



Date: 3-10-2024

Scripture: Genesis 22: 1-19 (LSB)

Sermon Title: The Grace to Grow

Genesis 22:1-6 (LSB)

1 Now it happened after these things, that God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go forth to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split 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 a distance. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there; and we will worship, and we will return to you." 6 Then Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and put it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

Galatians 4:29 (LSB)

29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh was persecuting him [who was born] according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

Testing:

Temptation:

2 Chronicles 3:1 (LSB)

1 Then Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [Yahweh] had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

The faith of Abraham had _____ to the point he didn't _____ to trust God.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (LSB)

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only [son], 18 to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise [people] even from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he also received him back.

John 19:17 (LSB)

17 They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

Genesis 22:7-8 (LSB)

7 Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

Hebrews 11:1-2 (LSB)

1 Now faith is the assurance of [things] hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

Faith is _____ in the absence of _____ the whole plan.

Genesis 22:9-19 (LSB)

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood and bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the boy, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, [there was] a ram after [it had been] caught in the thicket by its horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Yahweh Will Provide, as it is said this day, "In the mount of Yahweh it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of Yahweh called to

Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares Yahweh, because you have done this thing and have not spared your son, your only one, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have listened to My voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and walked together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.

1 Samuel 15:22 (LSB)

22 And Samuel said, "Has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, [And] to heed than the fat of rams.

John 1:29 (LSB)

29 On the next day, he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

God's _____ comes after the step of _____.

The Phases of Faith:

Faith Phase 1: Dream

How does God build your faith? He always starts with a dream. Nothing happens until you start dreaming. You have to get an idea, a vision, a goal, or a target. When God wants to work in your life, he gives you a dream about what he wants you to do and the impact he wants you to have in the world.

Faith Phase 2: Decision

You have to make the decision to go for it! Nothing will happen to your dream until you wake up and put it into action. For every ten dreamers in the world, there is only one decision maker. The only way to move forward in faith is to decide to take a risk.

Faith Phase 3: Delays

When you pursue your dream, there is always a waiting period. Why does God make you wait? Because God wants to work on *you* before he works on your project. The purpose of the delay phase is to teach you to trust God and to be patient with his timing. How you handle God's waiting rooms of life is a clear measure of the strength of your faith.

Faith Phase 4: Difficulties

Not only will you have to wait, but you will also have problems while you're waiting. There are problems even when your dream lines up with God's dream, because God is working on your faith and character. Finally, the difficulties become so bad that you come to your limit. You've tried everything, you've exhausted all your options ... and now you've reached the fifth phase of faith.

Faith Phase 5: Dead Ends

In the dead-end phase, the situation deteriorates from difficult to impossible. If you are at this stage, congratulations! You are in good company. Even the apostle Paul experienced dead ends. He wrote, "*We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*" (See 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.)

God not only can raise people from the dead physically but also can raise people from the dead emotionally. He can raise a dead marriage. He can resurrect a dead career. He can breathe new life where all hope has died.

Faith Phase 6: Deliverance

In the end, God delivers. He performs a miracle. He provides a solution. God loves to turn crucifixions into resurrections, hopelessness into victory, and dead ends into deliverance. Why? Because he gets the glory.

Life Group Questions:

Get to know you question (optional):

1. Discuss a time that you took a step of faith?
2. Read Genesis Chapter 22:1-19 (prior to life group): When you read through the scripture take note of anything interesting, unique, or questions that come to mind when reading. Take some time and dig in deeper in the following areas.

Read Gen 22:4 – List and discuss other places in the Bible where this same time frame (3 days) is used. What is being communicated in the pattern?

Why do you think that God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Is it wrong that God would ask this? Why or why not.

3. How does God build our faith? In what ways do we participate? Are you comforted or discouraged with it taking a lifetime to develop our faith?

Temptation, Testing

“Temptation” and “testing” (both Heb. *nsh*; Gk. *peirázō*) denote one of the important aspects of the relation between God and human beings in the Bible. Whereas human beings are not supposed to test God (Deut. 6:16), God tests human beings’ faithfulness with various tools such as hardship or difficult commands. If they overcome the temptation to turn back against God in the face of these difficulties, they will prove their steadfastness and pass the divine testing.

In the Exodus tradition, God is frequently portrayed as testing the Israelites (e.g., Exod. 15:22–26; 16:1–5; 20:18–21). According to Deuteronomistic interpretation, these divine testings have pedagogical purpose: God tests people to discipline and benefit them (e.g., Deut. 8:2–6). This interpretation became popular in later biblical traditions (e.g., Sir. 4:11–19; Wis. 3:1–9; Jdt. 8:25–27). The most famous testing stories in the OT, however, are those of Abraham and Job. God tests Abraham by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. 22:1–2). God gives permission to the Adversary (Heb. *kāṭān*), one of God’s court ministers (“sons of God,” Job 1:6; 2:1), to test Job with the severest afflictions (1:12; 2:6). Both Abraham and Job prove themselves faithful to God and are rewarded (Gen. 22:15–18; Job 42:11–17).

All of the Synoptic Gospels record that immediately after his baptism and just before beginning his public ministry Jesus is tested by the devil, also called Satan or the tempter (Mark 1:12–13; Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). In the longer version of the story (i.e., in Matthew and Luke) the devil tests Jesus with three temptations, all of which Jesus resolutely succeeds in overcoming. It is noteworthy that God is involved in Jesus’ temptations by the devil, as Matt. 4:1 explicitly states that the Spirit took Jesus to the desert so that the devil might tempt him.

According to the Synoptics, Jesus confronted and overcame temptations not only at the beginning but throughout his ministry. In these later temptations, God’s involvement is no longer clear and human beings, not the devil, appear as the tempters. Jesus’ compatriots test him by asking him for a sign from heaven (Mark 8:11; Matt. 16:1; Luke 11:16) or by asking difficult legal questions (e.g., Matt. 19:3; 22:35). Although “temptation” or related words are not explicitly used, two important events strongly suggest that they meant to be understood as temptations Jesus suffered. When Peter rebukes Jesus, who has just foretold his passion, death, and resurrection, Jesus rebukes Peter with the same words that he used when the devil tempted him (Matt.

4:10): “Get behind me, Satan!” (Mark 8:33; Matt. 16:23). Similarly, while Jesus is on the cross, Jewish leaders mock him with words reminiscent of the devil’s temptation (Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:9), saying that if Jesus is the Christ he can come down from the cross (Mark 15:32; Matt. 27:42–43; Luke 23:35). In the OT it is always by the directive of God’s own will that humans are tested, but God’s purpose in testing is positive, never meant to seduce humans to do evil. This is not always true in postbiblical Jewish literature and the NT. In several documents from postbiblical Judaism (e.g., 1-2 Enoch, 2 Baruch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Martyrdom of Isaiah, and esp. Qumran), a personified evil figure, identified with various names such as Beliar, Belial, Satan, Azazel, or Mastema, appears as the tempter in the eschatological tribulations. As the ruler of the present age, the personified evil aims to seduce God’s people to do evil against God’s own will. The concept of temptation here becomes almost synonymous with “sin” or “evil.” Early Christians interpreted their persecutions in the same perspective, while eagerly awaiting the return of Christ which would consummate the eschatological reign of God (e.g., Matt. 6:13; Luke 22:40; 1 Pet. 1:6–7). Christians believed that Christ, who himself experienced temptations in every aspect (Heb. 4:15; cf. Luke 22:28), would help them to overcome the testings (Heb. 2:18).

Bibliography. J. B. Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus in Early Christianity*. JSNT Sup 112 (Sheffield, 1995).

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