



LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

TEXT: Genesis 22

MAIN IDEA: Abraham's faithfulness serves as the ultimate example for our walk of faith.

LEADERS:

- Winter Sessions is coming up. This year, the classes will be called "I've Got Questions," where we will address some of the big head scratchers that are important for understanding our faith. The questions addressed will be, "Do I need evidence to believe?", "Why should I think God exists?", "Are the Gospels reliable accounts of Jesus' life?", "How can I know that Jesus rose from the dead?", "What about evolution?", and "Is Christianity bigoted?" These will run on Monday nights from December 13–January 17 at 7 pm. You are invited to join us in person at the Totowa campus, or from home via our Facebook and YouTube channels.
- Discover Emergence is happening. If you want to get more plugged in and become a member, this is for you. Classes go for three weeks, beginning the first Sunday of every month. Classes are at 10:30 in suite 300 in Totowa, and in Impact Central in Ringwood. Sign up on our digital bulletin.
- Please remember to pray for all the teens who signed up to go on our Winter Retreat from January 14–16. Be sure to pray for the spiritual growth of everyone God is bringing there, and the leaders who will be there for them.

GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
- **Icebreaker:** What is the best part about celebrating Thanksgiving?
- **Opener:** What did you take away from the sermon this week?

AN IMPOSSIBLE COMMAND

When Ryan began this week's sermon, he noted that much of the Abraham story seems resolved by the end of chapter 21. The promised son is born, Hagar and Ishmael, under God's care, have moved on, and Abraham is living shoulder to shoulder with the rulers of Canaan. It seems as if his story has been told. But God has one last thing to ask of his servant, and it will turn his world upside down.

☺ Can you think of an example of someone you know who finished their walk of faith well, and did not allow their zeal for the Lord die down in their last days? What does their example teach you?



Read: Genesis 22:1–8

Leaders: Some examples of God's opposition to human sacrifice in the Bible can be found in Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kings 17:17; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5.



The first verse of this chapter makes it clear that God is testing Abraham. Use the verses below to answer these two questions:

What are some reasons God might have for testing people?

What does God use to test us?

Exodus 15:25; 16:4; 20:20; Deuteronomy 8:2, 16; 13:3; Judges 2:22; 3:1, 4; 1 Chronicles 29:17; 2 Chronicles 32:31; Psalm 7:9; 11:4–5; 17:3; 26:2; 66:10; 2 Corinthians 8:1–2; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; James 1:2–4; 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 2:10.



What is at stake for Abraham in obeying the command that God gives him in verse 2?



Notice that God's command to Abraham in verse 2 corresponds to his initial command to him from all the way back in Genesis 12:1 ("go . . . to the land . . ."). Back then, when Abraham obeyed, he was following God's promise to bless him. But now he is told to follow God into absolute devastation. What is the hardest thing that God asks of you?



In what ways is Abraham's view of God being tested?



In what ways does the text emphasize how excruciating this was for Abraham?



What hints are there that Abraham trusts that God will somehow act to preserve the life of Isaac? See Hebrews 11:17–19.

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

Read: Genesis 22:9–14



How does what happens in this passage foreshadow what God does for those whom he loves through Jesus?



What do you think is being conveyed by the correspondence in wording between verses 1 and 11 ("Abraham . . . here I am")?



What does this passage teach us about the love of God in contrast to the love of the gifts that he gives?



☺ Abraham ends up naming the place where he almost sacrificed his son (in Hebrew) *Yahweh yireh*. This has the double meaning: “The LORD will provide” and “The LORD sees.” Why is it important for us to realize both these things, and where do you acknowledge them in your life?

BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON

Read: Genesis 22:15–19

☺🧠 Notice how, throughout this entire chapter, Isaac is consistently called “his son” by the narrator (vv. 3, 6, 9, 10, 13) and “my son” by Abraham (v. 7). But when God (or the angel of the LORD) speaks, he is always called “your son, your only son” (vv. 2, 12, 16). These are both oddly redundant—that is, the story could have been told by simply calling him “Isaac.” What is the significance of these two ways of referring to Isaac?

🧠 In verses 17–18, God gives the most thorough expression of his promise to Abraham that we have yet to see in the book of Genesis. Take a minute to identify all the components of this promise, and what their significance is for the overall story of the Bible.

☺🧠 Recall the meaning of Beersheba from Genesis 21:31. Why does verse 19 tell us twice that this is the place to which he returned after this whole ordeal?

☺ In verse 16, God says that it is because Abraham did not withhold his son that he will receive God’s blessing. What are you tempted to withhold from God in your life, and how does Abraham’s example challenge you?

PRAYER TIME

Pray that God would help you see the tests that he places in your life, and acknowledge to him that he is on your side in helping you to be faithful in those tests.

Thank God that he is the one who has provided a Lamb for the offering for our sin.