

CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2025
GENESIS 22:1-24

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A RESURRECTED HOPE



A British man once complained to a customer service representative for the weight loss drug: Loser. After a 10 minute hold time, the CSR rep came on the line, "Thank you for holding, how may I help you?" The British man said, "Good morning madam, I am giving you a ring because your weight loss drug says that I should lose 30 pounds a month, but I have only gained weight, I want a refund." The CSR replied, "My apologies mate, are you sure you are using it correctly?" "Of course," replied the man, "There's only one way to swallow a pill madam, and right now I'm a bit cheesed off." "Certainly sir, I totally understand, but before we issue the refund, how much did you pay for it?" "30 pounds," replied the man. The CSR quipped back, "Then it sounds like the drug has done it's job."

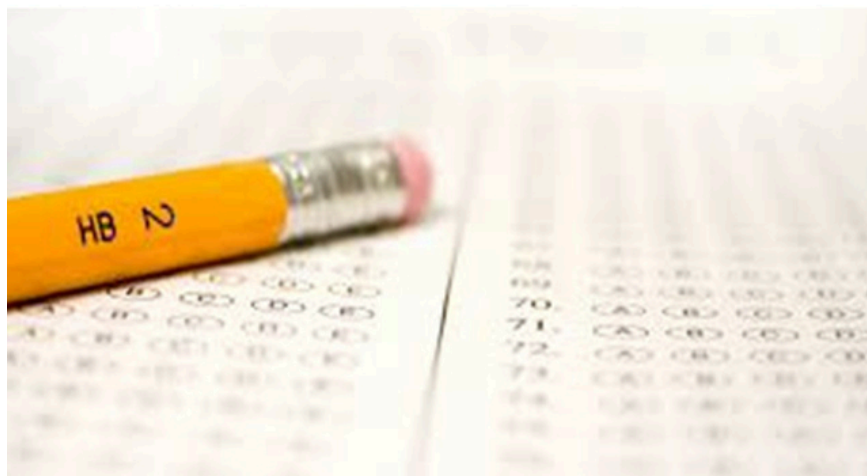
Well, just like that man didn't get what he was promised, so our passage this morning begins to look like Abraham is not getting what he was promised.

This passage has to be one of the most profound yet confusing chapters in the whole Old Testament at least, but in it we see: a Test, Faithfulness, and a Resurrected Hope, which all culminates in a Picture. First comes the test.

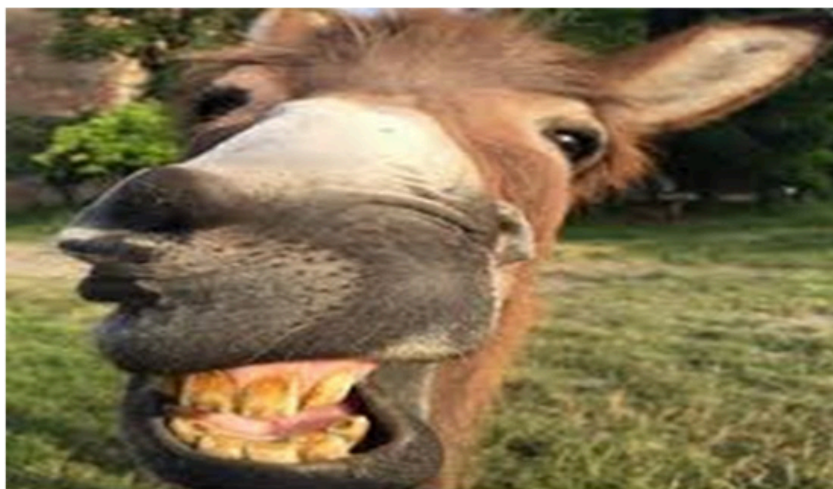
Verses 1-2: Abraham, the friend of God is once again put to the test. The first test ever faced by Abraham was one of trust **12:1-3**. God called Abraham to leave his homeland, to go to a place he has never been, to trust in a God he had never heard of, or at least—had not known, and, just like in our passage this morning, he wouldn't know what land it was until he got there. Abraham had some challenges on his way: Would he completely leave his father's house? Would he go straight to the land God called him to? No, but eventually, carefully, perhaps reluctantly, fearfully, he arrived to the land God promised him.

Abraham was told he would be a great nation, that his descendants would be like the stars of the heaven, but he was tested again later in **Genesis 12**, and also in **chapter 20**, when he refused to call Sarah his wife, instead telling the half-truth (full lie) that Sarah was only his sister. If it had not been for God's intervention, Abraham would have ruined the promise.

But isn't it a wonderful thing that the promise rests on the One Who promised, and not the one given the promise?



Abraham was tested in another way in **chapter 16**, where Sarah gave him Hagar, her servant, and taking matters into his own hand, Abraham listens to his wife, and takes Hagar as another wife, having a child with her. A child later described as a wild donkey of a man, who would prove to be an issue for Abraham's yet to be promised child.



And now we enter Abraham's final test **verses 1-2**

What would Abraham have learned from these former tests? Lets move on in our text to the point of Faithfulness **verses 3-10**

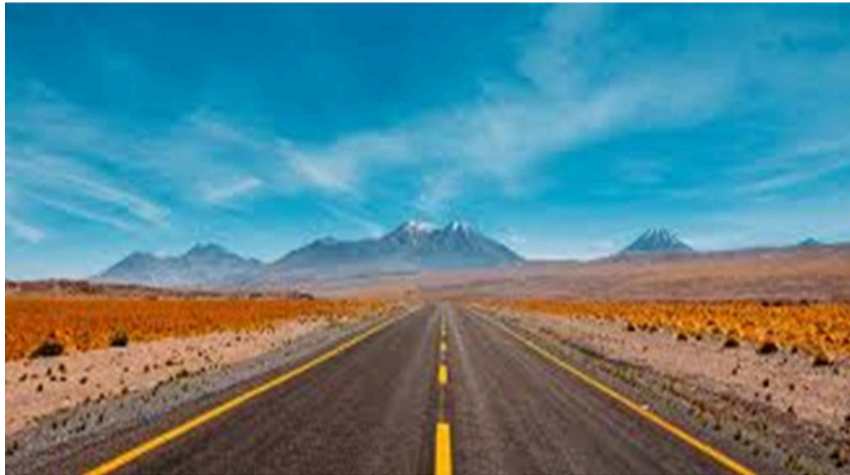
At this point, the story seems to slow down, to begin narrating unnecessary details, to zero in on the pain surely going through a soon-to-be bereaved father.



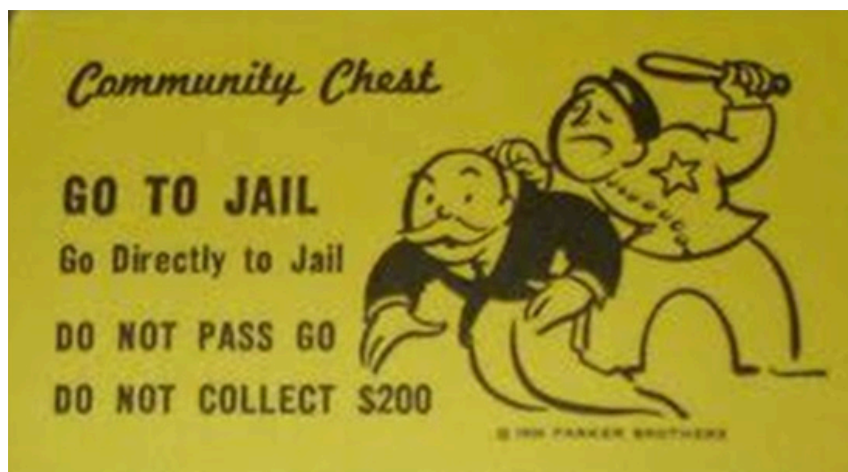
Abraham gets up early, saddles his donkey. Takes two servants and his son—that's right—Isaac. Then he chops some wood – how can you offer a burnt offering unless you have wood?



Then he sets out for the journey, and on the **THIRD** day, Abraham sees the place. God has proved Himself faithful to once again show Abraham a place he was not sure where it was until he got there. Perhaps Abraham had hoped the journey would take 3 weeks, 3 months, 3 years, but no, 3 days.



No prolonging this journey like he had the first, no half-truths (full lies) bringing Ishmael instead of Isaac, like his sister/wife and Hagar. No, this time Abraham gets straight to work, goes straight to the mountain, and raises the knife.



In **chapter 17**, God promises Abraham another son, but what does he do? He protests, "May Ishmael live before You." But God says, "No." In **chapter 18**, Abraham bargains with God, protests that He not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, for there might be even 10 righteous there. But no protest here. **Verses 1-2**

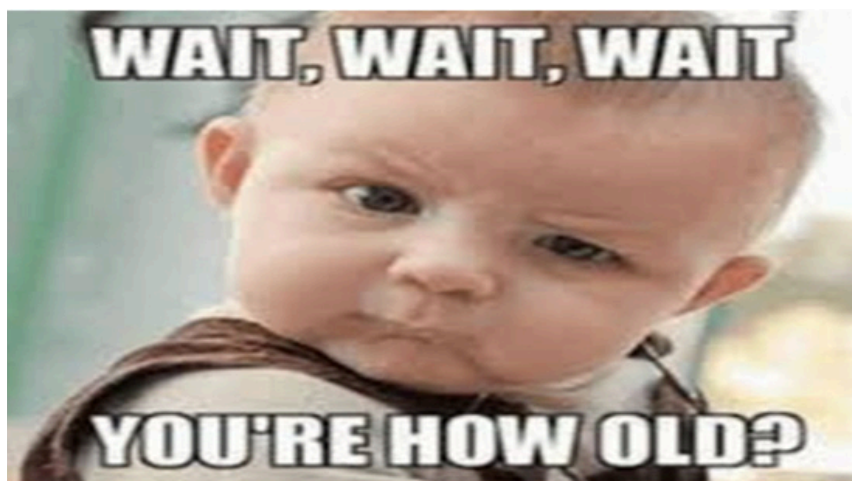


This would have been the perfect time for the Abraham we have grown accustom to, “But Lord, spare the boy, take my wife instead.” “Lord, spare his life, isn’t he righteous before You?” Or even, “No Lord, but take my life instead.” Silently, he walks with the boy, hand in hand, up the hill to the place of sacrifice.



Verses 3-5: Early in the morning. Without delay, Abraham obeys the call of God, to take his son, his only son, whom, he loves—by the way—and obeys the call of God.

Verses 6-9: Now we have another picture of trust and faithfulness emerging from this story. Not only is Abraham being tested to trust, but so is his son Isaac. How old was Isaac here?



I mean, at this point, Isaac is only 34 verses old, one chapter—that is. The Hebrew word translated here as servant is the word Naar, which actually means young man. This is the same word used of Isaac in **verse 5**



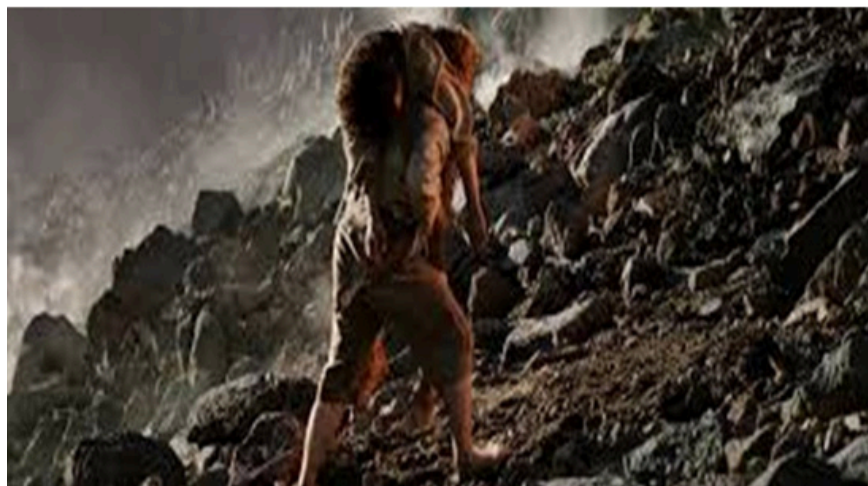
So was Isaac a boy? A teenager? Well, Josephus says that Isaac was 25 years old at this time. A Jewish Midrash—which just means commentary—says that he was 37 years old.



They get that number because Sarah was 90 years old when she gave birth to Isaac, and dies in the very next chapter at 127. This Midrash argues that the fake news – yep, fake news has been around a long time—but the fake news of her son's death is what killed her.



So what age was he? That is all speculation, but what we do know, is that he was able to make this journey, walk up a mountain, and carry the wood all the way up said mountain. And as they go up the mountain, Isaac finally breaks the silence **Verses 7-8**

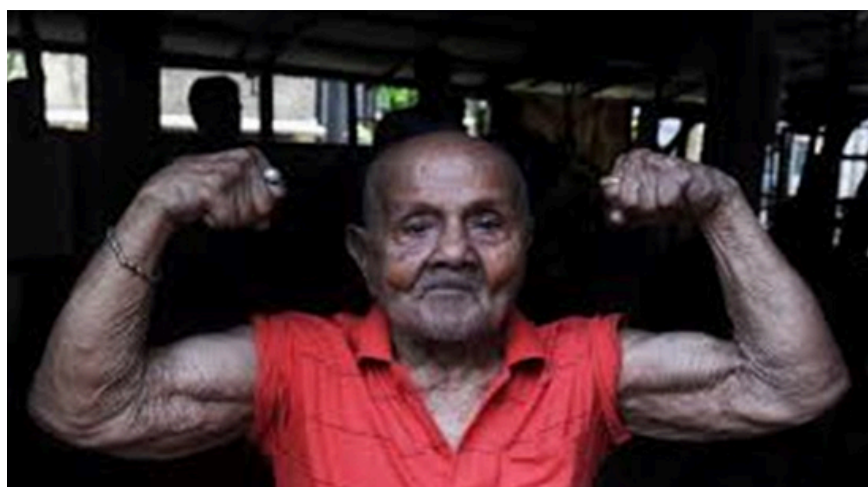


At this point, I wonder what was going through Isaac's head. Did he truly trust his father, that God would provide a sheep, or did it begin to dawn on him that he wasn't going to come down that mountain? We know from reading the Bible, that child sacrifice was a common practice among the religions of the world at the time of Abraham. The gods Molech and Chemosh for example. It was so common, that in **Judges 11**, the judge Jephthah thinks the LORD would be pleased with a human sacrifice and offers his daughter to Him **Judges 11:29-40**



But whether Isaac, at this point, knew that it was he who was supposed to be the sheep for the burnt offering, we just don't know, but he is about to. **Verses 9-10**

So here we have a 100 year old man tying his son to an altar, and no sheep. If he didn't know it before, he knows it now, Isaac, himself, is the sheep for slaughter. But though his dad is 100 years old, and Isaac is likely old enough to put his pops in his place, he does not resist. You could say that it was love that held Isaac there, not the bands. Isaac, a fully submissive-obedient son, lets his father do what he would with him.



Interestingly, the word for tie is Aqedah, and it is used only here in the whole Bible. There are plenty of stories of binding, for example, Samson was tied up a few times before they cut his hair, some of the prophets were tied up and arrested, and Zedekiah, the last king of Judah was surely tied up when his sons were killed in front of him and his eyes were put out. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up when they were thrown into the furnace, but none of those stories used this word. That shows that this story is a one of a kind story, and is known in Jewish communities as the Aqedah.



But once he allowed himself to be bound, **Verse 10**

What strikes me about this part of the story, is that Abraham is ready to do this thing with Isaac fully conscious. I mean, come on, hit him in the head with a rock or something first. Does he want to watch the life leave his son's eyes? It seems almost detrimental to the story, that not only Abraham is faithful, but Isaac is fully obedient, to the death, after the walk, after the binding, after the knife is raised in the air, until it comes down and deals it's blow. But it is at that moment, knife high in the air, that we see a resurrected hope **Verses 11-18**

Knife in the air, Abraham hears his name called out, "Abraham, Abraham!" Surely, in a trance of emotionless will power, Abraham, hears his name and wakes up from the nightmare that has haunted the last 3 days.



With anticipation, he calls out, Hineniy , or, in English, "Behold, me!" **Verse 12**



Verses 13-14: You have to wonder, how long has this ram been in the thicket?



Was it there before he arrived, but Abraham was so set on doing what God had called him to do, and not deviating from the command? After all, God did not call him to go offer a ram in a thicket, but his son, his only son, the son that he loved. Did it stumble into the thicket at this moment? Perhaps, but one thing we know: this ram was caught by the curse. **Genesis 3:17b-18** Thorns, thistles, thickets are a result of the curse, if not for the curse, this ram would not have been caught by its horns, if not for the curse, even if the ram was caught in an apple tree, there would be no need for it, because there would be no need for a sacrifice. The only reason this ram is caught is because of the curse on man.



Abraham then goes on to name the place, Yahweh Yireh, which means the Lord will provide, or more rudimentary: The Lord will see to it. The word Yireh means, "He will see." In fact, the word Moriah, is a participle of the word Ra and Yah, meaning, "Seen of the LORD," or "the LORD was seen." And the picture is getting clearer and clearer as we read the story, but first, the LORD resurrects the hope, by confirming, once again, what He had promised to Abraham, this time with an oath by His own Name **Verse 15-18**

יְרֵאָה
JIREH

Most of this promise has already been said before, but this time He makes the addition of Abraham's descendants being like the sands of the seashore. I don't know which is more, the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore, but it means a whole lot!



Verses 19-24: These last few verses set up the provision to continue the promise, as Isaac will soon need a wife, otherwise, the promise cannot continue.



But as we consider all of this, what do we learn about Abraham? What do we learn about this test? Well, I am so glad you asked.

When we reflect over the stories of Abraham, we see that he is a liar, a half-hearted husband, a protester, a coward, and an opportunist. Is this coming out again in this story? Is he going to offer Isaac because he doesn't care about him, kind of like he was so easily willing to give up Sarah to a couple of pagan leaders? Is he lying to the servants in **verse 5** like he lied to those pagan leaders about Sarah? Or, had this old, crippled man finally learned to trust that God was going to fulfill His promise? I think there are a few clues in this story that help us determine what is going on here.



The first clue comes from **verses 3-4**

Abraham did not delay to do what God told him to do. There was no wishy-washy, half-hearted protest from Abraham, he just got up and did what God called him to do.

The next clue comes from **verse 5**

Abraham tells the servants that he and the boy will go to worship and we, yes, we will come back. Is he lying again, or does he really believe that they were both coming back?

The next clue is **verse 8**

God will provide the sheep. Sure, God provided Isaac to Abraham, but he is not a sheep.

How about a clue from God's promise to Abraham in **chapter 17**, which would have been told to Abraham before this event **Genesis 17:15-19**

Before Isaac was even born, Abraham protested to God that it not be Isaac, but that it be Ishmael, but God reiterated that it was going to be Isaac, and only Isaac, who would be the promised child.

How about one more clue from the New Testament, **Hebrews 11:17-19**

Based on these clues, I believe God had tested Abraham time and again, so that He might sanctify Abraham, so that he might learn obedience, and teach that obedience to his children, and his children to their children, and their children, on and on. While I am sure it was hard, I believe that Abraham heard the call of God, expected to kill Isaac, but then God would raise him from the dead. Except, he didn't have to kill him. He didn't have to rise from the dead, and here now comes the full picture.



God calls Abraham to take his son, his only son, whom he loves. Sound familiar? **Matthew 3:17, John 1:18, John 3:16.**

Abraham saddles a donkey and takes his son to the place of sacrifice. Sound familiar? **Luke 19:28-36**

Abraham places the wood for the burnt offering on the shoulders of Isaac, and he carries it up the hill. Sound familiar? **John 19:16-18**

Abraham binds his son to the wood. Sound familiar?

Abraham tells his son, "The LORD will provide the Lamb." Sound familiar?

Abraham receives his son back from the dead—metaphorically—on the third day. Sound Familiar?

God is the one Who calls to Abraham, and tells him to sacrifice his son, his only son, the one he loves, but it is the Angel of the LORD—Jesus—Who stops Abraham from killing Him, and reconfirms the covenant to Abraham.



The story of Abraham sacrificing his son, is the story of God sacrificing His Son, but though the knife from Abraham's hand never descended, the proverbial axe from God's hand dealt the blow to His Son. When one reads the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, you cannot but look at Jesus. What would this story mean to a Jew who does not know Jesus? It doesn't make any sense. Only that Abraham's son was spared because God's Son was not. You and I are spared because God's Son was crucified. But that is not the end of the story. 3 days after He was crucified, God raised Him from the dead. In the same way that Abraham received his son—metaphorically—from the dead, so God received His Son from the dead, and promises you and I that He will raise us too.

So, how does this message apply to me?

Sanctification: Just like God used tests to shape Abraham into His image, so He uses tests to shape us into His image. **James 1:2-4** A test should be seen as an opportunity, not an obstacle.

Teach obedience: Our culture says that you are a product of where you grew up, and in a way, that's true. Brothers and sisters, if we don't teach our children about God, and the Biblical way of looking at things, they will learn it from Social Media, television, peer groups at school. The topics that we are afraid of, puberty, sex, abortion, etc. We want to be the ones to teach our children, and I am telling you what, the average age that a child first views porn is 11, and you don't want them to learn what sex and marriage is through pornography. The younger our children are when we teach them things the better. Of course, consider their maturity level, and what they can understand, but a picture is worth a thousand words, so when they see that, our work is much harder.

Faith: The story of Abraham is the story of a man who believed even when he did not see the outcome. He believed, even though it looked the opposite. Maybe you have a wayward loved one. Maybe you have a hard time making ends meet. Maybe you desire a spouse, and there is no one in sight. Trust in God. If God has promised, you can take that to the bank, even when the outcome looks bleak.

If He is your delight, He will give you the desires of your heart. What you will find, is that the more you delight in Him, the more He becomes your greatest desire, and no one can take Him from you. In the midst of political turmoil, assassinations, growing threats around the world, UAPs, we can trust that God still sits on His throne. Uncontested, undefeated, without match, without worry this is still our Father's world, and we can have bold confidence, not to take up arms and fight, but to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because just as Abraham believed God—though his body was good as dead—and it was counted to him as righteousness, so it is counted to us as righteousness, who believe that God raised Christ from the dead, and will raise us up with Him! Christianity has outlived it's undertakers for 2 thousand years, and will remain in eternity.



If you know Christ, this promise is yours. If you do not yet know Christ, I want to give you an opportunity, right now, to make this promise your own.