

The Gift that Keeps on Giving: Be Loving

Genesis 22:1-14

January 3, 2010

Intro: Be Loving...this story...where God tells Abraham to kill, sacrifice his own son!

- Grew up thinking, "What a hard story."
- People throughout the ages have done so much with this story!
 - Some Rabbi's and scholars have denied it's accuracy and or truth
 - Muslims attempt to place Ishmael as the one who is almost sacrificed
 - Comedian Woody Allen, wrote a comical version
 - Even Family Guy has referenced it in an awful way
- Why this story from the OT to talk about being Loving?
- Simply put, if you understand the story, what it is truly about...you will see it as one of the strongest biblical examples of God's love for you and I.

John 5:39 - ***"You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!"***

Genesis 22:1-14

1) Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called.

"Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

- This is the climatic story, the completion of testing that God has given to Abraham.
- James 2:21-23 - says that Abraham is shown to be "right with God" by his actions on this exam!
- NOT tempted!! Tested.
- How do you distinguish a test from God and just life circumstances?
 - Markers: Moves you forward in your faith, strong feeling that God is calling you to something, confirmation from another believer.
- Strongest advice: Always do the right thing, honor God in whatever you do and say!

2) "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

- Muslims use this phrase "only son" to indicate Ishmael, that this story preceded Isaac, since Ishmael was Abraham's first son. However...Isaac is Abraham's "only son" of promise. Isaac is the son whom God chooses to bless Abraham through.
- Land of Moriah? Why here? It would be a 3 day journey, why not somewhere close by? Many scholars believe that the site in which Abraham will offer Isaac is the site of where Jerusalem would be and which the Temple is built:
 - **2 Chronicles 3:1**
 - **1 Chronicles 21-22:1** (see vs. 26 & 27)
- Remember the word I taught you guys last year: Propitiation? It is a sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God.
- This would test not only Abraham's obedience & faith, but his love for God.

3) The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.

- Abraham's obedience to God is immediate!
- Sometimes it's good to take a few weeks to pray, other times the call is so strong in your spirit, it requires immediate action!
- Where is his list of pros & cons?
- Shouldn't he consult someone? Counsel with someone? Doesn't this plan, seem outlandish? You realize the tragedy of this event...Isaac is it!!! Abraham has waited all these years for a son and God give him a son, now only to call on Abraham to sacrifice him!
- I guess the more in tune you are with God's voice, there are no pros & cons, no lists, no counsel, if you know it is God...you either obey or you don't.
- I guess when you have total faith and trust in God, it's an easier decision to sacrifice your son, build a big boat, lead others in the desert, face a giant...
- This was a faith moment test! When was the last time your faith was tested? How did you do? It's not ABCDF, it's pass or fail, isn't it?

4) On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5) "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

- "we" will be back
- Abraham trusted in God so much - Hebrews 11:17-19
- God is in control!
- What if...?
- Abraham's simple faith in God is a powerful example to each of us...to our church!

6) So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, 7) Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8) "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

- Here's a picture...Isaac, Abraham's one and only son, whom he loves, carrying the wood that would be part of his sacrifice...sound familiar?
- Isaac asks a question of reason; Where is the sheep?
- Was Abraham speaking of Isaac or did he reason that God would provide a sheep...I think his next actions speak...

9) When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. 10) And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice.

- We don't see a struggle or fight in the text, not even an objection!
- Most scholars put Isaac at about age 13
- I will tell you with experience, 13 year olds object to everything!
- Abraham was going through with this, obedient to God...even in this horrific moment!

**11) At that moment the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”
“Yes,” Abraham replied. “Here I am!”**

- Abraham twice because the knife was close, the act was close! STOP!!

12) “Don’t lay a hand on the boy!” the angel said. “Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.”

- You pass!

- Not adding to scripture here, but I have a thought...what was Jesus thinking at this moment, he knew what this point, what this event truly pictured!

13) Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

- God provides a sacrifice instead of Isaac

- A sacrifice that represented and offering that would free all mankind from sin.

- John 1:29, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

14) Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means “the Lord will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

- The Mountain of the Lord is where the temple was built in Jerusalem

- What an incredible story, that left to the OT would be one of God’s provision, but because His providing was not limited to a ram in the thicket, but his own Son to “turn away the wrath of God”, because He loved us so much!!

How can you & I give God the gift of being loving?

1) Put Him First! [The Word, The Holy Spirit, Godly Counsel - will show you how!]

2) Obedience! It is not a preference (I prefer not to...)

John 14:15, “If you love me, obey my commandments.”

3) Love Others! - 1 John 4:7-12

- PRAYER

- INVITATION