

## **MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK**

*Tuesday, September 25, 2018*

### **The Binding of Isaac? – Genesis 22**

**Overview:** The binding and sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 is a difficult story to read. It is credited to Abraham as faith in God. As fathers and sons, we struggle with the actions and thoughts in this story. Let us come together and wrestle with these verses and discover their meaning for our lives today!

**Hearing Our Stories:** Aaron Brown

#### **Segment Questions:**

- In Genesis 22:1, it says that God “tested” Abraham. Why do think God tested Abraham or why did Abraham need to be tested?
- How does Abraham get up early the next morning and faithfully follow his orders? What would you have done?
- Thorns and thistles were part of the curse on Adam in the Garden, they also make up the Crown of Christ on the cross. How do you interpret the ram tangled in the thicket in this story of Isaac?
- Have you purposefully looked for Jesus in the Old Testament stories? What other places do you see Jesus in the Old Testament?
- What is the take away message of Genesis 22? Is it a demonstration faith and unconditional obedience? Had Isaac become an idol to an old father who had been waiting for so many years? Another example of God’s faithfulness?

#### **Action Questions:** (Taken from Martin Luther’s Four Garlands on Studying Scripture)

- **Instruction:** What lessons do you learn from Genesis 22? What does it teach you about God? What does it teach you about yourself?
- **Thanksgiving:** From the story of The Binding of Isaac, what leads you to worship and praise God?
- **Confession:** What in Genesis 22 leads you to repent and confess?
- **Prayer:** Today, think through and prayer about this story. Share with God your thanksgiving and confess what is necessary. Seek God.

**Personal Prayer:** Father God, I thank you for Your Word, for the stories and the people in them. I see my human heart and struggle with faithfulness. Thank you for these examples of Your faithfulness and promises. You really are incredible, God! Forgive me for being short-sighted, for not always living in faith. Forgive me for not going deeper in Your Word. Help me to see You and Jesus in the entirety of the Bible. Light within me an unquenchable passion to seek You and shine Your light in this world.

## Introduction

What is your favorite Old Testament story? David and Goliath? Gideon and his mighty army? Joshua marching around Jericho? The Old Testament is teeming with stories of outrageous characters on incredible adventures. The beauty of these incredible Old Testament stories is that we are able to see the humanness of our own hearts in the people in Scriptures and contrast it with God's heart and faithfulness.

The story of Abraham's faithful life spreads out between Genesis 12-25. God has covenanted with Abraham and promised blessing to him. He will have the land that God will show him and he will have descendants that are more numerous than the stars in the sky or the sand on the shore. Even when Abraham and Sarah tried to take matters into their own hands and start a family through a maidservant, God was very clear that the covenantal line would flow through Sarah (Gen 17:5-6). Chapter 21 sees the long anticipated promise fulfilled with the birth of the promised son. Isaac is the embodiment of all of God's promises to Abraham and he is loved. Suddenly, the episode in Genesis 22 takes a darker twist in Abraham's life.

Jewish tradition calls Genesis 22, "The Binding of Isaac." Our Bibles often call it, "The Sacrifice of Isaac." God tests Abraham by saying, "Take 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 which I will show you" (v. 2). Excuse me. What?! The promised child? The proof that God is faithful? Sacrifice him? Abraham woke early the next morning, gathered supplies, and left with Isaac and two servants. After 3 days, Abraham leaves the donkey and the servants, saying, "Stay here with the donkey; and I and the boy will go over there and worship and we will come back to you" (v. 5). Isaac gets to carry the wood. Abraham carries the knife and fire. Isaac asks his father, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (v. 7). Abraham simply states, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (v. 8) and they continue on together. Abraham builds an altar, binds his promised son, and raises a knife to kill him. "Abraham! Abraham!" said an angel of the Lord, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me" (v. 12). Abraham sees a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. He takes the ram and offers it as a burnt sacrifice, instead of his son. Abraham received a blessing again, reaffirming the possession of the land and of numerous descendants "because you have obeyed my voice" (v. 18).

We see this story as an incredible story of faith. Abraham shows us that faith means unconditional obedience to God (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham believed that God could and would bring back Isaac from the dead because God is faithful. I think this story is more than the binding of Isaac.

Isaac: was a Promised Son (Gen 17:5-6) was Loved (Gen 22:2); was to Be Sacrificed on a Mountain (Gen 22:2), was on Mount Moriah (Gen 22:2); Carried Wood to His Sacrifice (Gen 22:6); "God will provide for Himself a lamb" (Gen 22:8); Ram tangled in the thicket by his horns (Gen 22:13); Ram sacrificed, instead of son (Gen 22:13); Figuratively, brought back from the dead (Heb 11:19).

Jesus: was a Promised Son (Luke 1:31, Micah 5:2) was Loved (Luke 3:21-22); was to Be Sacrificed on a Mountain (John 19:17), was on Mount Moriah (John 19:17, 2 Chron 3:1); Carried Cross to His Sacrifice (John 19:17); "Behold the lamb of God" (John 1:29); Thorns tangled into a crown (Matt 27:28-29); Son sacrificed, instead of us (2 Cor 5:21, Heb 7:27); Physically brought back from the dead (Rom 6:9).

The story of Jesus is there in Genesis 22, "The Binding of Christ." Jesus is the better Isaac and God is the better faithful Father. He was willing to do the unfathomable to bring us closer to Him.