

The View From The Altar

Text : **Gen. 22: 1-19**

INTRODUCTION :

A. What are the three most valuable things in your life ?

1. Take a moment and make a mental list.
2. Everyone's list will be different :
 - a. For some it will be people (*Spouse or Children*)
 - b. For others it could be a special possession (*House , Car, Job*)
 - c. Perhaps, for a few, it could even be a pet.

B. Now, from that short list choose just one which is most valuable to you.

1. "Most" is a superlative which means there can be only one.
2. What single thing means more to you than anything else in your life ?

C. What would have to happen to cause you to voluntarily give up that most treasured possession?

1. Would you ever sell it.
2. Would you trade it for someone else's most valued possession ?

D. What would you do if God told you to sacrifice that treasure to Him ?

1. It would not be transferred to someone else, but totally cease to exist.
2. To sacrifice something to God is to turn it over to Him. (*permanent*)

E. What if you were the one being sacrificed to God ?

1. When a living thing is sacrificed it dies.
 - a. Its throat is cut and the blood sprinkled on the altar.
 - b. It is then dismembered and burned to ashes.
2. WHAT would be your response if God required you to sacrifice that which you treasure most in this world ?

*** Our text describes God making exactly that demand.**

1. We will observe how Abraham became known as "*the father of the faithful*." **Rm. 4**
2. We will then see how Abraham's sacrifice foreshadowed that of Jesus.
3. We will conclude by observing the parallel with the sacrifice God demands of us.

I. Abraham was not being punished by God. He was special to God.

A. Abraham had been obedient to God from the beginning to the end.

1. He had a well established life, but surrendered it to God. (**Gen. 12: 1-5**)
 - a. He was not a young man. (*75 yrs. old .. 12: 4*)
 - b. He was a successful man. (**12: 5**)
2. He left a secure life to go into the unknown.
3. Like the old West, it was a time when the strongest man imposed his will.

B. Before God required Isaac be sacrificed, Abraham had already given up a lot.

1. He left his home and family.
2. He went out from his homeland.
3. He gave up his nephew Lot.
4. He gave up his son Ishmael. (*Left as a teenager.*)
5. Now God was demanding that upon which all of Abraham's hopes relied.

C. God demanded the sacrifice of Isaac in order to “*test*” Abraham. **22: 1**

1. The devil sends trials attempting to destroy the faith of Christians, but God sends trials to strengthen our faith. **James 1: 12-17**
2. God does not tell you when you are being tested.
 - a. In a manner of speaking, all of life on earth can be considered a test.
 - b. Every trial of life provides an opportunity to grow and to glorify. **James 1: 2-4**
3. Each trial or test places a decision before us : “*Who will I accommodate, God or self ?*”
4. Some trials must last long in order to accomplish their purpose.
 - a. They produce endurance. **James 1: 3**
 - b. They mature our godly character.

Rom. 5: 3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

5. It is important to bear in mind that God did not tell Abraham he was being tested.

D. God demands the dearest thing to Abraham's heart, his only son.

1. All of the promises made to Abraham were riding on Isaac.

2. Vs. 2 contain three imperative verbs :
 - a. “Take” “Go” “Offer” (*It was a call to action.*)
 - b. Take “Now” reflects a call to immediate action.
 3. Vs. 2 repeats the personal pronoun “you / your” three times.
 - a. How would you have responded if God had given this command to you ?
 - b. *Before Abraham could sacrifice Isaac, he had to sacrifice his own will.*
- * **The devil will be satisfied with only part of you,
God gave it all and God wants it all.**

II. Imagine this event from Isaac’s perspective.

A. Isaac was not a small child.

1. Josephus, the Jewish historian say Isaac was 25 years old. (*He offers no proof.*)
2. Some Christian scholars believe he was 33 years old. (*Frank Kassel & Ed Reese*)
3. The context reflects age beyond that of a small child.
 - a. Ishmael was married before this. (*Ishmael was 14 yrs. older than Isaac.*)
 - b. He lived “many days” after Abraham settled in Beersheba. (*Dug well, planted trees*)
 - c. The next event after this was the death of his mother. (*He was 37 when she died.*)
 - d. He was old enough to reason and ask logical questions. (*Where’s the lamb.*)
 - e. He was old enough to carry enough wood to burn and animal.

B. Why is the age of Isaac important ?

1. Isaac was of such an age that he voluntarily allowed himself to be sacrificed.
2. Isaac could see what was coming.
 - a. The journey took three days. (*Abraham would have been grieving.*)
 - b. He knew that previous sacrifices had not been occasions of grief.
3. Abraham was so old that he could not have forced Isaac unless he was very young.
 - a. Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born. (*Add the current age of Isaac.*)
 - b. The age of Abraham makes the word “lad” a relative term.
 - c. One strong enough to carry the wood was strong enough to overpower an old man.

C. Though it meant his death, Isaac submitted to his father.

1. Isaac had received no instructions from God, **but** he fully submitted to his father.
2. Abraham fully intended to sacrifice Isaac and Isaac submitted to being sacrificed.

D. Imagine what was going on within the minds of father and son.

1. As Abraham raised the knife and their eyes met, what were they thinking?
 - a. Both expected this to be the last moment of Isaac's life.
 - b. There had to be fear in the eyes of Isaac and grief on the face of Abraham.
2. *What a traumatic moment !* No one could ever forget a moment like that.

E. Even in the midst of this trial, Abraham never doubted God.

1. **Heb. 11: 17-19** By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸ it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." ¹⁹ He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.
2. The sacrifice of Isaac was a type of the sacrifice of Christ.

III. The purpose of types is to teach us about things to come.**A. There are many parallels between the sacrifice of Jesus and of Isaac.**

1. Both Isaac and Jesus were "only begotten" sons. (cf. **John 3: 16**)
2. Both were beloved sons.
 - a. Text (Vs 2) (*This is the first time love is used in the bible.*)
 - b. **Matt. 3: 17** - "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."
3. Both were sacrificed by their Father who loved them.
 - a. Text
 - b. **John 3: 16**
4. Both sons freely submitted to being sacrificed.
 - a. Text
 - b. **John 10: 18** - No one has taken it away from Me,
but I lay it down on My own initiative.

Luke 22: 42- Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me;
yet not My will, but Yours be done."
5. Both were required by their father to carry the burden on their back.
 - a. Isaac carried the wood. Text (Vs 6)
 - b. Jesus carried the wooden cross and the sins of the world.
John 19: 17 - They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross,
Isa. 53:6 - All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

6. Both were sacrificed on Mt. Moriah.
 - a. Text (Vs. **2**) ... **go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there ...**
 - b. Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem was on Mt. Moriah ... II Chro. 2:21*)
 7. Both Isaac and Jesus went back to the Father's house after being sacrificed.
 - a. Text (Vs. **19**) ... **they arose and went together to Beersheba;**
 - b. **Heb. 1: 3-** ... **When He had made purification of sins,**
He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ...
- B. Time permitting there could be more parallels draw, but these are sufficient to show us that the sacrifice of Isaac was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus.**
1. The Old Testament was written to teach us about the coming of salvation in Christ.
 2. In it we also find "types" of our life in Christ.

IV. Abraham's walk with God was also a type of our walk with God.

- A. As Abraham was called out from among his people to journey with God, Christians are called out of the world to go where God directs.**
1. Christians are called out from the world. (*ekklesia*)
 - a. The very word "church" means, "*Those who have been called out from others.*"
 - b. We are commanded to separate ourselves from worldly influences.
II Cor. 6:17- **Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,**
says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean;
And I will welcome you.
 2. Though Christians dwell in this physical world, we maintain a separate culture.
 - a. **John 17: 13-19** Jesus prayed that we would never become "**of the world.**"
 - b. **I Pet. 2: 11-12** The Apostle describes Christians as pilgrims and sojourners.
- B. Christians are called upon to leave behind all that we had in the world.**
1. The stories of the patriarchs teach us this lesson over and over.
 - a. Noah left everyone except his wife and children.
 - b. Abraham left everything to walk with God.
 2. Once we have made the commitment to Christ, we must never look back.
 - a. Remember Lot's wife.
 - b. Looking back at Egypt brought judgment on Israel.
 3. The Apostle Paul told us the key to success is to forget those things behind.
Phil. 3: 13-14 ... **forgetting what lies behind ... I press on toward ...**

C. Just as Abraham was required to sacrifice, so are we.

1. We are to present our bodies a “**living and holy sacrifice.**” **Rom. 12: 1**

2. Having been sacrificed, our bodies now belong to God.

Gal. 2: 20- I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

D. Jesus warns us that if we don't sacrifice our life we will lose it.

1. **Luke 9: 23-27** And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory* of the Father and of the holy angels.

2. When God demands that you sacrifice your time on earth, He is testing you to see if you are faithful enough to receive the promised land.

E. When God requires you to cut all earthly ties and follow Him, He is asking only that which He asked of the patriarchs.

Matt. 10: 37-39 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

F. After the time of testing, God always delivers on His promises.

Mark 10: 29-30 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, ³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

CONCLUSION :

A. There is no sacrifice man can make that is greater than that which God made.

B. He is asking you to sacrifice for Him as He sacrificed for you.

Lesson Text :**Genesis 22: 1-19**

1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” **2** He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” **3** So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. **5** Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.” **6** 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 the two of them walked on together. **7** Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” **8** Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **10** Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. **11** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” **12** He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” **13** Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. **14** Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, **16** and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17** indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. **18** “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” **19** So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.