

UNIMAGINABLE FAITH: TWO FATHERS, TWO SONS, AND TWO MOUNTAINS

Our text today is Genesis 22:1-24. Found within these verses is one of the most famous stories of the Bible. It is the story of when God told Abraham to take his son, his only son, Isaac and offer him on a specific mountain in the land of Moriah. There is a parallel in this passage that God uses to show forth redemption as clear as He does anywhere in the Old Testament. Yet even in this beautiful story of redemption, we find practical and life-changing truths.

I. The purpose of testing is to reveal truth in us.

Genesis 22:1 tells us that *"...God did tempt Abraham...."* It must be said that God does not tempt us to do evil. James 1:13 says, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* Therefore, the temptation spoken of here must be another kind of temptation. The word from the Hebrew translated "tempted" is the word "nacchah" which means to test, prove or try.

When God puts His people through a test, it is for the purpose that we might see ourselves for the way He sees us. God tries us to reveal to ourselves what the problems may be in our lives. Passing the test is determined by how we respond.

II. The guidance of God is specific.

In Genesis 22:2, God tells Abraham to offer his son in a specific place, but that particular mountain would be made known to him at a later time. Jesus said to His disciples, *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"* (John 16:12). Even though God doesn't always give us information far ahead of time, it is specific.

- A. A specific person: Isaac.
- B. A specific area: Moriah
- C. A specific event: sacrifice.

III. God desires a faith that does not stagger.

Although there are areas where Abraham's faith stumbles, God declares that when it came down to the wire, *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God"* (Romans 4:20).

We see this confident faith in:

A. The Preparation

In Genesis 22:3, Abraham takes his son and two young men, saddles his donkey and brings wood for the sacrifice. I am reminded, *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD..."* (Ezra 7:10a). A faith that does not stagger is always prepared to obey the Lord in all things.

B. The Determination

In Genesis 22:4, Abraham has traveled faithfully without complaining for three days. He has not tried to negotiate with God nor did he change his mind in the three-day journey.

C. The Predestination

We hear the most remarkable thing come from Abraham's mouth. He declared to the small entourage that he and Isaac were going to go to the mountaintop and come back again. Keep in mind, God had told Abraham that he was required to sacrifice his son. Hebrews 11:17-19 reveals to us how Abraham could have acted so confidently, not staggering in his faith. He knew a certain thing was predestined of God as revealed in Genesis 17:19 and Abraham also knew that God could not and would not lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; Romans 3:4).

IV. Team work makes the dream work!

We see this truth in Genesis 22:6-9.

A. The Power of Two

Genesis 22: 6 and 8 says, *"...they went both of them together."* Isaac was willingly involved in this mission. The Scriptures speak strongly in Deuteronomy 19:15 and Matthew 18:19, 20 of the power of multiple witnesses to truth.

B. The Promised Sacrifice

In Genesis 22:7, 8a, God promises Himself to be the sacrificial Lamb!

C. The Prefigurative Surrender

In Genesis 8b, 9 we see the voluntary surrender of Isaac upon the altar.

V. Faith proves that God can be trusted.

In Genesis 22:10-12 we witness:

- A. Obedience is totally tested (Genesis 22:10).
- B. Salvation is of the Lord (Genesis 22:11,12); (Jonah 2:9).

VI. The meaning of the test is revealed.

Genesis 22:12-14 holds some the sweetest inspired words ever written! We praise God for:

- A. The Only Begotten Son (Genesis 22:12b)
- B. The Male Lamb (Genesis 22:13)
- C. The Substitute Made (Genesis 22:13)
- D. The Name That Says It All (Genesis 22:14)

VII. The most consummate blessings come from life's greatest trials.

Genesis 22:15-19 informs us of this truth.

- A. God places His own honor at stake to assure us of His blessings (Genesis 22:15, 16; Hebrews 6:13).
- B. God's blessings are innumerable (Genesis 22:17).

VIII. There is always a tandem working in God's plans.

Genesis 22:20-23 gives us a finishing tag that is quite delightful.

- A. A normality returns when trials are most daunting (Genesis 22:20-22).
- B. A name is recorded that tells us there were plans for Isaac beyond the rescue at the altar on Moriah's heights (Genesis 22:23).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.