBREWS 11:11-12 - Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

II. The Response of Obedience

1. Genesis 22:3-8
2. **A. Immediate Obedience**
3. When God called Abraham, there was no hesitation. Abraham did not ask for a reason. He acted in complete faith and gathered everything needed to obey God entirely. Abraham prepared to offer Isaac on the altar.
4. George Mueller said, "Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible, There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man's power ends:"
5. *ROMANS 1:17 - For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*
6. The calmness in which Abraham expressed his obedience was due to his total trust in God.
7. In verse 5, he told his servants that he would come again unto them. God had promised that through Isaac's seed, Abraham's people would proceed, and Abraham chose to believe in faith.
8. D.L. Moody once said, "I prayed for faith and it did not come, but when I read the Word of God then faith came:" Abraham trusted the words of God and acted in obedience to His Word.
9. *HEBREWS 11:17-19- By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*
10. We learn from our text that Isaac was obedient, as well. He carried the wood along his journey to Mount Moriah, picturing Christ and the cross He carried to Golgotha.
11. *JOHN 19:17 - And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*
12. It is also interesting to note that Abraham left his servants and supplies at the base of the hill when he went to worship. As Christians today, there are things we must leave behind when we come to worship Christ. We must cast off the weights that would hinder us from focusing our attention and directing our worship toward Him.
13. **B. Faithful obedience (v. 8)**
14. Abraham reminded his son that God would provide a sacrifice for the offering. What a true example of faithful obedience! Abraham had obeyed God before, and he was confident that he could obey God in this situation as well.
15. **Illustration** - Faith in God makes great optimists. Several years ago in Burma, Adoniram Judson was lying in a filthy jail cell with thirty-two pounds of chains on his ankles and his feet bound to a bamboo pole. With a sneer on his face, a fellow prisoner said, "Dr. Judson, what about the prospect of the conversion of the heathen?" His instant reply was, "The prospects are just as bright as the promises of God."
16. *HEBREWS 11:1-3 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*
17. *HEBREWS 11:6 - But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

III. The Results of Faith

1. Does God try us simply to see how much pressure we can handle? Does He test us to determine how strong our faith is? God knows the strength of our faith. He tests us to build our faith, to be an

example to other believers, and to increase our spiritual capacity to enjoy a meaningful relationship with Him.

2. *2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4 - Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

3. **A. Abraham prepares to sacrifice.**

4. *GENESIS 22:9-And they came to the place which God had told him 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.*
5. Here, Abraham finds himself at the moral elevation of his trial; however, he proved himself willing to give his most precious possession to God.
6. Even so, God was willing to give His only begotten Son for us. Isaac, as a picture of Christ, willingly lay down on the altar (verse 9). Christ willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins.
7. *PHILIPPIANS 2:7-But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
8. God was well pleased with Abraham's faith and promised to bless him.
9. *GENESIS 22:15-18 - 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 sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*
10. Is a willingness to sacrifice an evident result of the faith in your life? Like Abraham, are we willing to serve and honor the Lord with the things in life which we hold dear? Are we reluctant to sacrifice our time or talents or treasures when called upon by God to do so? May we all prepare to sacrifice for our Saviour.

11. **B. God provides a replacement.**

12. *GENESIS 22:11-14 - 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 lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest 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. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*
13. It is important to remember: "God is much more likely to reward our obedience with an explanation than He is to give an explanation to encourage our obedience."
14. So often in life, we demand explanations from God; however, He is more likely to bless our trust and obedience than He is our half-hearted and doubtful obedience. In our story, we learn that God rewarded Abraham's faith and obedience with a replacement-a ram caught in the thicket.
15. Isaac was spared, and a ram caught in the thicket was provided in his place for the offering. By providing a replacement, God preserved Isaac and the entire nation of Israel.
16. *Jehovah-jireh* means "the Lord hath provided." God provided for Abraham, and He has provided for us as well! May we never forget that God has provided a Lamb for us, and His Lamb offers atonement for our sins. Jesus is our Lamb of sacrifice.
17. *John 1:36 says, "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"*
18. We can thank the Lord that Jesus took our place on the Cross. Because He provided a replacement, we can be confident of a future home in Heaven.

19. **Illustration** - Lauren McCain was one of the students killed at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007. The freshman from Shawnee, Oklahoma, left a powerful statement about her faith on her personal web site. The 20-year-old had written, "The purpose and love of my life is Jesus Christ. I don't have to argue religion, philosophy, or historical evidence because **I KNOW Him.**"
20. **1 PETER 1:18-19** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

Conclusion

1. Luther Bridgers, a pastor in the early 1900s, his wife, and three boys were visiting family in Kentucky. Travel over the rough Kentucky roads brought them to the home of Mrs. Bridger's parents where the happy reunion ended rather late. Worn out from the trip and excitement, all fell asleep quickly that night. A restless neighbor glanced out the window and saw the Bridgers' home engulfed in flames. Running to wake the family, the neighbor was only able to wake the grandparents and Pastor Bridgers. Realizing his wife and three boys were still in the home, Pastor Bridgers attempted to rescue them, only to be restrained as the house crumbled in flames. When the fire was over, Luther Bridgers' wife and three boys were dead. What a tragedy! During the days of darkness and sorrow, Pastor Bridgers remembered the promise of the Lord found in Job 35:10, "*But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night.*" It was during this time of heartache that Luther Bridgers wrote "He Keeps Me Singing." We can see how this pastor came through the testing not with bitterness and questions but with greater strength and joy.
2. Just as Luther Bridgers responded correctly to God's test in his life, Abraham also walked his journey of faith in a way that was pleasing to the Lord. Abraham's faith to follow God enabled him to see His mighty hand at work.