



God's test of Abraham

Gen 22:1-14

[based on the sermon preached on 30.10.22 – available on the [church app](#) or at
<https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

KEY IDEAS

1. God calls Abraham to go sacrifice his son, Isaac.
2. God is testing Abraham's faith to see if Isaac had become an idol
3. Abraham demonstrates his willingness to sacrifice Isaac and passes the test
4. God announces that Abraham has passed the test and reaffirms his covenant of blessing with him.

CONNECT

- Have you ever faced a difficult, stressful test? What is the most difficult, most challenging, or most anxiety producing test (of any kind) you have ever taken? What was that experience like? Was it pleasant or rough? How did you make it through?

STUDY

Read Genesis 22:1-5

- The text tells us that God tested Abraham. Do you think God tests all believers or just some? Does he do so often or infrequently?
- Have you had a recent test of your faith which you believe was from God? If so, what was that like? Did you recognize at the time that it was a test or only afterwards?
- Was God's request of Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, a request/command to do evil? Why or why not? How can we reconcile this request with God's nature as good?
- Acknowledging this request was, at the least, extreme, does God make extreme requests of us today to test us, or are our tests usually more gentle and gracious?

- Why do you think God told Abraham to go three days-journey away to sacrifice when he could have said three hours? What might have been the purpose of getting Abraham to take a three day journey before he could perform the sacrifice?
- What might have been going through Abraham's mind while taking this three-day trek to the region of Moriah?

Read Genesis 22:6-8

- Why do you suppose Abraham did not tell Isaac what was in store for him/them? If Abraham had tried to tell Isaac what was going to happen, what do you think that conversation might have been like?
- When Abraham tells Isaac that God himself would provide the lamb for the offering (in response to Isaac's question), what do you think Abraham meant? Was he referring to Isaac as the lamb? Was he referring to what eventually happened? Did he not know what was going to happen but said this to indicate his implicit trust in God?
- Describe as best you can what you think Abraham was feeling emotionally at this point: towards his son, Isaac, and towards God.

Read Genesis 22:9-14

- The text does not tell us how Abraham communicated his intentions to Isaac or whether Isaac struggled against Abraham's binding of him and placing him on the altar and wood, but what do you think this scene might have looked like? Try to imagine Abraham's explanation and Isaac's response. What would you have said, if you were Abraham? How would you have responded, if you were Isaac?
- Do you think Abraham was crying or weeping as he explained God's command to Isaac, as he bound Isaac, as he took his knife to slay Isaac?
- God intervenes and prevents Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, but only after Abraham has fully committed himself, only after he is "all in." Why does God wait to the very last moment before he stops Abraham?
- After God intervenes and stops the sacrifice, Abraham looks up and sees a ram caught in a bush, and sacrifices that instead. Thus, Abraham declares that God is "Jehovah Jireh," or "God is my provider." In similar fashion, do you think God sometimes provides a way for us in the midst of our testing, to help us out?

- God tested Abraham to see if he had made his son, Isaac, into an idol, loving him more than God. Abraham passed that test. Can you think of any other biblical figures who underwent testing by God to determine their devotion or whether they had an idol in their life which stood between them and God?
- What about you? Martin Luther said “that to which your heart clings IS your god,” meaning we can make an idol out of just about anything, whatever is in our heart. Since idols (or potential idols) are often found amongst those things or people or talents or achievements closest to us, what things in your life and in your heart might be idols?
- Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, then make a mental list of potential idols in your life, whether few or many.
- Confess them to God, laying them down before the Lord, offering them up in prayer as a sacrifice. Ask God to help you, give you the strength and courage to lower these idols/potential idols to their proper place in your heart and life, allowing you to love God above all else, and “have no other gods before me (God) (Ex. 20:3).
- Be careful here, praying this way is not for the faint of heart. If something truly is an idol in your life, you may need to let go of it for a while in order to get your priorities realigned, with God back in first place.

APPLY

- What is that one area of your life which is or could potentially become an idol, getting in the way between you and God, receiving more love and devotion, time and energy from you than God? Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart, identify it, then ask God for courage to let it go, lay it down as a sacrifice to the Lord.
- Which other aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?
- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.
 - 1.
 - 2.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.