

Series: Lessons from God's Servants

Lesson 4: "Abraham: Faith Put to the Test"

*Announcements, encouragement to invite people and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** What is the worst test you've ever had to pass? What made the test so difficult?

Transition: Life is full of tests. That is especially true of the person who has chosen to walk with their God. Walking with your heart on holiness in an unholly world will always be filled with challenges and obstacles that will test your faith. Today we learn from the great faith of Abraham who was put to a test was greater than anything we will ever face.

Bottom Line: God will guide and protect His faithful.

LESSON PLAN

Read Genesis 22:1-5

1. What is unique in God's instructions to Isaac? How is this a shadow of God Himself?

Mt. Moriah is the site in Jerusalem where according to 2 Chronicles 3:1 Solomon built the temple. Genesis 22:14 calls the site the "Mountain of the Lord" so it was very likely at this place and would give Solomon good reason to build the Temple to God there. We also see that Abraham arrived on the third day. Jerusalem was about 45 miles, a full two days journey from Beersheba on foot, which would put them arriving on the third day.

2. What does Abraham tell his servants once he sees the mountain?
3. Abraham already knew what God had told him to do. Was it truthful to tell the servants that he and Isaac would worship and then THEY would come back when?

Question: What are some things God has asked of you that you never understood until you were on the other side of the situation?

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Scripture says to test everything and hold on to what is good. To test my faith in every way could lead me to losing hope. Wouldn't it be better to just trust? No, it could cause me to embrace false hope in a non-existent god. I am who I am because I took the journey of challenging my beliefs in the Bible, in God and in Christ.

Read Genesis 22:6-12

4. How old was Abraham's son, Isaac at the time he was offered as a sacrifice to God?

The Bible does not give a direct answer to the question of Isaac's age when he was about to be offered as a sacrifice by his father. We normally think he was 20+. Sarah gave birth to Isaac when she was 90 years old (Genesis 17:17). She would have been 92 or 93, 95 at most, when Isaac was weaned. She died at age 127 (Genesis 23:1)—when Isaac was 37 years old, after the event. The term “lad” used to refer to Isaac (21:5,12) is a flexible Hebrew term that does not necessarily refer to what we ordinarily think of—i.e., a boy. Rather, the term encompasses a wide range of meanings—from a baby (e.g., Exodus 2:6; 2 Samuel 12:16) to a young man (e.g., Absalom in 2 Samuel 14:21; 18:5). It even can refer to “servant” or “attendant” (e.g., 2 Samuel 16:1) as well as soldier/leader (1 Kings 20:14,15,17,19). Isaac was given the task of carrying the wood for the impending sacrifice (22:6). There would have been enough wood to consume a human body when set on fire. Could a young child carry such a burden? Several commentators have weighed in on this question. Leupold wrote: “He may by this time have arrived at the age of some eighteen to twenty years” (1942, 1:625). Josephus stated: “Now Isaac was twenty-five years old” (1.13.2). Adam Clarke said: “[I]t is more probable that he was now about thirty-three” (1:140, emp. in orig.). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown asserted that Isaac was “then upwards of twenty years of age” (n.d., p. 29). J. Curtis Manor described him as “a youth of sufficient strength and agility to carry a load of firewood up a mountainside” (1994, p. 103). Keil and Delitzsch affirmed that “this son had grown into a young man” (1976, 1:248). (article from Apologetics Press)

5. What does this tell you about the character of Isaac?
6. How close did Abraham come to killing his only son whom he loved? What stopped him from doing what God told him to do?

Question: What have you done in your life that went against what you wanted to do for the sake of obeying God's instructions?

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Question: How would you explain this historical event to a child so they could understand why God would ask such a thing of Abraham or of Isaac?

Read Genesis 22:13-19

7. What does God provide after Abraham passes the test of overwhelming faith?

It would seem that the faith of the father that brought God's favor was just as powerfully living within the son, Isaac. God sets Isaac free and delivers Abraham from a devastating act. That ram represents Christ. The Lamb of God was provided by God as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, for our sins so we could go free.

Question: How has God provided a solution for you when you were in a time where you made tough decisions based on keeping your faith pure?

Question: How could you use your experience to teach your children, grandchildren, or kids you work with the blessings of always trusting God in times of crisis?

8. What blessing does God bestow on Abraham because of his faith?

Notice God swore by himself to fulfill this blessing. There is nothing greater than God so it was a sign of the ultimate promise. The angel reports that God said Abraham's faith has brought down God's blessing. God would cause his descendants to take possession of the cities of their enemies. Through Abraham's descendants all nations on earth will be blessed because of this incredible act of faith in God's words.

9. Can you explain how this promise finds fulfillment in the church?

Question: What is your role in passing on the promise of God to Abraham?



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Breakout Groups: Divide into groups. 1) Discuss areas where you need to further develop your faith. 2) Discuss how you can help others who are struggling in their faith? 3) What would it take to help this church have a faith more like Abraham's faith. (You can pick one, or do several, or assign different ones to each group.)

Final Question: What is the one idea that stands out to you most from this lesson?