

Genesis 22:1-14 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. <sup>5</sup> 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." <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> 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." <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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."

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## Announcements:

1. Book Club: 6/2, 6/23: 5:30pm
2. Discipleship workshop: Sunday, June 6th right after church.

## Genesis 22:1-14 | Sacrifice of Isaac

Of all the religions in all the world, with all the great teachers of all time, how can it be that Jesus is the one? Of all the gin joints in all the world? Yet the scriptures say of Christ, "He is before all things and in him all things hold together" (Co 1:17). His story is the ultimate story. All of history counts down to this middle eastern carpenter and all history counts up from him to the present. The Christian story is where all other stories find their foil, or their realization.

Today we see the shape of the story of Christ reveal itself in Abraham and Isaac's obedience, which taken its own leads towards a deep confusion. But when viewed through the lens of Christ, we see that no greater story can be told. In the story of Christ, we see the story to end all stories. It is at once impossible and inevitable. It is grounded in the facts of history and geography, and it is unfolding in your life today. It unfolds in the life of Abraham and Isaac.

# 1. The Sacrifice

Genesis 22:1-14 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> 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."

Throughout Abraham's life he has been tested to trust the promise of God for a son. But this test is different, it is a move from trusting for a particular outcome to trusting God (period). God will ask in the most precise and costly way imaginable, "do you trust me."

The command is shocking and descriptive. God calls Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. But this is not a cold request. God says, "your son, your only son, whom you love." This is the first time that love is mentioned in scripture. **The first time that love is mentioned in scripture is in the context of the love a father towards his son who will be sacrificed.** Do I need to say that again?

He is given the precise location, it is a three days journey away in the land of Moriah on a mountain. There are more details to come, as is typical for the call of God to Abraham.

Genesis 22:3 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.

As was his habit when he was called to face difficult things, Abraham set out resolutely in the morning, took Isaac and cut the wood for the offering. Alright, but we have to ask the question. Why? Why didn't Abraham simply say, this is absurd? And perhaps even wrong? How could this request come from a God who would ban the practice of child sacrifice? I'll offer two reasons.

1. Abraham goes because of who the child is. Abraham has a clear understanding, one which his life story was steeped in, that Isaac does not belong to him, but belongs to the Lord. If he had asked for any other child, it would have seemed absurd. But Isaac was not any other child, he was the child of promise.
2. To ask why Abraham followed through, is to grasp the whole essence of the story. Don't you see this request is impossible? Unreasonable? The request draws a line down the fabric of reality in which all of what we might know and receive as true is held against this one opposing fact, "God said." This is the choice. All my own reason and desires or trust in God. Abraham trusted God, but it is not a cold trust. Look at how Abraham sets out.

Genesis 22:5 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."

Did you see that? Abraham said that he and Isaac would come back to them again. Abraham trusted God in his command, but he didn't stop trusting God for his goodness. He continued to trust the promise of God for Isaac, even at the point of its deepest impossibility. The writer of Hebrews says this of Abraham;

Hebrews 11:19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Abraham, having never seen it or heard of it trusted the goodness of the Lord for resurrection. Now listen to this next part closely.

Genesis 22:6-8 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. <sup>7</sup> 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?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

The son places the wood on his back, and walks up the hill. The father assures the son that God will provide. Both the father and the son walk together.

## 2. The Rescue

Genesis 22:10-11 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> 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."

The altar is made, and the story zooms in on the actions of Abraham's hands, as he takes the knife up to slaughter his son. But in that instant the angel of the Lord cries out to Abraham twice! It is urgent and effective. And Isaac is spared. Theologian Derek Kidner says;

The exact moment of intervention wrings the last drop of meaning from the experience. On the human side, the

ultimate sacrifice is faced and willed; on the divine side,  
not a vestige of harm is permitted.

Two things are perfectly known. The faithfulness of Abraham, and the faithfulness of God. Isaac is spared, and not an ounce of the cost is overlooked by God. In what God has spared, he also provides a substitute.

### 3. The Substitute

Genesis 22:13 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.

God provided the sacrifice. Abraham was right. Isaac is spared and joins his father in worship as they sacrifice the ram to the Lord. Look at that word, "instead." The ram was sacrificed instead of his son.

Genesis 22:14 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."

The phrase that was famous then should be famous now. On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.

How can it be, that the story of Jesus Christ is the highest of all possible stories. Impossible and inevitable. Well let us pick up a thread from this phrase, and follow it to Christ.

The mountain. The place to which Abraham was sent to sacrifice Isaac was a place called Moriah, and he was sent up a mountain there. This later was named Mt. Moriah. One of Isaac's offspring was named David, King David. He was a good king and the first one to unite the kingdom of Israel. But at the end of his reign he disobeyed the Lord and called for a census of his army, trusting in his army not the Lord for protection. God rebuked David and punished him for this pride. God sent a plague on the people of Israel, and David rushed out to intercede for his people, asking God to punish him instead and the Angel of the Lord stopped his plague at the threshing floor of an insignificant farmer named Ornan, at the base of Mt. Moriah. At Mt. Moriah the wrath of God stopped, the angel sheathed his sword.

David bought the land there, and was instructed by God to build the temple for the Lord at this place. The place where the wrath of God was stopped.

The offspring of David, Jesus Christ, will place wood on his back and walk up the mountain outside this temple in Jerusalem. Silently the promised son of Abraham will obey his father, saying not my will but your will be done. He will be bound to the wood, but God will not intercede. Instead the full wrath of his

father will come down upon him. He will cry out, "My God" And receive no response. He will not be spared.

But why? Because "on the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." The Child of promise is not given a substitute for his death, because he is the substitute for our death. It wasn't provided for Jesus because he was providing it for us. God would say to Abraham, that he truly feared the Lord because he did not spare his own son whom he loved. But Jesus, the suffering servant, the true child of promise will say;

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

And three days later, Christ rose again, having conquered sin and death. Okay so I'm not a Marvel movie expert. But I know they have a problem. Their last villain's big plan was to kill half the life in the universe. So what is the next villain going to do, kill 75% of the life in the universe? There's not much space to go from there. But here is why the Jesus story is the ultimate story. Jesus is the perfect hero, sinless. He is the one undeserving sacrifice. He dies not for his friends but for his enemies. And he doesn't just go into death to save, like a Greek god voyaging into Hades. No he conquers death itself.

On the Mount of the Lord it has been provided.