



The Lord will Provide

Genesis 22:1-19 Hebrews 11:17-19

Romans 4:1-5a Galatians 3:7-9 John 8:51-59

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Pastor Dave Bolte

Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah his wife was 90 years old, when God gave them a miracle baby, Isaac. 25 years earlier God had promised Abraham that he would have a son; and through that son the Lord would bless the entire earth. Abraham believed that promise of the Savior, and that faith in God's promise credited to him as righteousness. That is how Abraham was saved, he believed the promise of the coming Messiah. Both Abraham and his son Isaac are ancestors of the Messiah: Jesus, born in Bethlehem. Jesus is the long promised son of Abraham who would bless the entire earth by His work of salvation. Abraham believed God's promises, just as we believe God's promise about the Savior and we are saved¹. Abraham, the great patriarch of the Old Testament, and the father of the Jews, is also the father of all who believe.

Knowing the significance of Abraham's son Isaac, it makes Genesis 22 a difficult chapter to understand. We heard some of it today. The Lord instructed Abraham to bind up his son like a sacrificial lamb and prepare to sacrifice him. Abraham loved his son Isaac, but he was faithful to the Lord first and foremost. That's why this is often called the "test of Abraham" or the "trial of Abraham." For Abraham it was a First Commandment issue: *He would fear, love, and trust in God above all things*².

¹ This is an important point to know about faith. If you lived in the Old Testament times, you believed in the Savior (Messiah) who was to yet to come; if you live in the New Testament times, you believe in the Savior who has come. Whichever side of the timeline you live on, your faith is still in the same person: Jesus Christ, who lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead for all of us! The only difference is that the people in the New Testament times know a lot more details about the Savior than the people of the Old Testament times did. But their faith was in the same person, and that is what saved them ... just like it does us!

² Interestingly, it's also a first commandment issue for Isaac. The Hebrew words indicate that Isaac could be a young man rather than a young boy; and so his allowing Abraham to tie him up and prepare him for a sacrifice is his loyalty to the One, True and Only God and His Word.

The key to understanding this story is **God the Father**, who sacrificed **His Only Son** so that we, nor our sons, nor our daughters, will die in our sins. Even in the middle of all the drama of Genesis 22, Abraham understood God's love.

Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "**God will provide** for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

Genesis 22:7-8

Centuries later, the writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament gives us even more insight:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac . . . [Abraham] considered that **God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. Hebrews 11:17

Abraham was a man of faith, he knew God's promises, and he believed that they were true. He knew that God had promised him a son who would bless the entire earth. God would keep His promise and Isaac would be safe.

And that's exactly what happened. God provided a ram, caught in a thicket close by, that Abraham used as the sacrifice. The Lord provided the sacrifice, exactly like Abraham confessed. Even though Genesis 22 may be difficult to understand, there are a few things that are easy to understand.

First, we are all like Isaac, spared from death because the Lord provided a sacrifice for us. That's what our Lenten journey has been reminding us week after week. Jesus is the sacrifice that God provides for us. He is like the ram caught in the thicket that will die so that we can live. Remember that a sacrifice is a substitute that God accepts on your behalf. God the Father accepted Jesus as your substitute, He took your place under the Law of God, carrying your guilt, and paying the penalty of your sin: that is death. Jesus is the only substitute that God accepts on your behalf.

Because of His sacrifice, you have life and salvation. Like Isaac, you will live and not die. The Lord has provided a sacrifice for us all!

Likewise, just as **the Lord has provided** for our eternal salvation, He provides for our daily life. We are dependent on Him for all things. An easy way to see that is in the simple act of eating. If you do not eat you will die. But there is no food in you. All food comes from outside of you, it has to be provided to you. Granted you may have to grow it, find it, buy it, store it, or make it -- but even these things are outside of you; and God is behind them all. *Eating is a daily reminder that we are dependent on the Lord and His love and care and providence.* That dependence on the Lord for all things is faith. You believe the Lord will provide for you because He has made promises to you. He promises to be your Father in Heaven, to provide your daily bread, and to watch over your life.

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. Psalm 145:15-16

Keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge. I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing." Psalm 16:1-2

The LORD will keep you from all harm— He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. Psalm 121:7-8

The Lord will provide for you. You can depend on Him. Not only has He provided for your eternal salvation by giving up His Only Begotten Son, but He is your Father in Heaven who knows you by name, cares about the details of your life, and Who blesses you with all good things.

Perhaps one other thing about Abraham in Genesis 22. His faith in Christ led to 1st commandment living. Abraham put his faith into action; he did not waver from the Lord his God, nor did he doubt the Word of the Lord. None of us will be asked to make sacrifices like Abraham, but the Lord does ask you to love Him, to serve your neighbor, and to grow in faith. This is how you show that you love the Lord your God with all of your heart with all your soul and with all your strength. First Commandment living is

another way of thinking about your sanctification, your holy life in Christ. You have been set apart from the world and its ways to live a holy and godly life according to the Word of God. You fear, love, and trust in God above all things. And so ...

FIRST COMMANDMENT

You shall have
no other gods before Me.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust
in God above all things.

- ✓ You worship the Lord your God
- ✓ you confess His Name in your life
- ✓ you give your tithes and offerings to support His work
- ✓ you find ways to hear, understand, and grow in His Holy Word,
- ✓ you love your neighbor as Christ has loved you
- ✓ you live your life by 10 Commandment morals, values, and ethics
- ✓ you strive to glorify God in all things.

When you live holy and godly life according to the Word, commands, and will of God, that's first commandment living. Like Abraham you strive to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

We are getting close to the end of the Lenten season, and the Lenten season ends in a flurry of significant events: Palm Sunday, Monday Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Today we remember what's behind Lent and Holy Week: that God the Father provided a sacrifice for us: He provided His Son as a sacrifice for our sins; and He provides for our daily Christian faith and life. In response, we fear, love, and trust in him above all things!

Amen!

God the Father,

we thank you for providing Jesus to be our Savior,

help us to deepen our understanding of His sacrifice and love for us.

Give us faith in all that You provide for us in body and soul, in life and for eternity.

Send us the Holy Spirit so that we may live first commandment lives in response to Your great love.

Help us to fear, love, and trust in You above all things.

We pray this in Jesus our Savior's Name,
Amen

Genesis 22:1-19

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 2 He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” 6 And 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 they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” 8 Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. 9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 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 lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a

thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

15 And 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 and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

Hebrews 11:17-19

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.

Romans 4:1-5a

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works,

his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

Galatians 3:7-9

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

John 8:51-59

[Jesus said] “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” 52 The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” 54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ 55 But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.