



FaithFull

Week 8 | Abraham and the Power of Faith

October 11, 2026

Reading of the Word

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Hebrews 11:17–19 (ESV)

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

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It has been said that in every life, there will be one great love, one great sorrow, and one great test. In the life of Abraham, it's impossible to miss the test.

The Saddle.

Genesis 22 isn't Abraham's first test from God. This test mirrors the tests that have come before.

- God says *Go. Get out of what's become familiar to you and comfortable. Go. Get out.*
- And then, he's told *Go to the mountains, don't worry about where, I'll tell you later. Just go.* He doesn't know where he's going.
- Then third, Abraham is called to offer something up again, but it's a million times greater of a sacrifice. God says, *Offer up to me your son. Your only son.*

For all intents and purposes, Isaac is Abraham's **only** son. Only through Isaac will descendants of the promise come. Only through Isaac will God's make good on his word. Only through Isaac will Abraham become the Father of Nations. (That's what *Abraham* means!)

- Isaac has likely become the emotional center of Abraham's life. And we all have something like that.
- God comes in, and tests us with that very thing. *Offer it up to me.*

Your real God is whatever is non-negotiable in your life.

Watch how quickly Abraham moves in response to God's command.

- 22:3 says *...he rose early, and **saddled his donkey.***
- Other places in the OT we read they *saddled their donkey.* (Here, Genesis 22, Numbers 22 with Balaam, 2 Samuel 17 with Ahithophel, 1 Kings 2 with Shimei).
- In Hebrew, the word for donkey is also the word for materialism, or our physical wants and compulsions.

So the word donkey is code for material wants and desires. Abraham's nature is to ***not go when God says go...to not offer his son.***

- But look what he does: **he saddles it.** He suppresses the urge to do the comfortable thing.
- He determined to follow God's word rather than his own heart.
- When God sends you a test, this is how you pass it. Saddle your donkey. Put God's word in charge instead of your heart.

The Firstborn.

- It's a problem isn't it? God asks Abraham to kill his son. What kind of person would even consider obeying that command?
- ***If*** this story is ***only*** about Abraham's obedience, and by extension our own, then we have a big problem.

Why is Abraham applauded for his faith and carrying out the sacrifice of his son?

- This command of God would have fallen on Abraham's ears completely differently than it falls on ours. Two important items to understand:
 - **First: This was absolutely not a command to murder.**
 - **Second: This was absolutely not a command that was crazy to Abraham.**
- *An offering, or a sacrifice, is always made because of what God is owed.*
- Over and over in scripture, God says *the firstborn is mine.*

The firstborn of livestock is always sacrificed to God. The first fruits of grain are always sacrificed to God. In Exodus 13, God says to people: consecrate to me your firstborn.

- In the last plague of Moses, then in Exodus 22:29, Numbers 3:12-13, Numbers 8:16-18, God says the life of the firstborn is mine unless it is redeemed.
- In this, God is saying: “Every family owes me a debt, because of sin”

Abraham would have immediately understood: *By asking for Isaac as an offering, God is calling in his debt.*

- The real horror here, is not a man killing his son, it’s that we are all sinners and owe an unbelievable debt to God. And only the blood of a firstborn will pay it.
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The Lamb

Abraham, and Isaac, and servants, travel 3 days just in the sight of the mountain.

- Abraham leaves the donkey and the servants, and it’s now just he and Isaac headed the rest of the way to where God has shown them.
 - vs 6 shows us Isaac carrying the wood. Abraham carrying the dangerous stuff. They are climbing the mountain together.
 - vs 7: Somewhere on the path: Isaac realizes that they don’t have something. *Dad...the fire is here, and we have the the wood, but don’t we need a lamb? Where is the lamb?*
- Abraham knew that he was looking at the lamb. The lamb was asking the question.

Abraham was asking a question of his own: ***How, God, is all of this going to work?***

- If you call in your debt in and take away the Son of Promise, fine. That’s what I owe. But if you require this payment, then how will you keep the promise you made?
- On the other hand, if you don’t take the son of Promise as the payment I owe you because of my sin, then how in the world will the debt I owe you ever be paid?
- **Will God be Holy or will God be Loving?** To be both is an impossibility to Abraham.

My question, is, *How did Abraham saddle the donkey? How did he muster the will to go up the mountain to sacrifice his son?*

- Abraham’s power to obey God is in his response to Isaac:
 - Vs 8: Isaac asks “*Where is the Lamb?*” Abraham’s response is, ***God will Provide.***
- The word for provide is ***to see***. *God is the great provider and he will see to it.*
- The covenantal name of God we get from this line is **Jehovah Jirah**. Jirah is the word ***see***.
 - Abraham is thinking: “I don’t know how the debt will be paid, how the promise will be kept, but I know he’ll do it. He’ll see to it. He will provide.
- Abraham binds his son. There’s no struggle mentioned. The worst sacrifices are the kind that crawl off the alter. This one didn’t. This one willingly stayed put.
 - Abraham took the knife, and when the moment of truth came, and Abraham is about to strike his son, the angel of the Lord called out. “*Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the boy, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, you have not withheld your son, your only son...from me.* (Vs 12)

- He realizes that he has the answer to his question. How will the promise be kept? It will be kept by God staying his hand.
 - But, what about the payment? I still owe you the debt. How will I pay the debt?
 - The payment is there on the mountain. Abraham and Isaac look over and see a ram, caught by it's horns in a thicket. And they take the ram, and it is offered in place of Isaac.

Did God expect Abraham to kill his son? Yes. Would Abraham have killed Isaac? Yes. But God stepped in with grace and provided a substitute.

- This whole story becomes a picture of the future. A picture of how we too owe a colossal un-payable debt to God.
- We glimpse it in Abraham's line to Isaac. He says (vs 8) **"God will provide for himself" *Himself?*** Yes. Himself. God will take care of his holiness and will come through with his promise, by giving HIMSELF a solution for both.

Centuries later, in these same mountains, a city will be built. A temple will be built in the city. On this very spot where Abraham offered Isaac it will be built.

- To that city a son would come. The perfect firstborn. The only begotten son. The son called the lamb of God.
- This son will have wood placed on his back, to carry up the hill. He will be caught by his head with a crown of thorns.
- And he will willingly surrender and be bound, nailed to the alter of a cross, to be sacrificed and pay the penalty for all sin, so that we might be redeemed and set free.

In this son, God keeps his promise to us. He loves us and let's us live. And in this son, God keeps his justice, as the sin debt is paid by the blood of the lamb.

- Three days later, the son is resurrected from death. So that now we don't just escape death, but we are given life forever.
- God provided himself for himself. And because of the lamb, His holiness is satisfied, His love is never in danger.

Jehovah Jireh...thank you that you have seen to it. We had a debt we could not pay. You had a promise you could not help but keep. But in Jesus the debt is paid and the promise is kept. You have seen to it. You have provided the lamb just for us. We stand in awe, and give everything to the one who gave everything to us. In the name of the Lamb of the world, we celebrate today. Amen.

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