

# Abraham Tested

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[ 0 : 00 ] But for now, we're going to pick up from where we left off last week. And that means this morning we are coming to Genesis chapter 22. And we're going to be looking at verses 1 to 19.

And I've asked Ali if she'd be willing to come and read our passage for us this morning. So thank you, Ali. So Genesis 22. Abraham tested. Sometime later, God tested Abraham.

He said to him, Abraham, here I am, he replied. Then God said, take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah.

Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain that I will show you. Early the next morning, Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

[ 1 : 04 ] He said to his servants, stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you. Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac.

And he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father, Abraham, Father, yes, my son, Abraham replied.

The fire and wood are here, Isaac said. But where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Abraham answered, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.

Abraham, Abraham, Abraham.

Lay a hand on the boy, he said. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son. Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns.

[ 2 : 29 ] He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place, the Lord will provide. And to this day it is said, on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.

Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me. Then Abraham returned to his servants.

They set off together for Beersheba and Abraham stayed in Beersheba. Thank you, Ali. Lord, I just pray that you would use your word this morning, Lord.

You would use this passage to speak to our hearts. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, when you get squeezed, what comes out?

[ 3 : 42 ] And just to clarify, when I say squeezed, I don't mean a hug. When I say squeezed, I mean tested or put under pressure. When you get tested or squeezed or put under pressure, what comes out?

I think on a daily basis there are several things that can test us, that can squeeze us, that can put us under pressure. And it really is in those times that we really see sometimes good things and sometimes not so good things come out of us.

A few weeks ago, our little Spencer woke up at night and he was getting sick. And we heard him crying and we heard him getting sick.

Well, Amy did anyway because I don't hear much when it comes to the middle of the night. And that's just a little bit of a confession. And when it comes to the middle of the night, I'm not great.

Okay? Okay. Just to say that.

So the detail of this particular night are a little bit foggy. But I remember the first thing that happened is I went into Spencer's room. We were kind of, you know, running in.

[ 4 : 55 ] And it was dark. And the first thing I did was I stood on a plug that I had left there myself. And that was a little bit annoying. And then to make that even worse, to kind of double the blow, when I kind of jumped off the plug, I then hit my elbow off the wall or something was there anyway that I didn't think was there.

And then that was a great start. But then from there, I went off looking for bowls and cloths and this kind of thing. And I couldn't find what I was looking for. And it just felt like everything was going against me.

And it was all taking ages. And let's just say by the end of it all, I was a little bit grumpy. And if truth be told, probably more than a little bit grumpy.

On that occasion anyway, when I was squeezed, when I was tested, grumpiness is what came out. But in our passage this morning, in a far greater scale than anything I could ever imagine, we see that Abraham, he is tested, he's squeezed, if you like.

He's put under pressure by God to highlight what would come out. In verse 1, we see that it was God who tested Abraham.

[ 6 : 16 ] Sometime later, God tested Abraham. Now this word for tested here can also mean to squeeze, to put under pressure, or to examine.

And when we consider why was God testing Abraham here, why was he squeezing him, why was he examining him? Well, really verse 12 is key in relation to why.

We see in verse 12 that the Lord tested Abraham to see if he feared him and to see if he would withhold anything from him.

Verse 12, the Lord said to Abraham, Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.

Now to fear God, I think in many ways, is to have God as number one in our lives. And to not withhold anything from God, I think in many ways, is to have God as number one in our lives.

[ 7 : 18 ] So when we look at this passage, basically, what is happening here is God is testing or squeezing or examining Abraham to reveal if God is number one in his life.

To reveal if he would withhold something from God, even his own son. So in that sense, I think as someone else said, Abraham's testing here would reveal his true treasure.

Was the Lord number one in his life or was it something else? Would he withhold something from the Lord or if needed, would he in faith surrender everything to him?

Well, let's look at Abraham's test and we'll see how he got on. In verse 2, we're told about his test. And I think when we read verse 2, what should come kind of charging out at us is just how difficult this test was.

This was not a little test just to stay patient in the middle of the night. This test, this examining of Abraham was not done in a low stakes way.

[ 8 : 33 ] The Lord did not test Abraham with something that did not matter too much to him. No, the Lord tested Abraham with something that mattered most to him.

His one and only son. Verse 2, then God said, Notice how God describes Isaac here.

God could have just said, Take your son and sacrifice him. God could have just said that, but he didn't.

In how the Lord describes Isaac here, the Lord is showing us the preciousness of Isaac to Abraham. God said, Take your son, your only son, whom you love.

This is actually the first mention of the word love in the Bible. Here we are in Genesis chapter 22, and this is the first time that the word love is used in the Bible.

[ 9 : 54 ] Isn't that something? The first mention of the word love in the Bible is used for how Abraham felt about his son, Isaac. That will tell us just how precious and treasured and treasured Isaac was to Abraham.

And that helps us to see that Abraham here is being tested to the very core of what was most important to him. Abraham here is being tested to the very core of what he treasured most.

His only son who he loved. Now it was not wrong in any way for Abraham to love Isaac and to love him in a deep, deep, deep way beyond what we could describe.

But did he love Isaac more than God? That is the test here. So what would Abraham do?

Would he cling to the child that God had given him? the child in which the future was promised? Or would he do what the Lord asked him to do? Well in verses 3 to 10 we see that Abraham actually moved quickly to do the thing that the Lord asked him to do.

[11:09] Verse 3 Abraham, Isaac and two servants headed to Mount Moriah where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac. And verse 4 is interesting. Verse 4 tells us that it took them three days to get to Mount Moriah.

We pick up that detail of three days in verse 4. And this really underscores the resolve that Abraham had in putting the Lord first. This was not a spur-of-the-moment thing he did.

In these three days Abraham had plenty of time to turn back. He had plenty of time to talk himself out of it. He had plenty of time to say no.

But no, day after day for three days Abraham kept moving forward in obedience to God. In verse 6 on the last leg of the journey the two servants waited and just Abraham and Isaac headed to the place of sacrifice.

Well as they walked along together Abraham and Isaac in verse 7 Isaac asks his father where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

[12:20] It's almost like Isaac realized that they had the wood, the fire, the knife and it's almost like Isaac was like wait a minute what about the sacrifice? Isaac asks his father where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

At this point anyway it seems that Isaac did not know that it was going to be him. But Abraham did not tell this to Isaac.

Abraham verse 8 answered God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering my son.

Abraham believed that with whatever was going to happen here if he trusted the Lord the Lord would provide.

Abraham believed at this time that even if the Lord would have him sacrifice Isaac the Lord would provide by even possibly bringing back Isaac from the dead.

And we're told about that in Hebrews chapter 11. In Hebrews chapter 11 verse 17 we read by faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac and in all of this he considered that God was even able to raise Isaac from the dead.

[13:36] Abraham believed that even if he had to go through with this that in some way the Lord would provide by even raising Isaac from the dead. Well with that trust Abraham continued to do what the Lord told him to do.

Verse 9 he laid his son Isaac on the altar and after laying his precious son on the altar verse 10 which really is a dramatic scene Abraham raised the knife over Isaac with full intent to do what the Lord had told him to do.

Well just when Abraham you would imagine was about to lower that knife to sacrifice his one and only son never it seems has there been more of a welcome voice because with knife in the air we read the voice of the angel of the Lord called out Abraham Abraham do not lay a hand on the boy do not do anything to him now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son your only son and it's kind of at this point that we're kind of cheering saying yes it didn't happen and of course the Lord with this miraculously provided a ram to be sacrificed instead God was never going to allow Abraham to sacrifice his son that was never going to happen here that is not the heart of God that is not what God is doing here God did not want a sacrifice a human sacrifice

God instead did all of this to see if Abraham was willing to surrender all to him God tested and squeezed Abraham here to reveal if Abraham was willing to surrender all to him and to not withhold anything from him as we said earlier Abraham's testing would reveal his true treasure well when Abraham was tested here when Abraham was squeezed here what came out was that nothing was more important to Abraham than God Abraham was not a perfect man in any way and we have really seen that over the chapters he was not perfect but God by his grace through ups and downs has brought him to a point of total surrender at this point

Abraham was willing to surrender everything to his God even his his own precious son and when we think of what we do with this passage well I think in that sense this passage encourages us at the very least to consider what is most important to us I think if truth be told when it really comes down to it when the squeeze comes on I think this passage encourages us to consider what is most important to us what is our true treasure is there something that we are putting before God in our lives or is there something that we are holding back from God in our lives what are the Isaacs so to

speak in our lives whether that be time or money or entertainment or possessions or people or position or whatever it is what are the things in our lives the Isaacs so to speak that might be in danger that we might be in danger of putting before God in our lives this passage is a strong passage

[ 17 : 40 ] I think that's something for each of us to consider what is most important to us is there something that we are putting before God in our lives I know that's something that I need to consider let us as believers with the Lord's help and we really do need his help seek to not withhold anything from him let us seek not to put anything before God in our lives because the reality is he has not withheld anything from us in our passage this morning we see that God stopped Abraham from going through with sacrificing his one and only precious son and there is kind of so much relief when we read that God did step in and stop Abraham from sacrificing his one and only son well our heavenly father went a step further with his own precious son

God did not hold back in sacrificing his own precious son and if we think about it a ram was provided by God the father to take the place of Isaac but there was no ram or lamb provided by God the father to take the place of his own son Jesus Jesus instead was the sacrificial lamb who was slain for the sins of the world so in this passage when we see and consider what Abraham faced in bringing his son to the place of sacrifice and when we can see how difficult it must have been that gives us just a glimpse of what God the father faced when he sent his one and only son to be sacrificed for each one of us and that really is how much God loves us and how much he has held nothing back from us he went all the way through with allowing and sending his only son to be sacrificed for us so that we could be forgiven and set free and it really is amazing when we think about it and you know how can we take it all in how can we take in what

God the father did for us he went all the way through with giving and sending his only son to be sacrificed for us we look at what Abraham did here in this passage and how he went all the way to the place of sacrifice and we put ourselves in his shoes if you have a son or a daughter put yourself in his shoes God was never going to allow that but then consider what God the father did for you and for me it really brings it home when we look at what Abraham almost did when we think about what God the father did for us I think some words from how great thou art kind of bring it home and when I think that God his son not sparing sent him to die I scarce can take it in that on a cross my burdens gladly he bled and died to take away my sin

I think that this passage when it comes down to it is about in faith not holding anything back from God in love God held nothing back from us and in love for our God in faith in him let us hold nothing back from him whatever might seem to be most important in our lives and we could list them all out again time money possessions position job you know whatever it is these things I think are there to be enjoyed but let us not put anything before our God with his help and by his grace because we really need his help may our song be all of us God let usktoive Jesus sheen year-kerald All of my ambitions, hopes, and plans, I surrender these into your hands. Let's pray together. Lord, when we look at this passage, we see what you asked Abraham to do, and we couldn't imagine that ourselves.

[ 22 : 26 ] And we just thank you, Lord, that you provided a ram to be sacrificed. And Lord, when we think of all of that, it really gives us a glimpse into what you, God the Father, must have faced when you sent your only precious son to be sacrificed for each one of us.

And that really does show us our value to you, Lord, our worth to you, what you think of us, that you would send your only son to die for us so we could be forgiven and set free.

And we know, Lord, that it's really hard at times to put you first. It's really hard at times to not let other things come into the center. But, Lord, we look to you for your help.

We pray that you will help us, Lord, bit by bit as you transform us into your likeness, by your grace and by your mercy, that you would help us to more and more have you at the center of things.

And have you as number one in our lives. Lord, help us not to hold anything back from you and help us not to put anything in front of you. And I pray that we would be an encouragement to each other in this.

[ 23 : 36 ] And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.