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Sermon Notes

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The Harvest of a Lifetime: Abraham's Faith Vindicated

Genesis 22:1-24

One of the Greatest Chapters in the Bible

Three messages:

The Vindication of Abraham's Faith:

[Focusing on the testing of Abraham's mature faith, how the testing of that faith was essential to his salvation, and how God tests our faith as part of our own salvation]

The Gospel of Christ Foreshadowed

[Focusing on how Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac foreshadows the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and what God the Father did in not withholding His only Son from us]

The Precision of Prophecy

[Focusing on one specific part of Genesis 22 as a proof of the incredible precision of God's prophecies concerning Christ: "On the mountain of the Lord, it will be provided"]

In 1849, a dusty California prospector placed a large yellow rock on the countertop of a small office run by a New Yorker named John Little Moffat. The prospector had sold everything he had to stake out a claim during the California gold rush of '49, and now he wanted to know if he'd struck it rich. Moffat had developed a technique of assaying gold in Georgia and North Carolina, and now he put the method to work. He scraped a small amount of the mineral from the rock and weighed it precisely. He then wrapped it in lead foil and fired it in a furnace at about 1100°C to remove all base metals. He reweighed the sample and pronounced its purity... for a certain fee, he offered to mint the resulting gold into gold coins of \$20 each... so perfectly formed that the United States government would come to accept them as legal tender

This was the life of the United States Assay office... anxious prospectors plunking down gold-colored rocks or bags of goldish sand, and pacing the floor to see if it was genuine or fool's gold

What Moffat was doing to the minerals physically, God was doing to Abraham's soul spiritually... he was applying the assayer's fire to prove what was in there

I. Abraham's Greatest Test

A. We Know What Abraham Was Never Told: "This is only a test"

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

Perhaps the test would have been so much easier if God had simply told him, "Abraham, I want to test your faith. What I am about to tell you to do will only be a test."

Illus. Emergency Broadcast System

The Emergency Broadcast System was initiated in 1963 during the Kennedy Administration, to allow the president to address the entire nation in an emergency. The original intent of the system was to communicate during a nuclear crisis brought on by a conflict with the Soviet Union.

The tests of the system lasted 35 or 40 seconds ... A loud high-pitched obnoxious tone followed, followed by the familiar phrase *"This is a test. This station is conducting a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. This is only a test."* In an actual emergency the public would be given Civil Defense instructions. The system was never used for a nuclear emergency, though it was activated more than 20,000 times between 1976 and 1996 to broadcast civil emergency messages and warnings of severe weather hazards.

One of the reasons for the repeated statement, "This is only a test" is to reduce terror and panic, to keep people calm. It is soothing to know that nothing actually threatening is happening that all is well.

Abraham was never given that benefit... he was just given a command

And with a soothing phrase added "Abraham, this is only a test," it would not have been the same test

So it is in our lives as well!!!

B. God Tests His Children

1. The Hebrew word: testing to see what is in is

Illus. To assay a metal is to subject it (such as silver or gold) to chemical analysis, to determine the amount of alloy.

Deuteronomy 8:2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

2. Why God tests us?

a. for His own glory

Trials are woven into the mysterious fabric of God's tapestry of Redemptive History... the dark threads of suffering and the light threads of triumph and success... all necessary to reveal the glory of God to the world

b. to reveal His character

God demonstrates His faithfulness the most when we are at the end of our resources and desperately clinging to Him alone

c. to reveal OUR character

Jeremiah 17:9-10 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? 10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

Only when we are subjected to the pressures of trials can we know what's been in our hearts all along...

"Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks", said Christ... so also out of the fullness of the heart we act

d. to increase our faith-filled dependence on Him

We are all prone to rely on ourselves for everything... only in the assaying fires of God do we learn to let go of self-reliance and trust only in His power

e. to build our character

James 1:2-4 Consider it **pure joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

C. Abraham's Test

1. Seemingly designed for pain

Illus. Dr. James Dobson & Ryan's ear infection

Ryan had a terrible ear infection when he was three years old that kept him (and us) awake most of the night. After examining Ryan, the doctor told us that the infection had adhered itself to the eardrum and could only be treated by pulling the scab loose with a wicked little instrument. He warned that the procedure would hurt and instructed us to hold our son tightly on the table. ... I swallowed hard and wrapped my 200-pound, six-foot-two-inch frame around the toddler. It was one of the toughest moments in my career as a parent. What made it so emotional was the long mirror Ryan was facing as he lay on the examining table. This made it possible for him to look directly at me as he screamed for mercy. I really believe I was in greater agony in that moment than my terrified little boy. ... What hurt me was the look on his face. Though he was screaming and couldn't speak, he was "talking" to me with those big blue eyes. He was saying, "Daddy! Why are you doing this to me? I thought you loved me. I never thought you would do anything like this! How could you? Please, please! Stop hurting me!"

In this account today, it seems God is burying the knife in Abraham's heart and twisting it with every phrase

2. The language God used

Genesis 22:2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Every phrase hurt more than the last... **“your son... your only son... Isaac... whom you love... SACRIFICE HIM AS A BURNT OFFERING**

George Herbert: “Each word was like a case of knives cutting at the patriarch's heart”

- **“Take your son”**: WHAT?? A father slay his own son? Would that not make Abraham a monster in his own eyes? What would dear Sarah, his precious wife say to him? How could he look her in the face? What would his household say? What of the Philistines and other pagan nations who knew him?
- **“Your only son”**: How much this brought shock and pain... thoughts of Ishmael, whom God had commanded cast out, much to Abraham's grief... now was the only remaining son also to be killed?
- **“Isaac”**: what a cascade of memories this name brought flooding into the mind: of Abraham's laughter at the prophecy; of Sarah's initial unbelief, and later laughter of joy at giving birth; and of Isaac's laughter as he grew from infancy to youth
- **“Whom you love”**: this is a twisting of the knife each previous phrase had inserted in Abraham's heart; the fatherly love of Abraham, the memories, the hopes for the future; and Isaac was a delightfully obedient son, his partner in serving and obeying God
- **“And sacrifice him”**: how could God demand an offering like this? Was God to be like Molech now, a bloodthirsty deity demanding human sacrifice? Would not Abraham have thought to say “Far be it from you, O Holy God, to be like the demon deities of the Canaanites!” Would Abraham have to listen to the death throes of his dying son?
- **“As a burnt offering”**: the pain is complete... Abraham was to burn up the body of his son? Not bury him gently? And he was to light the fire himself? And smell the smoke with his own nostrils?

Oh the incredible shock of that command... the agony... the grief... the confusion

3. The real test: Who are you, God?

What kind of God would demand such a thing of Abraham?

What is the point of all these promises and all these hopes and expectations if it was meant simply to end in Isaac's premature and shocking death?

D. A Mature Test for a Mature Faith

1. Step by step preparation: We do not receive these kinds of tests immediately in the Christian life!!

Note the account begins:

ESV **Genesis 22:1** After these things *God tested Abraham...*

Charles Spurgeon: “The great test came after nine great trials, each of them most searching and remarkable. After he had passed through a great fight of affliction, and had through the process been strengthened and sanctified, he was called to endure a still sterner test. From which fact it; is well to learn that God doth not put heavy burdens upon weak shoulders, and he doth not allot ordeals fit only for full-grown men to those who are but babes, he educates our faith, testing it by trials which increase little by little in proportion as our faith has increased. He only expects us to do man’s work and to endure man’s afflictions, when we have passed through the childhood state, and have arrived at the stature of men in Christ Jesus. Expect then, beloved, your trials to multiply as you proceed towards heaven. Do not think that as you grow in grace the path will become smoother beneath your feet, and the heavens serener above your heads. On the contrary, reckon that as God gives you greater skill as a soldier, he will send you upon more arduous enterprises; and as he more fully fits your bark to brave the tempest and the storm, so will he send you out upon more boisterous seas, and upon longer voyages, that you may honor him, and still further increase in holy confidence. You would have thought that Abraham had now come to the land Beulah, that in his old age, after the birth of Isaac, and especially after the expulsion of Ishmael, he would have had a time of perfect rest. Let this warn us that we are never to reckon upon rest from tribulation this side the grave.” “Mature Faith – Illustrated by Abraham’s offering up Isaac.” May 2nd, 1869

2. Original call from Ur of the Chaldees
3. Years of “calling on the Name of the Lord”
4. Twenty-five years of waiting for the Promised Child
5. Many ups and downs... sins with Pharaoh and Hagar and Abimelech
6. Spectacular revelations from God: the covenant cutting ceremony in Genesis 15
7. Step by step God had developed and nurtured Abraham’s faith... like a master gardener tending a priceless plant

Abraham’s faith had been planted by God, tended and nurtured by God... step by step it had grown hearty... but now it was time to test it to the extreme, so that it could bear its sweetest harvest of all

8. Along the way, it is quite possible that Abraham’s own heart had grown so wrapped up with the boy that he lived or died with Isaac

Same thing happened with Jacob and the second son of his beloved wife Rachel who died in childbirth. The first son, Joseph, he thought had been killed by a wild animal. The second son, Benjamin, had been born and Rachel had died giving him birth.

Judah testified about him that Jacob's life was closely bound up with the boy's life... and if Benjamin died, then Jacob would die too

It may be that the same was true of Abraham and Isaac

E. Tested Right to the Uttermost

1. "Three days' journey" would test Abraham's faith... minutes would seem like hours
2. Ever-increasing pain

The intensity of the pain must have increased with every step and with every painful detail

The text highlights their togetherness... that they were together as they went through it

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. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

How could Abraham have felt as he laid the wood upon the back of his son, and his son had to carry to wood for his own death up the mountain

The pain must have been poignant as Isaac asked where the animal was for the sacrifice

Clearly father and son had shared many times in animal sacrifices to the Lord... this was a shared father-son experience, and they had that memory together; but children are used to patterns, used to the regular routines, and are acutely aware when any difference in the routine occurs

Now, we don't know how old Isaac was... some say he was a grown man as much as twenty-five years old; other picture him much younger. However, we do know that he was old and strong enough to carry enough wood for a burnt offering

As the two of them went on together, God remained silent

God intended to get the full effect of this trial... he wanted Abraham's faith to be put on display to the uttermost, and so the test had to go to the uttermost

And so the two of them ascended Mount Moriah together, to the bitterest test a father had ever experienced

3. Note that the angel of the Lord did not speak out until Abraham raised the knife

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

II. Abraham's Faith-Filled, Total Obedience

A. Immediate Obedience: No Hesitation

Genesis 22:3 *Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.*

1. "To delay is to disobey"
2. Abraham was immediate and prompt in his obedience
3. He didn't linger, meditate or pray about his decision
4. He didn't complain or murmur... neither did he speak of this to anyone in the text
5. He made provisions for complete and total obedience... note especially the wood for the burnt offering

B. Faith-filled Obedience: Based on a Lifetime of Experience in the Word

1. This test revealed the total faith Abraham had in the word of God
2. Faith comes by hearing the word of God

Romans 10:17 *So **faith** comes from **hearing**, and **hearing** through the word of Christ.*

3. GOD HAD SPOKEN MANY TIMES by then to Abraham

by my count... 1,133 words in English translation

19 separate commands...12 statements...2 questions...40 promises!!!!

Genesis 12:2-3 *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12:7 *The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."*

Genesis 15:5 *"Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."*

The astonishing river of words that God had spoken to Abraham by this time, command after command, promises after promise, had caused faith to grow inside Abraham's soul

So also had Abraham's practice of obedience

C. Practiced Obedience: Based on Habit

1. Nineteen commands... and Abraham obeyed each one

God commanded: *"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

Abraham obeyed and went

God commanded: *"Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." ¹⁰*

Abram brought all these to him

God commanded: *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham*

Abraham changed his name

God commanded: *No longer shall your wife's name be Sarai but Sarah*

Abraham changed his wife's name

God commanded: *Every male among you shall be circumcised.*

Abraham and the males in his household were circumcised

God commanded: *Send away the slaved woman and her son.*

Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away

2. Abraham had an established pattern of obedience

3. Scripture shows that, the more we obey God, the more God reveals Himself to us

4. Abraham's habit of obedience was a pathway to ever-increasing knowledge of God

D. Reasoned Obedience: Based on the Promises

1. God's promise specifically focused on Isaac

2. God had spoken clear prophecies concerning Isaac... not just about his birth, but also about his future!!

3. Abraham reasoned by faith based on these promises

Illus. Some people think faith and reason are diametrically opposed

Evolutionist scientist Richard Dawkins likens religion to an infectious virus that readily replicates, spreading its falsehoods.

Clearly many scientists, philosophers and worldly-wise people consider faith and reason diametrically opposed

You either trust science and reason... OR you take the blind leap of faith and trust religion

THAT IS NOT ABRAHAM'S VIEW

Abraham started with the basic premise of revelation: God has spoken to me certain promises concerning Isaac

Genesis 17:19 your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Genesis 21:12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Next, Abraham weighed God's command:

vs. 2 "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."

Abraham put the two together, and reasoned it out:

Hebrews 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Abraham had it all figured out by faith... he would obey and sacrifice his son, and God would raise him from the dead

Genesis 22:5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

4. Where the NIV goes wrong

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

THERE IS NO "EVEN THOUGH" IN THE GREEK... Abraham was USING the promise of God in order to obey the wrenching command of God... that was the basis of His confidence

Abraham reasoned that God would raise Isaac up from the dead... since that was the only way he could figure out how God would still keep His promises concerning Isaac

Lesson in faith: God's promises NEVER contradict His commands, and when they seem to, obey His commands and watch Him also fulfill His promises

E. Total Obedience: Right to the Uttermost

1. Abraham obeyed right to the end...

*vs. 9-10 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He **bound** his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.*

2. Abraham did everything that God asked of Him
3. A shadow and pattern of the perfect obedience shown by Christ

*John 17:4 I have **brought** you **glory** on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*

III. God's Commendation

vs. 11-12 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

A. Last Minute Reprieve

1. At the last possible minute, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham
2. Abraham had passed the test!!!
3. Now came the rewards of obedience

B. The Angel of the Lord is God

1. This passage is the clearest of any concerning the deity of the angel of the Lord
2. Look at this statement:

*vs. 12 Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld **from me** your son, your only son.*

NOT WITHHELD **FROM ME**???

This is a statement only God alone could make

The angel of the Lord is none other than the second person of the Trinity... Jesus Christ commanded that Isaac be spared, only because someday He would take His place!!!

C. Astonishing Mystery: “Now I Know That You Fear God”

1. Human language... but extremely significant
2. God knows ALL things, and does not need it acted out in history to know precisely what will happen
3. All of history was written in God’s book before one of those days came to be
4. BUT YET the Angel of the Lord says “Now I know that you fear God!!”
5. In effect, God wants to see our faith vindicated by our deeds... he wants to see it acted out, lived out, written out in the pages of our personal history books
6. Without Abraham’s total obedience, this statement would never have been made

More in a moment

D. The Promise Restated and Intensified

Genesis 22:15-18 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

E. God Swears by Himself for Our Benefit: Hebrews 6

Hebrews 6:13-19 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." ¹⁵ And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. ¹⁶ Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷ Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

F. Faith’s Reward: Praise from God

This is the finish line of the trial... the glorious victor’s crown of a triumph handed down by God Himself!!

1. No higher reward can ever be given a human being than to be praised by God
2. To have God commend you, to have Him speak well of you and your actions
3. What could ever have been better than that?

4. What kind of joy filled Abraham's heart as he came down the mountain together with his son?
5. What kind of eternal praise awaited Abraham on that final day?

Romans 2:29 *No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.*

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his **praise from God.***

IV. The Vindication of Abraham's Faith

What happened on Mt. Moriah was the harvest of a lifetime of work God had done in Abraham's soul

It was also the public vindication of Abraham's faith... God tested Abraham and put the fire on the crucible to see the quality of the faith in Abraham's soul

So God does to each believer in Christ... a lifetime of small tests and perhaps one great big test from God

The central lesson of all this:

A. Faith and Works: Inseparable in Salvation

Luther: "Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone"

B. Paul's Clear Teaching on Justification by Faith Apart from Works

Romans 4:6 *David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works*

Galatians 2:16 *yet we know that a person is not justified by **works** of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by **works** of the law, because by **works** of the law no one will be justified.*

C. James's Clear Teaching on the Essential Role of Works

James 2:21-24 *Was not Abraham our father **justified** by **works** when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"- and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is **justified** by **works** and not by faith alone.*

This statement was so offensive to Martin Luther, who was trying to establish the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from works of the law, that he made two errors

- 1) He called James an “epistle of straw”, denigrating its divine authorship
- 2) He inserted a word in Romans 3:28

Romans 3:28 For we hold that one is justified ALONE by faith apart from works of the law.

The word is not found in the Greek original, nor was it in the Latin Vulgate

D. The Lord’s Testimony

vs. 12 Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.

1. Paul and James use “Justified” differently
2. Paul is speaking of the tribunal of God’s judgment... answering the question

“How can a sinner be righteous in the sight of the Holy God?”

3. James is speaking of the tribunal of life in the body... the vindication of faith in the eyes of the watching world; the proof that his internal, invisible faith was genuine
 - a. a faith that produces no works of righteousness is a FRAUD
 - b. a faith that produces no obedience is DEAD faith
 - c. a faith that knows the right way and refused to follow it is DEMON faith

If one has a genuine justifying faith, it will produce righteous works, acts of sacrificial obedience

If Abraham had refused to obey God, his so-called “faith” would have been a FRAUD, DEAD, DEMON faith, and it would not have saved him

This was the very nature of the test which God subjected him to

ASSAYING the gold to PROVE what is really there, and to put it on display for Abraham and all the world to see

V. Timeless Lessons and Applications

1. God will test your faith... be ready to respond as Abraham did
 - a. small tests come daily
 - b. all of it prepares you for greater and greater tests

- c. perhaps the greatest tests will occur toward the end of your life
- d. DO NOT MURMUR against God when the test is severe and painful

The loss of a child may be the most severe trial parents can ever undergo

My professor in seminary was pastor at a church at which one set of parents lost three children in separate tragedies over the course of two years... one to illness and two others to separate accidents

At the funeral of the third child they buried they sang the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation", and the last stanza was the most powerful

*The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

Each of the "never"s in that final line reminded the congregation of each of the three lost children

Maybe your trial will be like that... maybe it will be financial, the loss of all your possessions... some of our Christian brothers and sisters lost everything in the recent hurricane season in Florida

Maybe it will be a chronic illness or disability; maybe the rebellion of a child

When your trial comes and God seeks to put your faith on display, will you respond as Abraham did... with prompt, faith-filled obedience to the uttermost reasoned out and based on the promises of God?

Or will you falter in the day of trial? Will you call God cruel to take your Isaac from you?

- e. feed your faith by meditating on the word of God... especially the promises of God

2. Faith apart from obedience is dead

Many in America claim to be Christians, but there is no evidence of faith alive in their lives

God said to Abraham, "Now I know that you fear God..."

Is your faith in Christ vindicated by a lifestyle of obedience to Him??

3. The nature of worship

Genesis 22:5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

The essence of worship is bowing down before God, prostrating ourselves before His person and His will

It is also a free opening up of all we have to God, making all of ourselves and our lives and our possessions available to Him to use as He pleases

God asks from us the same stance toward Him that He takes toward us

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Abraham did not spare his son, his only son, Isaac, whom he loved from God either

Worship God with your song; worship God with your money; worship God with your time; worship God with your abilities and talents; worship God by saying ALL I HAVE IS YOURS

John 17:10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine.

4. The rewards of faith-filled obedience: greater knowledge of God Himself

Psalm 25:14 The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

John 14:21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

When Abraham walked down that mountain after obeying God's astonishing and incomprehensible command, what joy must have filled his heart... GOD WAS PLEASED WITH ME!!! MY SON IS ALIVE!!! ON THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD IT WILL BE PROVIDED!!!

Do you know the joy of victory in your faith? Have you been tested and come through?